

## PART II

### THE QUESTION PAPER

An index to questions appears at the end of Part II.

Numerical references are to Question Paper page numbers.

An asterisk preceding an entry in the index indicates that an answer has not yet been received.

23 February 1988

24. Helicopter Charters - Minister for Tourism

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What is the total cost of helicopter charters undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1987.
2. What was the take-off point and the destination for each journey.
3. Who were the passengers, if any, on each of these trips.

20 February 1990

114. Liquor Licence Applications

Mr EDE to MINISTER for RACING and GAMING

1. For each year from 1985 to 1988 how many applications for new liquor licences have been -
  - (a) approved; and
  - (b) rejected,by the Liquor Commission.
2. For each year from 1985 to 1988 how many applications for renewals of liquor licences have been rejected by the Liquor Commission.
3. For each year from 1985 to 1988, how many applications to have liquor licence conditions changed to provide for takeaway sales have been -
  - (a) approved; and
  - (b) rejected,by the Liquor Commission.
4. For each year 1985 to 1988 how many applications for -
  - (a) new;
  - (b) renewal; and
  - (c) changes,to licence conditions were opposed by commercial or community interests.
5. Of the opposed proposals, how many were ultimately granted.

1 May 1990

127. Tourist Commission's Advertising Budget

Mr BELL to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. What was the Tourist Commission's budget for -
  - (a) television advertising;
  - (b) print advertising;
  - (c) international marketing; and
  - (d) trade shows, during -
    - (i) 1987-88;
    - (ii) 1988-89; and
    - (iii) 1989-90.
2. Which advertising agency(ies) is/are retained or have been retained.
3. On what basis is/are the agency(ies) chosen.
4. Is there a tendering process.
5. If there is no tendering process, why not.
6. What is the nature of the tendering process.
7. Are tender documents public.
8. If there is a tendering process and that tender documents are prepared, is the amount of air time thus prescribed.
9. What amount of air time was prescribed during each of the years listed above.
10. If air time was not prescribed during these years, why not.
11. What was the value of that air time.

14 August 1990

135. Conversion of Pastoral Properties to Perpetual Leasehold

Mr EDE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

1. Upon which properties have recommendations under section 48A(1) of the Crown Lands Act, relating to the Director of Conservation's power to recommend the reservation of areas for public interest, been made.
2. Which of the above properties encompassing or bordering major waterways, estuaries or coastline have been -
  - (a) the subject of recommendations; and





20 February 1990

115. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	14
2. Total cost 1988-89	934 569
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	16
4. Total cost 1989-90	711 006

NORTHERN TERRITORY TREASURY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	4
2. Total cost 1988-89	49 231
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	13
4. Total cost 1989-90	194 583

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL  
(Authorised Auditor's Fees)

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	-
2. Total cost 1988-89	1 161 984
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	-
4. Total cost 1989-90	1 138 000

## ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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### OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	-
2. Total cost 1988-89	-
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	1
4. Total cost 1989-90	1 000

### DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	1
2. Total cost 1988-89	10 000
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	1
4. Total cost 1989-90	9 763

### POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	2
2. Total cost 1988-89	56 500
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	2
4. Total cost 1989-90	7 680

### 116. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

### ANSWER

### DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	31
2. Total cost 1988-89	505 000
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	34
4. Total cost 1989-90	676 331

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES - NIL

117. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for EDUCATION

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	5
2. Total cost 1988-89	47 152
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	6
4. Total cost 1989-90	60 728

118. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TOURISM

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

TOURIST COMMISSION

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	8
2. Total cost 1988-89	243 025
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	11
4. Total cost 1989-90	286 000

OFFICE OF YOUTH, SPORT, RECREATION AND ETHNIC AFFAIRS

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	1
2. Total cost 1988-89	3 711
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	1
4. Total cost 1989-90	45 426

119. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	321
2. Total cost 1988-89	9 658 395
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	330
4. Total cost 1989-90	9 310 680

DARWIN PORT AUTHORITY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	8
2. Total cost 1988-89	20 808
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	9
4. Total cost 1989-90	98 350

RACING, GAMING AND LIQUOR COMMISSION

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	1
2. Total cost 1988-89	32 672
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	-
4. Total cost 1989-90	-

120. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	9
2. Total cost 1988-89	223 539
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	8
4. Total cost 1989-90	159 667

WORK HEALTH AUTHORITY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	3
2. Total cost 1988-89	42 000
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	5
4. Total cost 1989-90	8 550

OFFICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	4
2. Total cost 1988-89	67 286
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	3
4. Total cost 1989-90	128 755

121. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.

3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	9
2. Total cost 1988-89	160 000
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	12
4. Total cost 1989-90	190 000

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	31
2. Total cost 1988-89	1 284 814
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	29
4. Total cost 1989-90	1 088 094

122. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF LAW

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	1
2. Total cost 1988-89	12 383
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	-
4. Total cost 1989-90	-

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND HOUSING

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	47
2. Total cost 1988-89	461 694
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	34
4. Total cost 1989-90	1 130 733

ABORIGINAL AREAS PROTECTION AUTHORITY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	6
2. Total cost 1988-89	15 926
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	32
4. Total cost 1989-90	129 359

123. Publicly-Funded Consultancies

Mr SMITH to DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

1. How many consultancies were engaged and paid for out of public funds within your portfolio areas for the financial year 1988-89.
2. What was the total cost of those consultancies.
3. How many consultancies have been engaged at public expense within your portfolio areas for the current financial year.
4. What is the total cost so far, and the projected costs at the end of this financial year of those consultancies.

ANSWER

DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND ENERGY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	53
2. Total cost 1988-89	421 104
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	31
4. Total cost 1989-90	429 945

POWER AND WATER AUTHORITY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	122
2. Total cost 1988-89	4 235 718
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	95
4. Total cost 1989-90	2 861 836

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND DEVELOPMENT

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	16
2. Total cost 1988-89	239 430
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	14
4. Total cost 1989-90	681 475

TRADE DEVELOPMENT ZONE AUTHORITY

1. No of consultancies 1988-89	6
2. Total cost 1988-89	122 318
3. No of consultancies 1989-90	5
4 Total cost 1989-90	138 487

1 May 1990

128. Registration of Aboriginal Health Workers

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

With reference to your answer to Written Question No 102, relating to Aboriginal Health Workers employed in certain Aboriginal communities, how many of those health workers were -

- (a) registered under the Health Practitioners and Allied Professionals Registration Act; and
- (b) not registered under that act.

ANSWER

The Health Practitioners and Allied Professionals Registration Act was passed in September 1985 and the Registration Board established in 1986, therefore no Aboriginal Health Workers were registered in 1981 or 1985.

In 1 year an Aboriginal Health Worker position may be filled by more than 1 person, for example, due to maternity leave, transfer or resignation.

The following registration details are of Aboriginal Health Workers employed by the Department of Health and Community Services in December 1989:

Registered Aboriginal Health Workers	86
Conditionally Registered Aboriginal Health Workers	4
TOTAL	<u>90</u>
Trainee Aboriginal Health Workers (not registered)	97

Communities who receive a Grant-in-Aid from the department manage their own health service, including staffing. Aboriginal Health Workers employed through Grants-in-Aid are not reflected in the above figures.

14 August 1990

133. Bovine Tuberculosis in Confirmed Free Area

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

1. How many outbreaks of Bovine Tuberculosis occurred within the Confirmed Free area in the Northern Territory since 1987.
2. In how many of these cases has a total or partial de-stocking been the preferred method of cleaning up the infestation.
3. How many of these cattle were shipped out.
4. How many of these cattle were shot to waste or used as pet meat.
5. What was the cost to the BTEC program for outbreaks within the Confirmed Free area for -
  - (a) compensation; and
  - (b) other associated costs,during the financial years 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

ANSWER

The honourable member for Stuart is again demonstrating his ignorance of the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Campaign. The term 'Confirmed Free Area' has no directly applicable meaning in the sense in which he has used it.

I presume the honourable member is seeking details relating to breakdowns in the Impending Free Areas and have framed my reply accordingly.

Question 1

- 1987 - there was no Impending Free Area in the NT.
- 1988 - Tuberculosis was confirmed on Henbury Station, tailtag area TKAS0135.
- 1989 - Tuberculosis was confirmed on Marqua Station, tailtag areas TKAS0127 and TCAS0050.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Question 2

<u>Tailtag Area</u>	<u>Type of De-stocking</u>
Henbury West TKAS0135	partial
Marqua - East and West TCAS0050	total (in progress)
Marqua - Breakfast Creek TKAS0127	total (in progress)

Question 3

Henbury West TKAS0135

864 cattle trucked with compensation  
185 cattle trucked without compensation

TOTAL = 1049 head

Marqua East and West, Breakfast Creek TCAS0050, TKAS0127

(to date)  
3680 cattle trucked with compensation  
557 cattle trucked without compensation

TOTAL = 4237 head

Question 4

Henbury West TKAS0135

79 unmusterable cattle  
27 untruckable cattle

TOTAL = 106 head - all these cattle (origin - Meteorite, Running Water, Block, Gap, Cotton Bush) were destroyed with compensation paid to the station. A number of unmusterable cattle (origin - Cave Hole, Bowra and Shepherds) were also destroyed but with no compensation paid to the station.

Marqua - East and West, Breakfast Creek TCAS0050, TKAS0127 -

To date no cattle have been 'shot to waste' or 'used as pet meat'.

Question 5

Assessable gross costs to BTEC for these breakdowns are -

Financial Year	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	TOTAL
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Compensation Payable	117 270	46 663	1 228 179	1 392 112
Other Costs (Type A)	390	19 565	21 201	41 156
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL:	117 660	66 228	1 249 380	1 433 268
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136. Maintenance Contract for Radiological  
Equipment at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BELL to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

In your debate in the committee stages of the 1989-90 Appropriation Bill you referred to the purchase of radiological equipment for the Royal Darwin Hospital and a maintenance contract with Toshiba (Australia) Pty Ltd which would give 'total savings in that area of \$120 000 per year or \$600 000 for 5 years, which represents a savings in the order of \$350 000 over that period'.

1. To which heads of expenditure detailed in the budget speech do Toshiba invoices Nos 695089, 695090 and 695091 relate.
2. Is it correct, as these invoices indicate, that the government has paid this service contract in advance.
3. Will the 'comprehensive 5-year service contract' with Toshiba (Australia) Pty Ltd be tabled.
4. How is the saving on parts of \$50 000 calculated.

ANSWER

1. Hospital Activity, Royal Darwin Hospital Program Capital Items Category of Cost.
2. Yes. The government has paid this services contract in advance.
3. No. Terms and conditions of contracts with private enterprise are not generally tabled in parliament. Protection of privacy is considered a high priority. Royal Darwin Hospital has numerous commercial agreements for the supply of goods and services.
4. The radiology equipment agreement allowed a one off \$100 000 saving with an annual saving of approximately \$50 000 per annum based on the cost of spare parts stored and utilised to maintain the previous equipment.

Work Health Authority

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The minister and other members of the Assembly would be aware that certain concerns have been raised in the community in relation to benefits available under the Work Health Act. What action does he intend to take, or has he taken in relation to those concerns?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I preface my answer to this question by saying that I am fully aware of the trauma suffered by families of injured people and, of course, by the injured persons themselves when, unfortunately, they are injured through work or from whatever cause. There is enormous trauma to families and the individuals concerned. I have been a little concerned over the last few weeks about much of the information that has been circulated, particularly by the member for MacDonnell, concerning the position with the Work Health Authority in the Northern Territory. The member opposite has termed it 'a disaster'. If the member opposite wants to look at disasters in work health, he should go to Victoria or South Australia. As we all know, Victoria is in debt to the tune of billions of dollars in relation to work health, and South Australia is currently \$60m in debt as a result of extremely poor management of its system.

Much has been made of the level of benefits in the Northern Territory compared to the level of benefits in other parts of Australia. Mr Speaker, you can compare apples with oranges if you like but, if you compare apples with apples, our system stands up quite well in comparison to others around this country. Let us look at some of the benefits payable. I will refer to weekly benefits because those are the benefits on which people must survive during an injury period. I am not referring to a lump sum benefit that one might receive in one of the states, perhaps after many years of court action, but benefits on which people must survive. In the Northern Territory, the person's normal weekly earnings prior to the accident are maintained for 26 weeks. Following that period, there is 70% of normal weekly earnings to a maximum of \$540. That does not stop after 6 months or after any time period pulled out of a hat. That figure is maintained until retirement. That figure is in addition to all medical and rehabilitation expenses incurred by that person.

Last year, Western Australia was the state favoured by the opposition. Let us look at Western Australia. An injured person receives the industrial award rate of pay only, regardless of what he was earning. If he has been earning \$1000 a week and the industrial award is \$400, that is what he receives. That is limited to a total figure of \$83 000 maximum. Once that amount has been reached, that person goes on unemployment or sickness benefits and becomes a burden on the Commonwealth social security system.

The new-found love of the opposition is Queensland. Since the last Queensland election, it has become the most favoured state of the opposition. Let me talk about the Queensland situation. In Queensland, an injured worker is paid at award rates for 26 weeks, whereas we pay normal weekly earnings for 26 weeks. The maximum amount payable is \$55 000, although I will say that it is about to be increased by \$10 000 or \$12 000. Once that amount is reached, the worker is picked up by social security. That is how the Queensland system operates, and the situation in respect of weekly benefits in other states is similar.

Members of the opposition, particularly the member for MacDonnell, have been raving on without really looking at the situation elsewhere in the country. He has been looking at areas such as death benefits and permanent impairment. Death benefits in the Northern Territory are not the nation's highest nor are they the lowest. Permanent impairment benefits are not the lowest either. In fact, the Northern Territory is the only jurisdiction which takes a whole-of-body stance in this area. In most states, if a person contracts a disease or internal illness at work, work health benefits do not apply. In the Northern Territory, such benefits do apply. In many of the states, if a person receives a lump sum benefit, any benefits received through normal weekly compensation or medical and other benefits are deducted from that amount. Our work health system compares extremely favourably right across the board. Although our benefits may not be as high as those in other states, when one looks at the way their systems operate, it becomes quite clear that the operation of our Work Health Act is far from being a disaster.

When we look at death benefits, as I said, they are not by any means ...

Mr Bell: Which one is lower, Terry? Tell us which one you think is lower.

Mr McCARTHY: They are not by any means the lowest in the country. The death benefits in Queensland total \$77 000 compared to our \$80 000, and that is reduced by any amount paid in maims or weekly benefits, whilst we make no deductions. They make many deductions. In the ACT, it is \$79 000. In South Australia, it is \$80 000 - again less than in the Northern Territory. We do not deduct any other payments that we have made.

Even though, from the facts that I have been able to outline here this morning, it is clear that we are not by any means the worst in this nation, I have no doubt that people are suffering, but people are suffering in the states too. However, they are not suffering because our system is worse than those in the states but because any cut in a person's salary is difficult to accommodate. I know that as well as anybody else does. I have been in that situation, and I recognise that it is a very traumatic time for families when it occurs.

As a consequence, I have met with the Injured Persons' Association and I have agreed to have the Ministerial Advisory Council of Work Health review all benefits payable under the Work Health Act in order to ensure that we maintain our responsible position in the matter of work health in the Northern Territory.

#### Work Health Authority

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I have a number of questions following from the minister's previous answer. He made a great deal of the question of weekly benefits in Western Australia and Queensland. Is he aware that, in both those states, a common law action is retained for a pain and suffering component that, in the Northern Territory, has been removed in its entirety unlike any state in the Commonwealth? In respect of a Northern Territory employee and a Commonwealth employee, does the minister accept that injured workers in the Northern Territory should receive lower benefits than their Commonwealth counterparts?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, do we have to be so different from every state? I have outlined for the honourable member opposite where we are above the states in this matter. Does he think for a minute that there are no Commonwealth employees in those states? There are Commonwealth employees in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales who are receiving different benefits from the benefits provided by those states. Why should we be different? We have a responsible attitude to work health. A review into work health in the Territory has been under way for some time. The member opposite, who now climbs up on his high horse and says that he has been aware of this problem for 12 months or more, did not make a submission to that review. He did not come near us. Neither did other members of the opposition or the unions come forward with any action with regard to that review. They did not come with a submission and ask if we were aware of the problem that people were facing. They did not come forward, yet they say they were aware of it.

I do not know how they can hide behind this. They kowtow to the Commonwealth to such an extent. It is quite obvious. Over the last few days, the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have been kowtowing to the Commonwealth at the expense of their relationship with the unions. I am not prepared to sit here and accept the high moral stance adopted by the member for MacDonnell when he did not make any effort to bring these concerns forward previously so that they could be addressed. I have responded quickly and I have responded in the correct way in order to ensure that people in the community do not suffer.

#### Commonwealth Guarantee on Borrowings

Mr SETTER to TREASURER

I understand that the federal Treasurer has written to the Chief Minister and Treasurer advising that he will withdraw the Commonwealth guarantee which underwrites the Territory's borrowings. What will be the effect of this action?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can confirm that I have received advice from the federal Treasurer that he intends to withdraw the Commonwealth guarantee from 1 July 1991. This is a serious matter which has cost implications for the Northern Territory. At the time of self-government, the Commonwealth undertook to stand behind the Territory when it entered the finance marketplace to raise loans for capital development throughout the Territory as part of its budgetary process. We were then, and we are still, a relatively small borrower and the Commonwealth guarantee provides comfort to lenders and enables us to secure loan funds at attractive rates. The federal Treasurer claims that, having been in the marketplace for 12 years, we should be moved to a more state-like footing, notwithstanding that we do not have the powers of a state. We do not have control over important mineral reserves and royalties, our hands are tied in relation to land administration and history shows that we are subject to the whims of federal decision-making to a far greater extent than are any of the states.

In taking this step, the federal Treasurer gave us a pat on the back by saying: 'In the absence of the guarantee, the Commonwealth considers that, provided the Northern Territory continues to manage its finances prudently, the Territory should continue to be able to borrow on favourable terms and

conditions'. It seems that, in that regard at least, the federal Treasurer disagrees with the Leader of the Opposition in this parliament. We are all aware that the Leader of the Opposition peddles quite a different line about how the Northern Territory government manages the taxpayers' funds of which it has stewardship. I will be very interested to hear what the Leader of the Opposition's attitude is towards the federal Treasurer's foreshadowed action in this regard.

We have been very successful at securing attractive interest rates. Currently, we raise funds at a rate just a little lower than 2 of the Australian states. At present, the average interest rate that we pay on our total debt is about 12.1%. Without the Commonwealth guarantee, there is no doubt that new borrowings will be at higher rates. We estimate a cost penalty of up to \$500 000 in the first year. That figure will compound in each subsequent year as we borrow at the higher rate. Over a period, this decision will cost the Territory many millions of dollars. Why should we be placed in this position when it costs the Commonwealth absolutely nothing to provide the guarantee? It does not cost it a cent. We accept that, eventually, the Territory government should have to stand on its own feet in the capital markets. However, we should do so when we have state-like powers over the administration of the Northern Territory. That is when we should do it, not now.

I have written back to the Treasurer - and I will table the 2 letters in a moment - appealing to him to review his decision. His decision does not benefit the Commonwealth in any way and, in a moment, I will demonstrate that it is likely to cost it some money. The Northern Territory's self-government exists really at the pleasure of the federal government. We are here as a result of a federal act which can be repealed at any time. Under that act, the Commonwealth has some very significant powers which do not exist in relation to the states. It has the power to withhold assent to legislation passed in this Chamber. In some respects, legislation can be overturned within 6 months of its being put in place in the Northern Territory. In the last 5 years, we have received precisely twice the cuts in Commonwealth funding that the states have received. We are subject to the whims of the federal government to a far greater extent than any state is. No doubt, in part, that is because we do not have the power where it counts. We do not have the numbers, particularly in the Senate. The Northern Territory is far from being a state.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The question from the member for Jingili to the Treasurer related to the termination of Commonwealth guarantees in respect of the Territory's capacity to raise loans. The Treasurer is now indulging himself in broad-ranging comments on Commonwealth/Territory relations which I do not think are appropriate in question time. They should be the subject of a statement.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I have been listening to the Treasurer with interest and I find that he is answering the question he was asked.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, the question asked me to comment on the ramifications of this action and that is what I am addressing.

In late June, at the last Loans Council meeting, the Commonwealth advised the Territory and the states that, for its own presentational purposes in its budget documents, it wanted the states to redeem the Loans Council's advances, that is, money raised by the Commonwealth by way of loans and forwarded to the states as distinct from the Loans Council

borrowing limits where the states raise funds themselves in the market. The Commonwealth has asked the states to borrow funds and to pay back the advances to the Commonwealth. To encourage that, the Commonwealth says that it will facilitate it at nil cost to the states.

Commonwealth advances to the Northern Territory now amount to \$785m and, for the information of honourable members, our global limit borrowings are \$552m. The Commonwealth is asking us to go into the marketplace to borrow another \$785m over a period and to pay that back to the Commonwealth so that it can remove all of these outstanding loans from its books. The Commonwealth has said that it will ensure that we are not disadvantaged in that regard. The withdrawal of the Commonwealth guarantee means that, as we enter the marketplace to borrow the \$785m, we will have to pay a higher rate of interest than would apply if the guarantee were still in place. In ensuring that this situation will have a nil net effect on the Northern Territory, the Commonwealth will be writing larger cheques for us than would otherwise be the case.

I hope that this is only an oversight on the part of the federal Treasurer, and that he might overturn his decision when he realises the implications. I would hate to think that his Treasury officers have weighed the matter up and have made the decision. Certainly, if the federal Treasurer knows that the decision will increase the costs to the Commonwealth government, but nevertheless remains prepared to withdraw the Commonwealth guarantee to the Northern Territory, one would have to be very suspicious about his motives.

Mr Speaker, I table the federal Treasurer's letter and my response.

#### Workers' Compensation Insurance

Mr BELL to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In spite of the minister's protestations, he has more or less conceded that benefits to Territory workers are among the lowest, if not the lowest, in this country. My question relates to his awareness of the overall costs of premiums and benefits paid out and profits to insuring companies, one of which is the Territory Insurance Office. Is the minister aware of his own government's figures, tabled in this Assembly, which indicate that insurers are making a \$10m profit on a \$27m turnover on work health, an amount equivalent to a 40% profit on turnover in worker's compensation insurance?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, as usual, the member for MacDonnell is playing around with figures that he does not really understand. I refute his assertion that I have conceded that the Northern Territory is behind the states in terms of compensation benefits. Certainly, I did not concede that. In fact, to the contrary, I made it clear that the Northern Territory's benefits in a whole range of areas - particularly those very important benefits which enable people to survive and to pay for their weekly groceries - are better than those in the majority of the states. The same applies in other areas, when one takes into account the deductions which states levy on their long-term impairment benefits and death benefits. They deduct amounts which have been paid out already in weekly benefits. We do not. When we pay a lump sum benefit, all our weekly benefits are maintained. Rehabilitation benefits and medical expenses continue to be paid. Whilst some of our lump sum benefits appear to be low in comparison with those in the states, when one

takes their deductions into account, it is clear that we are not necessarily behind the 8-ball.

We chose deliberately to have a work health system which did not rely on a single insurer. We are a responsible government when it comes to money matters. We could foresee the problems which work health systems in Victoria and South Australia now face with their single insurers and their belief that governments were the fount of all knowledge and could run a system better than the private companies in the insurance world. We went deliberately down a road of having private insurers involved in this system.

It is not my place or the government's place to tell an insurance company whether it can make a profit of this size or that size. That is monitored by the Insurance Council of Australia. If the insurance companies are making money out of work health, I am sure that the council will advise its members and they will take action as a result. I will not go to private insurers and tell them what rate they will charge and what profit they will obtain. That is how the private sector has some freedom under a conservative government. I know that that is anathema to the members opposite, who believe that they should put their sticky fingers into everything and direct private enterprise how to run its show. I believe that that is a matter for insurance companies and the employers who buy that insurance. If an employer believes that an insurance company is charging too high a premium, let him say that he is not prepared to pay it. How can the government tell an insurance company what its premiums should be?

I can give figures that will show clearly that, under the Work Health Act in the Northern Territory, workers' compensation premiums have reduced dramatically. Across the board, they are now around 4%. Some of those were previously as high as 40%. That is the clear result of the good management of this government in respect of work health. Let the would-be Leader of the Opposition over there indicate to the public that the opposition would put its sticky fingers into insurance companies, that it would run a Victorian-type work care system which has seen billions of dollars go down the drain or that it would run a South Australian style work health system which has seen \$60m go down the drain. Let him tell the public exactly what sort of people members of the opposition are.

#### Counterfeit Aboriginal Art Works and Artifacts

Mr FLOREANI to CHIEF MINISTER

Is the Chief Minister aware that the Northern Territory is being swamped with counterfeit Aboriginal art works and artifacts which are being produced overseas under the pretext of their being genuine Aboriginal art work and artifacts? Would the Chief Minister, in cooperation with Aboriginal artists and organisations, consider enacting copyright legislation to protect Northern Territory artists, Northern Territory businesses and potential purchasers from cheap foreign imitations as this infant industry is estimated to be worth \$10m per annum in the Northern Territory?

Mr Speaker, with your permission I have some samples of genuine Aboriginal art work and the copied art, and some photographs of people producing this art work in Bali.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Flynn may make the artifacts available to members during the course of these proceedings.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the proposition put by the member for Flynn is an interesting one. I will not respond in detail other than to say that there are copyright laws that exist in Australia. If I recall rightly, they are federal laws. I do not recall any Northern Territory copyright laws. I know that those laws have been used by Aboriginal artists to seek redress from those people who have snaffled designs. It has been quite a topical issue in the media recently. We will have a look at this, but I think it is probable that the protections are there. It is up to artists, who believe that their designs are being copied in breach of copyright, to take appropriate action to try to obtain redress. In regard to any items that are being imported, as distinct from those produced in Australia, there may be some additional protections that can be brought to bear in that the commodity has to come through customs which, naturally, does not apply to material produced in a factory somewhere in Australia.

All I can do is take on board the honourable member's points and we will have a look at the matter. I can assure him and other honourable members that the Northern Territory government does indeed support Aboriginal enterprise. It is a very significant industry in the Territory and elsewhere and, hopefully, it will be very much a growing industry which will employ many more Aboriginal people than it does at the present time and give them the opportunity to earn their own income, be their own bosses and establish their own enterprises.

Fuel Costs

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

What action is the government taking to alleviate the burden on people in remote areas of the Northern Territory, including businesses and those who need fuel to carry out their daily lives, as a result of the sudden increase in fuel prices in the past few weeks?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question from the member for Araluen is indeed timely. I was told this morning that the price of oil has now risen to \$US40 a barrel. That is a rise of some \$US6 over Friday's spot price ...

Mr Tuxworth: That was at 8 o'clock.

Mr COULTER: That is right. We need an hourly update on this.

For the information of honourable members, I was in Singapore last week at a petroleum conference and the Singapore spot price has increased some 60% since 2 August, the date of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. At \$US40 a barrel, we can be in for a great deal of trouble if something is not done. Of course, roughly calculated, every dollar increase in the price of a barrel of oil represents 1¢ a litre. The federal government people are probably rubbing their hands together over the windfall that the federal government has received as a result of this. It exceeds some \$2m a day at the moment. That is not bad money for doing nothing. It should see the federal government gain an extra \$500m. I forget the formula that determines the amount of this per-dollar increase that goes straight to the federal government.

The situation is reaching a crisis point in Australia. Luckily, we have moved away from the Singapore spot price, because we simply could not afford to pay \$US40 a barrel in Australia. A formula has been agreed to now that reduces our price below the Singapore spot price. An international price applies now rather than the Singapore rate to which we were linked previously. However, it means big problems for Australia and, of course, bigger problems for people living in remote areas of Australia. The Chief Minister has written to the Prime Minister and Premiers throughout Australia expressing his concerns and I will start by putting those concerns into perspective and talk about fuel pricing and what has happened in the past few weeks.

As a result of the Middle East crisis and the rising cost of crude oil, the price of petrol has increased by about 14¢ a litre throughout Australia. A rule of thumb is that the price of petrol per litre increases at the rate of 1¢ for every \$US1 increase per barrel. In addition, since the federal government indexes both its crude oil excise on Bass Strait oil and its excise on refined products, its fuel tax has added a little under 4¢ to the price of a litre of petrol. Currently, about 25¢ of the price of each litre of petrol is paid to the federal government. Finally, there is the Northern Territory government tax, which was raised by 1¢ in the current budget. This means that 5¢ of the price of a litre of petrol sold in the Northern Territory goes into our coffers. Our tax on petrol is not indexed. Thus, if petrol were to rise to \$42 per barrel, the Territory government would still receive only 5¢ per litre, while the federal government's indexed collection would be more than 30¢ per litre.

No Territory motorist, business or any fuel-using concern welcomes the situation, but the underlying cost of fuel is out of our hands. It is in the hands of people like President Hussein and President Bush. Obviously, in this situation, it is the responsibility of the federal government to ensure that no one suffers disproportionately through the fuel cost burden, particularly the people who are least able to afford it. In this case, the people least able to carry the burden are those suffering the greatest weight - that is, those people in remote areas in the Territory and elsewhere in Australia.

Under the former Liberal government, there was a scheme in place which went some way towards alleviating the burden: the Petroleum Products Freight Subsidy Scheme. In fact, it is still in place, but no one would know it because the federal ALP has emasculated the scheme, rendering it almost totally impotent to compensate those who live in remote areas. Previously, the scheme subsidised the freight component on fuel. Today, it costs more than 10¢ a litre to transport fuel to some remote areas of the Territory. The Territory government believes it is right and proper to ask the federal government to help those who can least afford to pay the extra cost of fuel, who have no alternative energy supplies and no public transport, and who are now effectively subsidising those who pay less for fuel in heavily populated parts of the eastern seaboard. It is a serious situation that is already affecting the tourist trade because holiday motorists on a budget simply turn around and head for home after filling up at the bowser. Remote area businesses are cutting their profit margins to the bone in order to survive.

I look to members opposite to use whatever influence they may have with their colleagues in the federal parliament to make the federal government realise its responsibility to people in remote areas of the Territory and to have the Petroleum Products Freight Subsidy Scheme returned to the level it was at before the Labor government emasculated it. It is known that the

indexed excises that the federal government collects from crude oil and at the petrol bowser are reaping windfall revenues for it. It seems only fair that it should put at least some of that extra and unexpected revenue back into helping those people who are powerless to find alternatives as the cost of fuel goes through the roof. A return to the former freight subsidy levels would save those in remote areas up to 10¢ in the litre, at least bringing prices into line with those paid at city service stations. That would help save lost tourist trade and, very possibly, lost business and jobs. Such a decision from the federal government would be not only fair, but would also make economic sense. We cannot wait for 1 or 2 months. We need urgent action on this, and we need it today. People in the Northern Territory and all over Australia are hurting very badly.

Mr Bell: What about Work Health victims?

Mr COULTER: If we cannot create wealth, we cannot all have bigger slices of the cake. We have to build bigger and better cakes. Is that the type of response that I am to get on this issue? Let us look at this question for a moment.

Mr Bell: You argue for urgency. Argue consistently, Barry.

Mr COULTER: Will you support this or not? Do you believe in this? Do you believe in helping people?

Mr Bell: Yes.

Mr COULTER: Good. Now let members of the opposition put their words into action. Let us see if we can have a united approach to this as a parliament in the Northern Territory and get some action from the federal government. It could be done by a simple stroke of a pen, just as the federal Treasurer intends to remove the Commonwealth's guarantee. It could be done that simply. We are not asking for new legislation. We are asking simply that it reinstate a scheme that was in place before. It could be done by close of business today if the federal government wanted to do it. That is the degree of urgency that is required because, at this price, we will simply drive people out of business and drive the tourists out of the Northern Territory.

Mr Bell: Bring on a motion. Let us debate it.

Mr COULTER: That is a good idea. We will propose a motion in this House. I can put it to my colleagues today. Let us see if we can get some action on this. The seriousness of this situation must be realised. It is ridiculous that Australia is 85% self-sufficient in fuel and yet we are linked to some international oil price. In addition, the federal government receives \$2m a day in windfall profit whilst businesses close in remote areas of Australia. The international spot price could reach US\$40 a barrel as panic buying is now setting in. We must have action immediately. The federal government had its little party picnic yesterday and it may now be able to get back to the serious business of running this country.

I was on a flight coming back from Zurich the other day and there was an Australian pilot on the plane. We were coming into Singapore. He said to me: 'I am getting off here. Where are you going - back to the Titanic?' I said: 'Unfortunately, yes'. The country really is sinking, and this will be the issue which sends it to the bottom. The federal Treasurer is the captain of the Titanic. The ship has hit the iceberg and

he is trying to convince everybody that it has just stopped for crushed ice. We have to do something and we have to do it now.

Pinelands Industrial Estate

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I understand that the councils of Palmerston, Litchfield and Darwin have agreed together and recommended to the Office of Local Government that the Pinelands Industrial Estate be included in the Palmerston rate area to enable the Palmerston Town Council to widen its financial base. Has this recommendation been made and, if so, will the minister proceed along the lines recommended as soon as possible?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I confirm that the councils have made a combined recommendation along the lines described by the member for Ludmilla. The matter is under consideration. However, I cannot confirm at present that the government proposes to go down that line. There are some difficulties associated with it. I would hope that, in the not too distant future, I will be able to confirm the government's intentions one way or the other.

Costs of Court Action Against Telecom

Mr LANHUPUY to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I refer the minister to a recent judgment of Justice Burchett dismissing a claim by certain communities against Telecom for provision of certain telecommunication facilities in the Northern Territory. Given that the Northern Territory government actively encouraged those communities in the court action, will it pay their costs to Telecom which, I am reliably informed, may amount to nearly \$0.5m? Further, did the Northern Territory government fund the applicants' costs or will it do so, and how much will that cost?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will take the member for Arnhem's question on notice. Without having been briefed at this stage, I understand that the judge did not dismiss the claim but stated that it should be referred to the tribunal which was set up to hear such cases. I understand that that has been done.

Let me give the honourable member an update on the result of taking the judge's advice and the reference that we have ...

Mr Bell: Which you should have been aware of originally.

Mr COULTER: We were aware of it. The tribunal told us to go to the judge.

Mr Bell: After you had commenced the action.

Mr COULTER: No way in the world. The tribunal did not want to have anything to do with it. The good judge, who was not satisfied that everything had been done in accordance with the law, advised us to go back to the tribunal. That was what happened.

Let me outline what we were trying to do in this case. We believed that the people in Aboriginal communities were being mistreated by Telecom. It will be interesting today to find out what will happen in respect of community service obligations and just how much a telephone will cost. The head of the Telecommunications Unit, Mr Ian MacLean, tells us that it could cost between \$40 000 and \$60 000 to have a phone connected. There will be a lot of phones in remote communities at that price! Let us not forget what the government was trying to do, Mr Speaker. I am happy to provide an update on the briefing, but let us not be too negative about it. There are some positive aspects. We have taken the advice of the judge and referred the matter to the tribunal.

#### Funding of Town Camps

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Can the minister justify what appears to be a dramatic cutback in funding provided to town camps through the Office of Local Government this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, funding of town camp organisations has been a matter of concern to many people. Over the last few years, I have been attempting to normalise local government functions in town camp areas. As you would be aware, Mr Speaker, initially, the Office of Local Government was part of the Department of Community Development. That department had a much wider role in the support of various organisations than has the Office of Local Government, whose primary role is to provide funding and support for local government organisations. Whilst some town camp organisations are carrying out what could be described as local government functions, others are not. It is very difficult for the government to determine clearly how local government funds are being spent by town camp organisations. Through consultation with the various municipal councils and town camp organisations, I have been trying to get to the bottom of the current situation and to bring about a greater involvement of municipal local governments in town camp areas and to ensure that they take their share of the responsibility.

Honourable members will be aware that local government receives Commonwealth funding on a per capita basis. The Grants Commission distributes those funds, basically on a needs basis, and municipal councils receive funding which would partially accommodate the needs of town camp organisations within their municipal boundaries. For some considerable time, the Northern Territory government has been topping up those funds. Initially, the Commonwealth-funded town camp organisations, such as Tangentyere, Kalano, Bagot and a range of others, were separate from those supplied through the Local Government Grants Commission. When the Commonwealth withdrew that funding, it forced the Northern Territory to pick up that additional burden which, in some cases, was quite substantial. Tangentyere is an organisation for which I have a great deal of respect. In Alice Springs, Tangentyere fulfils a number of very important functions for Aboriginal people in its area, not just local government functions, but functions of management of those communities in all sorts of ways. It is involved in the provision of housing and training, and it does so effectively. I am very much in support of that.

However, the Office of Local Government has a primary responsibility to support local government and, given that the Commonwealth, as is its wont,

reduced funding in real terms to the Northern Territory once again this year, the government was forced to reduce funding across the board, particularly in the areas of government operation. In fact, the Office of Local Government received less funding in real terms this year than it did last year and, as a consequence, I had to find ways to reduce the outgoings from our office. One of the outcomes of that has been reduced funding to town camps which, as I pointed out, are not the primary responsibility of the Office of Local Government. We have never been able to get a clear indication of what funding those organisations are receiving from other agencies because they do not tell us. Consequently, I have had to make that decision and, as hard as it is, I stand by it. I do not like it. I do not like reducing funding to anybody, but that is a decision that has been taken responsibly. I believe that those organisations will continue to fulfil their roles effectively, but I would say that they should be contributing more from within.

If we look at the Bagot community in Darwin, we could say that the Bagot community is very much a part of urban Darwin. As a consequence, the people living there should be paying such charges as rates and power and water charges. We should not be picking up those costs by means of local government funds, yet that is what we have been doing. The same applies to Tangentyere and Kalano, and it cannot continue. All people have to contribute for what they use, and there is no reason at all to believe that the people of Bagot or the people of Kalano or the Tangentyere town camps should be any different from the rest of the Territory's citizens. The decision is a responsible one, and I stand by it.

#### Police Cars

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to CHIEF MINISTER

In view of the Chief Minister's interest in cars and the speedway, and assuming he is au fait with the details of his portfolio relating to the police and the cars that Traffic Branch officers drive, how can he equate the \$50 000 spent on the Northern Territory police car, when it competed recently at the speedway with a US police car, with the condition of the cars driven daily by our police officers?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker I am about to demonstrate that I am not perhaps as au fait on these matters as the honourable member perhaps believed. I would be extremely surprised to hear that \$50 000 had been spent on a standard police car to enable it to compete, as a public relations exercise, against a car brought from overseas. In fact, I understand that the police car that was used is an ordinary police car. Unfortunately, I could not make it on the night, but I presume that it may have had its tyres changed and its mufflers removed, and probably it did not have a carburettor. I guess it was fuel injected and there is not a great deal that can be done to that. For \$50 000, a very handsome engine can be obtained and a very handsome differential, along with tyres that are a couple of feet wide and lots of other goodies as well. The police car used, which I gather is now back on the road doing ordinary patrols, certainly is not equipped with that type of equipment. I think the honourable member's information is wrong and ...

Mrs Padgham-Purich: Who won the race?

Mr PERRON: Unfortunately, the race was rather unequal. The Americans are very good at building giant and very powerful engines, particularly for

patrol cars used in places like California. Most of the major companies that compete for police contracts in the United States issue special models with police pursuit engines that are able to beat the competition. There was not much chance that the Northern Territory's police car could match that vehicle in particular. However, we put on a good show and the public relations aspect is important.

Honourable members may not be aware of the fact, but the Victorian police - and I do not say a great deal that is nice about Victoria these days - have had a car carrying police colours and police lights permanently competing at the drags in Victoria as a public relations exercise to improve the relationship between police and young drivers. It is regarded as an outstanding success. All the young fellows, who get a bit toey with the foot on Saturday nights, are able to go to the drag strip and compete physically against a police car with their own car. The police in Victoria regard it as a very successful public relations exercise, and I look forward to the day when we can have a more permanent fixture in Darwin in that regard. However, I acknowledge that it should be at minimal or no cost to the taxpayer, and that is very possible.

#### Costs of Court Action against Telecom

Mr BELL to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

I refer him to the question asked by the member for Arnhem and to the judgment in the cases involved. I draw his attention to the applicants in those cases. They include the Warruwi community, Gapuwiyak community, Numbulwar Numbirindi Council, Bulman Community Council, Kaltukatjara Community Council and Walunguru Council. There are about a dozen of these applicants in this case and I remind the minister that the court awarded costs thought to be in the vicinity of \$9.5m against those individuals and communities. At the encouragement of the minister, those communities and individuals are liable for \$0.5m. Firstly, can the minister confirm that he directed officers of his government to approach these individuals and communities and, secondly, can he guarantee those individuals and communities that he and the government will meet the cost of this idiot \$0.5m action?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I had intended to provide an answer on this after question time. I have some additional details, but I am still awaiting further information. I seek the indulgence of the House to give the full explanation about the way in which the case started, who our advisers were, and under what section etc. If that could be granted, I would appreciate it. It is important because some people were paying full commercial rates for the telephone service, and there are many people in remote areas of the Northern Territory that still do not have a telephone.

I well remember the maiden speech of the member for Stuart, who spoke about telephones in his electorate. I have heard the member for Braitling, who was the former member for that electorate, speak about the number of telephones in the area. Unfortunately, over a period of some 20 years, the situation has not changed much. Maybe we could get some of the turbo-charged carrier pigeons that Mr Richardson spoke about yesterday. There are still people who do not have a telephone. In these days of wonderful communications discoveries and innovations that we are so proud of and that we are marketing worldwide, there are people in our community who cannot pick up a phone.

On 23 March 1989, the department engaged ...

Mr Bailey: Who is responsible for power and water?

Mr COULTER: Do you want to hear the answer or not, china?

On 23 March 1989, the department engaged Amos, Aked and Swift Pty Ltd to develop a strategy for the Territory government to use in persuading Telecom to provide interim satellite telecommunication to 13 remote Aboriginal Territory communities until the communities are served by the Digital Radio Concentrator System. The AAS Report concluded that the Territory government could take legal action against Telecom for breaching section 11 of the Telecommunications Act 1975 and section 27 of the Telecommunications Corporation Act 1989. Telecom has indicated that it will provide these services through DRCS technology but, because of the time delay in providing the service, Telecom can be adjudged as failing to implement its plan. Instead, Telecom has offered specific communities ...

Mr Bell: What did the court say?

Mr COULTER: I will get to that. I will leave nothing out.

Telecom has offered specific communities telecommunication services via its commercial ITERRA satellite services. ITERRA services can be provided within 4 weeks of an order being placed. ITERRA services are charged for at the full commercial rate which is applicable perhaps to a remote goldmine but certainly not to an Aboriginal community.

Mr Vale: Or a pastoral property?

Mr COULTER: Or a pastoral property.

In fact, Telecom is acknowledging that the DRCS is inadequate to service the Territory's remote area Aboriginal communities and has offered ITERRA services instead, but at a greatly increased cost.

On 3 July 1989, on behalf of the Ngukurr community, which was served by the ITERRA service, the Solicitor for the Northern Territory served court proceedings on Telecom for the recovery of overcharged moneys. Also on 3 July 1989, the Department of Industries and Development, on behalf of 12 remote Aboriginal communities, wrote to Telecom requesting that the communities be served by interim satellite telephone facilities at the applicable remote area rate. Regrettably, on 17 July 1989, Telecom wrote back to the department advising that it would not serve the communities via satellite unless they paid the full commercial price. Authorised by the 12 remote area Aboriginal communities - the communities which the member for MacDonnell named - the department took legal action on 1 August 1989 under section 27 of the act ...

Mr Bailey: Encouraged by you.

Mr COULTER: ... on the communities' behalf to have interim satellite telephone services provided.

That is right, and I will keep fighting for them until they receive it. It is not over yet, and I have not given in yet.

Mr Bailey: You did not appeal though.

Mr COULTER: Did they get you in here simply to annoy me?

The Ngukurr case was heard in the Federal Court from 15 May to 22 May 1990. On Friday 24 August 1990, Justice Burchett of the Federal Court brought down his decision in the Telecom court case. Unfortunately, the judgment went against the Aboriginal communities and the judge declined to order Telecom to provide an interim satellite telephone service. While the judgment is lengthy, the main reason the judge has given for dismissing the action is that the power to order Telecom to provide telephone services under its community service obligation is conferred on the Australian Telecommunications Authority. That is AUSTEL, and I referred to it as the tribunal before. As such, effectively, the judge has abrogated his role in this case and is handing it over to AUSTEL for decision. I understand that some people have indicated that the Territory government ...

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I would ask the Minister for Industries and Development to withdraw the word 'abrogated' in respect of the actions of a Federal Court judge. I believe that it is contrary to standing orders to reflect on the actions of a Federal Court judge in those terms, except by way of a substantive motion.

Mr SPEAKER: There is a point of order under standing order 62. I ask the honourable minister to withdraw that remark.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the word 'abrogated'.

However, he did hand the matter over to AUSTEL for decision. I understand that some people - and it was said here this morning - have indicated that the Territory government may have been better served by going straight to AUSTEL over this matter instead of to the Federal Court. Unfortunately, this is ill-informed scuttlebutt which bears no actual relevance to the course of action taken by the Territory government. AUSTEL was not even established at the time that action was taken over the Ngukurr case. Whilst it had been established formally when the second action was taken, it had no concrete structure at all.

Mr Bell: That is nonsense.

Mr COULTER: All advice from our consultants, the Department of Law and its lawyers from Allen Allen Hemsley indicated - and I appreciate the honourable member has his 2 subjects of law now but there are other people who have been studying law for a while - that legal action under section 27 of the new Telecommunications Act should proceed. On behalf of the Aboriginal communities concerned, the department has written to AUSTEL requesting that it direct Telecom to provide public pay phones to the communities forthwith. It is not over yet. We have excellent legal advice on this. We are concerned that Aboriginal communities and remote parts of the Territory should have that basic telephone service. We will continue to fight for them.

Mr Bailey: Before or after they get power and water?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, unfortunately, when God made this place, he left out a bit of water here and there. I cannot simply truck it in or pipe it in to these people wherever they decide to live. That is a problem, and we have had that debate in this Assembly on many occasions. However, as a result of innovations of which this country can be proud as a world leader in telecommunications, they could have a phone service tomorrow if Telecom

would realise its obligations under the Telecommunications Act 1989 and provide that service. That is all we are asking for.

If we cannot get that service under the present Telecommunications Act, with a 5-vote margin yesterday, what chance will community service obligations have under the new scheme? The federal parliamentary secretary to Minister Beazley could not convince his own Labor Party colleagues that it was a good thing. What chance do we have for community service obligations under the new Telecom regime? I am very concerned. If the 2 occupants of the vacant chairs opposite had cast their votes the other way yesterday, it would have given a margin of 3 votes.

Members: 1 vote.

Mr COULTER: That is right - 1 vote.

Mr Speaker, they are on their way back from Damascus after having sold the Northern Territory remote communities down the drain.

Powers Brewing Company Proposal

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for INDUSTRIES and DEVELOPMENT

On the Clare Martin show this morning, I listened to the minister's description of his highly confidential and tremendously sensitive negotiations with Powers Brewing Company and his attempts to hose down speculation on that issue. Can the minister confirm that perhaps the first public announcement on that issue was made on either Monday 10 September or Tuesday 11 September in the bar of the Vic Hotel where, in the presence of an ABC journalist, the minister shouted at the top of his voice words to this effect: 'I am getting a brewery for Palmerston'? Whilst the minister considers his answer, could I advise him that I have a statutory declaration from a member of the public to that effect.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, a number of journalists have been aware of this project for some time. I respect those journalists and their integrity in holding back the story for as long as they have. Similarly, I respect the Palmerston Town Council, which has been briefed in relation to the project. Some 4 journalists have been aware of the matter, and I reiterate my respect for their integrity. However, I cannot respect a political candidate who, for the sake of a media grab and some press coverage, is prepared to sink such a project.

Mr Smith: You might have sunk it in the Vic Hotel.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, if I did say it in the Vic Hotel, I cannot recall. I respect that ABC journalist. I suspect that it was the same journalist who rang my office yesterday. I know that that journalist ...

Mr Ede: How many others were there?

Mr COULTER: At least 4 journalists are aware of this project. I respect the integrity of those journalists, but I cannot respect a political candidate who issues a press release during negotiations at the risk of jeopardising the project. He has jeopardised the project. Let us be perfectly clear about who released the information in the public arena. It was the ALP candidate for Palmerston. When he rang Powers Brewing Company yesterday, he was told that he was not to release the information under any circumstances.

Mr Smith: Were you told by Powers Brewing Company not to release the information under any circumstances, particularly in the Vic Hotel?

Mr COULTER: He was told not to ...

Mr Smith: Were you told that?

Mr COULTER: ... release it under any circumstances.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would advise honourable members on both sides of the House that question time is being broadcast this morning. I hope that members will maintain some decorum.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the ALP candidate for Palmerston was asked not to release any information. What did he do? He contacted the federal Minister for Small Business and Customs. He arranged a forum and he rang

certain journalists and television media representatives to ensure that he would receive coverage. Fortunately, many of them did not turn up and did not cover his announcement.

Mr Smith: At least it was not made in the Vic Hotel.

Mr COULTER: It just demonstrates the security of the Vic Hotel - things at the Vic Hotel that do not get into the press. It was not until Mr Draffin stood up in his small business forum and spoke about the matter that it became public. It was none other than Mr Draffin ...

Mr Smith: Where did you think he got it from?

Mr COULTER: Where did he get it?

Mr Smith: From your office, in the end.

Mr COULTER: Mr Draffin obtained it from my office, did he? That is not correct, Mr Speaker. We have not spoken to Mr Draffin. The Leader of the Opposition is wrong in saying that. He is wrong.

The fact is that this project is now in jeopardy as a result of the irresponsibility of the ALP candidate for Palmerston in making it public. Thank goodness some of the journalists did not turn up there and it was only the ABC which ran this story. Some of those journalists knew that it was not to be mentioned. This project is now at risk. Many journalists were aware of this project, not through my source but through many sources. I pay tribute to those journalists who were aware of this project. I pay tribute also to the Palmerston Town Council, which had an in-camera session but did not leak this project. However, I am disgusted by the candidate for Palmerston who was told by the corporation that he would put the project in jeopardy if he made a public announcement.

Mr Smith: Were you told that before you said it in the Vic Hotel?

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, the announcement by me in the Vic Hotel was known to possibly 4 journalists, but I respect their honour and the privilege under which they held that information. They have held that information now for some 3 weeks. Full marks go to the media and those journalists for their integrity in holding that story. I congratulate them for it.

I congratulate the Palmerston Town Council too for holding confidential its in-camera session. It has been involved in these negotiations so far. I hope that I can get this project back for the sake of the Territory. I have worked on this project now for over 12 months. If I had wanted to make an announcement on it, I could have made it at any time, but I chose not to. I operated under the confidence and the security that I had with those journalists that were aware of the project, and I thank them very much for their integrity. However, I cannot and will not forgive the ALP candidate for making such a public statement as he did. All that he has done is jeopardise this project. Let us be under no misapprehension about who has blown this project. It was the ALP candidate for Palmerston.

Fuel Cost Increases

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT AND WORKS

Yesterday, there was some discussion about the horrendous effects that recent fuel price increases are having on the Northern Territory economy and we heard the Minister for Industries and Development put forward his point of view on that issue. It might be appropriate if the Minister for Transport and Works could advise the House of his perspective on how the recent fuel costs will affect freight charges on goods coming into the Northern Territory.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The member for Jingili has not asked the Minister for Transport and Works a question. He has simply made a statement and expressed an opinion.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Minister for Transport and Works.

Mr Leo: What was the question?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I understand the question completely and it is a little disappointing that members of the opposition do not. Of course, the member for MacDonnell is concerned that I might spend 10 minutes on telling this House and the people of the Northern Territory about the horrific impact that fuel prices and road freight charges that are hanging over our heads, might have on them. If he, his leader or his deputy leader - who at least went to the trouble of getting some appraisal of road registration costs under the ISC Report - had spent 10 or 15 minutes to deliver their message to the federal government, a message that I can tell them was delivered effectively by the South Australian and the Western Australian Labor ministers, then perhaps Territorians would not have so much to fear.

Not only are we looking at horrific increases in our freight costs, but we are dependent almost totally on road freight. As honourable members know only too well, 90% of our incoming freight is delivered by road. Substantial portions of our outgoing freight to the states, our primary produce, cattle and horticulture goods, are transported by road. Those products are very sensitive to the small variations that can occur from time to time in road freight costs, not to mention how sensitive they are to the horrific costs that they are facing now. Based on petrol price increases to date, the industry is talking already of 10% increases about to hit people on their freight. That 10% is bad enough alone but, when sales tax of 20% on average is added to it, they are talking about an increase of 12% at the shop's front door.

Not only are we talking about a petrol price hike that, in my view, is almost totally unnecessary, but we are linked to this artificial international parity. We should be talking about releasing ourselves from that for domestically-consumed fuels. There is no reason why we should not. In the meantime, the Chief Minister has suggested that the federal government ought to reintroduce fuel equalisation schemes, and there is no reason why it should not. It is making millions of dollars additional profit every day of the year, and that will escalate dramatically.

We did not really have a debate. We had a pooh-poohing of the concerns I had about the Inter-States Commission's Report, a report based totally on

the federal Department of Transport and Communication's recommendations to it, that the federal government should hike up road train registration fees by some \$70 000 per annum. It has generously considered now that \$42 000 per annum is good enough for Territorians to suffer. Thank goodness, that was not good enough for the Western Australian minister. We were able to convince most delegates at the Hobart conference recently that it was a problem and that the basic principles were wrong. Why should one sector of the road-user industry carry the total costs for construction of our road systems, particularly with a flow of dollars across the borders to the eastern coast?

These are serious matters, and an additional \$40 000 per year for registration of road trains is unacceptable. In itself, that will lead to a significant increase in freight costs of probably another 10% or so. The 9.4¢ in fuel tax will be additional. Certainly, the federal government will take from the states the right to raise their own fuel tax and, in most cases, those states have used their fuel tax to improve their road systems. Added to the now 24¢ federal tax that is imposed on Territorians at the bowser, when all these costs are totalled, they will lead to an increase of 20% or more in freight costs to the Territory, and that is not acceptable at all.

During the last sittings, all I asked for was a little support from the members on the opposition benches. But no, in their centralist government approach, hand in hand with their colleagues of the same political persuasion, they will simply go along with what these people interstate say, and they will go willingly.

Mr Ede: Come off it!

Mr FINCH: At least your colleagues interstate have the guts to stand up for themselves and their constituents.

Mr Ede: You must have had your ears stapled and your eyes glued shut.

Mr FINCH: It is their new-found friendship with Canberra. They are kowtowing again.

The impact of the petrol price situation is bad enough. Petrol price increases will be 10% at least within the next month, according to industry spokesmen, not to mention increases in transport costs, and this other shadow still hangs over our heads. Thank goodness, the basic principles were rejected by ATAC at its last meeting, but the federal minister wants to bring it on again next April. That leaves a few months during which these people opposite can put in a bit of a dig ...

Mr Ede: We will be in government by then.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, Disneyland is what their policy is about, and Disneyland epitomises their belief about their future prospects in government. I find it abysmal, mickey-mouse politics that they should sit there and do nothing about these shadows hanging over the heads of their constituents and all Territorians.

BTEC

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRIES and FISHERIES

I refer to the minister's frequent comments that his government enjoys the support of the pastoral industry for its BTEC program. Can the honourable minister advise this House if the Northern Territory government has ever sought to deny pastoralists the right to freedom of speech on the BTEC issue?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is interesting to note that the Leader of the Opposition is again taking control of BTEC from the opposition's point of view. The last time he tried it, he got his fingers burnt and ditched it suddenly by giving it to the member for Stuart. He is now going to have another go at it.

As the Leader of the Opposition correctly states, the industry is very supportive of the BTEC program. I have indicated a number of times, most recently last week, that this year industry will put \$19m into the BTEC program. If industry had a shadow of doubt in relation to the BTEC program and the way it is conducted in the Northern Territory, its members would withdraw those funds immediately, and I am not talking only about the industry in the Northern Territory. I am talking about the industry nationally, and I am talking about the national scrutiny to which the industry put our BTEC program, and the Cattlemen's Union of Australia making recommendations to the Queensland government that it adopt the processes that are now applied in the Northern Territory in relation to the way we run our BTEC program.

If the BTEC program was such a nasty ogre, when the Queensland Labor government came to power, it would have ditched it, but it has not done so. What has happened instead is that the industry nationally has recommended to the Queensland government that it have a look at how we conduct our program in the Northern Territory and adopt some of the procedures that we use. Of course, the reason for that is that we have been open to total scrutiny from every source and, on every occasion when anyone has any doubt in relation to our BTEC program, I extend invitations to the industry, whether they be the national body or the local body, or to the federal government to examine our program. Our books are open, and that is what has happened. As a result of that scrutiny, we are now being recommended as an example ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I asked a very specific question and I will repeat it in case the honourable member has forgotten it. Can the minister advise this House whether the Northern Territory government has ever sought to deny pastoralists the right of freedom of speech on the BTEC issue?

Mr SPEAKER: I will rule on that point of order. I understand that the Leader of the Opposition's question is straightforward, and I would ask the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries to answer it as concisely as he can.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, it is interesting to note that the Leader of the Opposition is so sensitive in relation to this issue. From the point of view of the industry, neither my department, my office, nor myself has ever sought to hinder anyone from putting forward their comments or views in relation to the BTEC program in the Northern Territory or how it is

conducted. To the contrary, I have put in place a process whereby the opportunity for producers to complain, to support or in any way to comment on the BTEC program has been maximised. The process that I have in place is one whereby every avenue is provided for producers to put their views, whether they be positive or negative. In accordance with the responses that we give them, we change the program to suit the needs of the producers. Producers are very well represented on my BTEC Committee and I can assure the honourable member that there is never any hindrance put in the way of anyone wishing to make any comment in relation to the program in the Northern Territory.

Membership of Darwin Tourist Promotion Association

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for TOURISM

I would like the honourable minister to explain why small Top End tourist operators who set up a completely honest, financially-positive business at their own expense, without any government help, grant or loan, are forced to pay a membership fee to the Darwin Tourist Promotion Association before the Government Tourist Bureau will exhibit their promotional pamphlets and dodgers on its premises? Can the minister tell me if the membership subscription to the Darwin Tourist Promotion Association is still \$356 a year or has it been adjusted for small operators?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this question was brought to my attention some time ago by the member for Koolpinyah. Following the meeting that I had with her, the Darwin Tourist Promotion Association met with a number of those small operators down the track and in her electorate. There is nothing to prevent any tourist organisation forming in the Territory and promoting any area. Following discussions with government, the tourist industry, the bureaus and the commission, a code of ethics was adopted by the Tourist Commission and the bureaus. The means to maintaining those standards is by having some control over who has authority to display brochures on our tourist bureau racks across Australia and across the Territory. As a result of complaints from the industry or from anywhere in Australia, the tourist associations themselves can move to expel their members. They then advise the Northern Territory Tourist Commission and any brochures that are on display belonging to that organisation are then removed.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: What about the honest people?

Mr VALE: There is nothing to stop the honest person approaching the tourist bureaus or the tourist association. If the member for Koolpinyah has an individual operator with whom she has some trouble, I am more than happy to meet with her myself or to have the tourist association or the commission meet with her.

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I refer the minister to his answer to the previous question and his advice that no impediment has ever been put in the way of any pastoralist who wished to comment on any aspect of BTEC. Has the Northern Territory government ever proposed to any pastoralist in the Northern Territory that he or she sign a legal document which sought to remove that person's right of freedom of speech on the BTEC issue?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I reiterate that the processes that have been put in place provide every avenue for aggrieved people, whether they be in the industry or not, to put forward their points of view. People have done this in a variety of ways. They have done it publicly. They have done it through the Ombudsman, through the courts and by means of their legal representatives meeting with representatives of the government. Those negotiations may result in agreements between the legal parties. I am not up to date with what particular agreements might be put in place between a producer and the department through their legal representatives. I would have thought it a matter for the producers if they enter into the type of agreements to which the honourable member alludes.

Mr Ede: Have you ever tried to do it?

Mr Perron: Are you talking about commercial confidentiality?

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, these arrangements are put in place between the department and the producer. If the producer wishes to enter into such an agreement, so be it. The fact is that, in relation to this program, if people feel aggrieved by the way it is being conducted, they have avenues that they can pursue publicly, through legal channels, through the Ombudsman, by means of other processes through the BTEC Committee or through their industry sources. The confidentiality of any agreements between the department and particular producers is a matter for the producers. Offhand, I do not have any knowledge in relation to those agreements. In any case, I am not prepared to divulge the contents of any agreements that have been put in place with individual pastoralists.

#### Alice Springs Flood Mitigation Dam

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

Last Thursday night on the 7.30 Report, it was claimed that the Alice Springs flood mitigation proposal was nothing more than an election gimmick to divide black and white people. Could the minister give us an update on the status of that project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I do not think that it can be put any more simply than the Chief Minister put it in Alice Springs last weekend - the Alice Springs people will have a dam in 1991. I know how committed he is to that, and that will happen.

Mr Lanhupuy interjecting.

Mr COULTER: The member for Arnhem might not live in Alice Springs but some people there are listening. The Northern Territory is rather larger than the electorate of Arnhem and people in Alice Springs are interested in this matter even if the honourable member is not. We talk about arrogance in this parliament. His would be unparalleled by anybody's. This is a very serious problem. It relates to deaths of Aboriginal and European people in the Alice Springs region. I would like the opportunity to explain the situation in full.

Work is continuing on the environmental impact statement and we believe that it will be ready for evaluation by the Conservation Commission towards

the end of this month. We hope that the commission's assessment of that full EIS will be available either later this month or in early to mid-November of this year. I state again that the Webb Report simply will not stack up. Now that we have the complete Webb Report, I will leave it to the scientists and engineers to deal with.

Mr Collins: He is supposed to be an engineer himself.

Mr COULTER: That is right. I will let his peers judge his report.

I conclude, Mr Speaker, with the words of the Chief Minister: Alice Springs will have a flood mitigation dam in 1991.

#### Allegations by Former Council Clerk at Yuendumu

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Recently, Chris Raynal, a former council clerk at Yuendumu, published a book containing severe criticism of Northern Territory government employees. He claimed that Northern Territory government officers systematically deny Aboriginal people their right to self-determination and self-management. Is there any substance to these allegations?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been involved in Aboriginal affairs in the Territory for about 27 years. I know that, from time to time, people move in on Aboriginal communities and take advantage of what they find there. Initially, such people may not intend to rip off Aboriginal communities but often they have an eye for any opportunities which might arise. Their performance is often quite amazing. Unfortunately, such people tend to turn up on a regular basis. They move from one place to another, and it is probably a very good idea to warn Aboriginal communities around the Territory about such people. I have seen so many of them. They rip off one place and move on to the next. It is surprising that nobody checks their backgrounds.

The book referred to by the member for Araluen is called 'Yuendumu: Betrayal of Black Rights'. It is designed to justify the damage which the author caused while working in Yuendumu as the council clerk. In his book, Mr Raynal portrays himself as a man of vision and goodwill determined to uplift Aborigines from a pitiful existence and to show them a new way of life. By way of contrast, he depicts every other white person working at Yuendumu - nurses, teachers, police and Office of Local Government field staff - as part of a racist conspiracy to oppress the community's Aboriginal residents.

As Mr Raynal's story unfolds, the plotters are aided by a part-Aboriginal essential services officer who establishes his own family empire. Some drunken Aboriginal residents become puppets of the conspiracy. After a series of clashes with various members of the community, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, the Yuendumu Council forces the author to leave the community. It is a great plot. Probably it could be made into a movie. According to Mr Raynal's account, the council president privately made it clear to him that the council does not really want to do what it is doing. Mr Raynal claims too that a white conspiracy forces the council to withhold his final pay cheque against the wishes of council members.

I hesitate to condemn the book outright. To do so might give it some credibility. People might race out to buy it, not only for its turgid literary style, but because I have somehow given it some undeserved prominence. Although the book pretends to be an expose of government and white oppression of Aborigines, the author declares that his experience on Aboriginal communities is limited to his brief 14-month stay at Yuendumu during part of 1988 and 1989. An overbearing element in Mr Raynal's account is a vigorous righteousness, which apparently motivated his actions and decisions at Yuendumu. It is quite likely that this part of his character alienated him, albeit unwittingly, from most residents of Yuendumu. Like many visitors to the Territory, he believes that he has the ability to absorb an extensive knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal culture and lifestyle in a very short time.

Mr Raynal admits that, even before his arrival at the community, his knowledge of the needs of the unfortunate Aborigines of Yuendumu was greater than their own. This unshakeable belief in the correctness of his views prompts him to share them with the reader more than generously. Mr Raynal has polished his own image as an idealist committed to the welfare of Yuendumu's Aboriginal residents on almost every page of his book. In doing so, it is perhaps understandable that he omitted significant facts which might have impeded that perception.

Mr Raynal was employed at Yuendumu both personally and corporately. He enjoyed an annual remuneration of more than \$80 000, in addition to a subsidised house, 4-wheel-drive vehicle and utilities. His spouse also received an income after he employed her on the council. His salary package made him the highest paid community council clerk in the Northern Territory. However, as clerk, he failed to record precisely the terms of his employment. Among other calamities for which he fails to take credit, he caused more than \$150 000-worth of damage to the community's power station an hour after deciding that he knew how to run it. Despite his credentials as a highly-qualified accountant, he left behind him a very high level of inadequately documented council debt. Although he left the council in poor financial circumstances, he managed to return himself and his family to Tasmania, at the council's expense - and I hope he stays there.

In the course of the book, Mr Raynal refers to a saying which asserts that people who work on remote Aboriginal communities belong to one of 4 'M' categories: missionary, mercenary, misfit or madman. He goes on to suggest lightheartedly that his own character is drawn from all 4. I would not credit him with missionary status, but I have no doubt at all that he fits very well into the other 3 categories.

Mr Raynal's book might attain some status as a minor classic, at least in Territory legal circles. The incredible list of unsubstantiated allegations he makes against people in the so-called conspiracy he concocted might cause the book to become the subject of a record number of libel suits. The author singled out the then Regional Director of the Office of Local Government for particular criticism. Having known this person for many years, it is my view that she has impeccable credentials for employment in relation to Aboriginal affairs. She acquitted herself in the public service with the utmost integrity.

I understand that the Minister for Education has examined the author's claims about teachers at Yuendumu. Like mine, his investigations refute the author's unsubstantiated assertions. I have no hesitation in naming this man as one of the people who come into the Territory from time to time, rip off Aboriginal communities, cause untold damage, and then claim in the wider

community that they have been hard done by. I have seen so many. I could name one after another over my 27 years of experience in this field. It is shameful that, at times, they are given some credibility. Unfortunately for Mr Raynal, I believe that he has shot himself well and truly in the foot. It is likely that he will find himself the subject of legal action, and I trust that those people who have a case will take that action. I believe that the Yuendumu Council has a strong case against him.

Mr Coulter: What about the Power and Water Authority?

Mr McCARTHY: Yes!

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr EDE (Stuart): Mr Speaker, I move that so much of standing orders be suspended as would prevent my moving the following motion forthwith: that this Assembly censure the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries for deliberately misleading the House by stating, in response to a question, that the government had not sought to restrict the rights of pastoralists to make public comment on BTEC issues, when incontrovertible proof exists that the government has so done.

Motion agreed to.

Mr COULTER (Leader of Government Business): Mr Speaker, I ask that further questions be placed on the Question Paper.

BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

The honourable minister has now had 24 hours in which to get to the bottom of the outrageous attempt to stifle freedom of speech through a legal deed, as was outlined in the House yesterday. Who in the government directed the draft deed to be drawn up in that manner and why was it drawn up in that manner?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it is a pleasure to answer the honourable member's question and to assist him with his diversionary tactics to deflect media attention away from the Leader of the Opposition's communications debacle earlier this week and the problems he faces with the unions, not to mention the opposition's bereft situation in terms of its inability to put forward its own policies and programs in terms of what it offers to the Northern Territory as an alternative government. I am quite happy to answer the honourable member's question, but first I would like to place it in context. I would like honourable members to be aware of the circumstances which existed at the time when the document was drawn up.

The pastoralist concerned, since named in the media, is Mr Dunbar from Nutwood Downs. As honourable members would know, he has a long history of criticising BTEC, my department and others through all arms of the media - on local and national radio and television and through the press. Notwithstanding that, Mr Dunbar has not obtained a great deal of support from the industry, and that is curious when one considers the extent to which he went to put his cause against BTEC to the public. It is interesting to ask why that is the case. The reason is that the pastoral industry generally in the Northern Territory expected that Mr Dunbar, like itself, would proceed with a BTEC program. Most of the pastoralists in the Northern Territory proceeded with their BTEC programs on a voluntary basis. They did that, notwithstanding that it was a difficult program, because they could see that, at the end of the day, there were distinct advantages to a national program to eradicate disease from Australia's cattle herds. They have never indicated any great support for Mr Dunbar because they wanted the Territory to be free of TB and they did not want to be faced with the problem where an island property - Nutwood Downs in this case - would be infected in the middle of a group of clean properties, thus preventing them from gaining TB free status, access to markets elsewhere in Australia and overseas and preventing the program from progressing in an orderly way.

Mr Dunbar made a number of allegations which were investigated by the police. The police report was considered by a prominent QC and those allegations were found to be without foundation. The problems that Mr Dunbar faced are not confined to the Northern Territory. I have here a press item from The Australian of Monday 19 April. It gives details of the problems that a pastoralist in Queensland faced with the BTEC program. In fact, his property was totally destocked and it appears from the item that he faced ruin because of that.

Honourable members opposite should recognise the fact that it is a national program. They should recognise also the fact that a small number of pastoralists face difficulty with the program and a small number oppose it very strongly. They should put that in the context of the present circumstances that we face. If consideration is given to the circumstances that existed at the time when this agreement was drawn up between officers

of the department and its legal representatives and the pastoralist and his legal representatives, given that there was considerable hype in the media against the department, the Cattlemen's Association and the cattle industry in the Northern Territory that had been worked up by Mr Dunbar, it will be appreciated that that would be a very difficult set of circumstances in which to try to put in place an agreement to proceed with the BTEC program on Nutwood Downs.

There was no set procedure. There was no set approach that clauses such as those that the member for Stuart has brought to our attention would be included in all agreements. Dozens of these agreements have been drawn up and they have been put in place through negotiation with the pastoralists concerned, tailored to suit the needs of particular properties and the particular difficulties involved in trying to get pastoralists to proceed with their BTEC programs - and, in this case, extreme difficulties were involved. Notwithstanding those difficulties, the department persevered, and the draft agreement that was tabled in this House yesterday came as a result of that. I emphasise that that was a draft because, as I understand it, Mr Dunbar was not asked to sign that document. That document was prepared following consultation with the Dunbars and their lawyers. The legal representatives of Mr Dunbar then came up with an alternative agreement, which was the agreement that was signed, by us and by them. Through their legal representatives, the Dunbars were a party to the drafting of the agreement. It was put in place, they signed it and the program was adhered to following that time.

One of the disappointing aspects of the criticisms that have come from Mr Dunbar in relation to the BTEC program is that he never gives a shred of evidence in relation to the assistance and the positive sides of the program which he has experienced. I have indicated in this House and elsewhere that, to March last year, Mr Dunbar had benefited to the extent of \$600 000 in BTEC funding. Nothing is ever heard from him about that. It is never mentioned that he has received \$600 000 in low interest BTEC loans in de-stocking compensation.

Mr Smith: He is entitled to it.

Mr REED: The Leader of the Opposition is right. He is entitled to it, just as all other pastoralists are entitled to it. However, because he receives public moneys and industry moneys, he is required to adhere to the requirements of the program. This year, my department is responsible for administering \$19m, and the department has to ensure that those funds are spent responsibly, not under its guidelines but under guidelines laid down by the National BTEC Committee, by cattlemen from all over Australia and representatives of governments all over Australia.

I ask honourable members opposite to bear those facts in mind. I would ask them also to consider that, on the one hand, we had officers with Mr Dunbar's lawyers trying to negotiate an agreement amid enormous press and media opposition to the program, initiated by Mr Dunbar. Those were very difficult circumstances in which to reach an agreement. On the other side, officers of my department had the cattle industry in the Northern Territory saying to them: 'This man must comply with the program. He has been the recipient of enormous amounts of BTEC funding'. The Leader of the Opposition laughs, but we are talking about \$600 000, perhaps more, since this agreement was put in place. The people listening to this on the radio will be aware of the sham that the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Stuart have put up in this case. It is another BTEC beat-up. People

have heard it all before. I have no hesitation in standing up and answering questions in relation to the BTEC program.

That was the situation in which officers found themselves in relation to reaching an agreement with this pastoralist. On the one hand, the pastoralist was being uncooperative - and it would be fair to say that - and, on the other hand, the majority of the members of the industry, bar 2 or 3 other pastoralists in the Northern Territory, were saying that he must not be permitted to impede the program in the Northern Territory. The message from the other pastoralists was: 'We have gone into the program on a voluntary basis' - albeit agreements had been negotiated and put in place with officers through their legal representatives - 'and we will not stand by as an industry and allow 1 person to impede the program, and to threaten our livelihood and our future and the future of the cattle industry in the Northern Territory. He must be made to comply'. That was the message that the department was receiving from the industry.

I ask the member for Stuart, who aspires to become the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries, to look not only at 1 recalcitrant pastoralist - and I believe he could be called that - but rather at the other 300. He should consider the position of the majority of pastoralists. The department is administering \$19m this year in industry funding from cattlemen all over Australia. The member for Stuart sits there and smirks and laughs, but he does not understand the program.

I reiterate that this agreement was put in place by officers of my department, and it was agreed to. The legal representatives of Mr Dunbar participated in that process. The agreement was prepared and signed by the pastoralists and by the department. It is not simply the department's agreement. We have seen the member for Stuart presenting as the Labor tough man who stands ready to ambush the Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries. I am not afraid of cowards who stand in ambush. I am happy to stand in this Chamber and answer questions. I will take any opportunity to do that, just as the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Stuart will take opportunities to score political points. However, I will not take criticism of this kind of the BTEC program merely because there are producers who are difficult to get on with. That is a fact of life. I do not deny for a moment that, if Mr Dunbar or anyone else wants to criticise the program, they can do so. They can criticise myself too, and they have done that. However, there are circumstances involved in negotiating agreements where particular requirements have to be taken into account, and the department has to be able to proceed with the program and ensure that it goes ahead. In cases like this, that can be done only where specific agreements are drawn up.

As far as admonishing someone in the department goes or sacking someone, I have had officers examine and report to me in respect of what happened in this instance. It was an isolated case. Perhaps if it was to be done again, it might not be considered necessary to be so hard in terms of the clauses proposed. I must say that, given the circumstances that I have described in which the officers had to work, I have some sympathy with their plight, particularly given the pressures from Mr Dunbar on one side and from the industry on the other. It was not an easy set of circumstances. I am advised that it has not been applied to any other program. Of course, all this happened more than a year ago. If it was a matter of such concern to the members opposite and to Mr Dunbar, and if he wanted to protect other people in the industry, why didn't he come forward with this matter much sooner?

Mr Ede: It is pretty obvious, isn't it?

Mr REED: Why didn't Mr Dunbar stand up at the time and say: 'I had difficulties in preparing this agreement. Other pastoralists could suffer as I have'? Why wait for a year to protect the industry?

Another important point in relation to this question is that the Department of Law was involved in the preparation of these legal agreements, together with representatives of my department. That, of course, involves the Attorney-General who may also be able to contribute some information in relation to these legal documents.

#### BTEC

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

We have just heard the honourable minister admit that he singled out the Dunbars because they were critics of the BTEC and that an effort was made to shut them up. He said that that that was justified because ...

Mr HATTON: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The honourable member is supposed to be asking a question, not making a speech.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Stuart will ask his question.

Mr EDE: Mr Speaker, I have asked this question before and it has not been answered. Who directed that the draft deed be drawn up? It was either the minister or a senior public servant. Who was it, and on whose authority were they acting when they directed that the draft deed be drawn up? Who authorised this act of blatant revenge?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I ask the honourable member to refer his question to the Attorney-General.

#### Flight Services Operations

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Honourable members will be aware of concerns expressed recently by the general aviation industry in relation to the relocation of facilities at Darwin Airport. Further concerns have now arisen in relation to the closing down, by the Civil Aviation Authority, of flight services operations throughout Australia. What impact will such a closure have on the general aviation industry in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, if one is involved in a mid-air collision, it does not make much difference whether one is in a small aircraft or a large aircraft. I imagine that even Warren Snowdon would not like the proposed changes to CAA air space management. He would have a bit of trouble flying into Tennant Creek in his Falcon jet, mixing it with light aircraft and KPT F28s without those aircraft having the benefit of simple traffic information.

Mr Bell: That is scaremongering, Fred.

Mr FINCH: Much has been made of the member for MacDonnell's flying prowess over the years. I can remember the story about the difficulty he had in starting the engine of a Cessna at Darwin Airport. He forgot to switch on the fuel. However, in spite of his limited experience and knowledge of flying, one would think that, if he had consulted the industry, he would know very well that there is a considerable amount of concern over the changes which are to be implemented early next year.

The Territory is highly dependent on light aircraft for communications to and from remote areas, for tourism and for a broad range of needs. Given that high dependence, increased charges at Darwin Airport levied on general aviation operators by the FAC will have a considerable impact, and Senator Collins has yet to address that matter. There are imminent increases in the price of fuel for aircraft and the operators will have difficulty in getting a return from their customers who, in the main, are people on Aboriginal communities who cannot afford great increases in aviation costs. Following the savage increases that the CAA has already told industry that it is up for in licence renewal fees etc, we now have the federal Labor government's own unique approach to commercialisation which will impact on the safety of Territory citizens and the pilots of the Territory.

The strip at Jabiru experiences a high level of activity in that some 20 000-odd air movements per annum occur there. I would think that the member for MacDonnell has flown to and from Jabiru on occasion and that he would be aware that it is a very busy strip.

Mr Bell: Several times.

Mr FINCH: It is a very busy strip and, on some days, activity there peaks ...

Mr Bell: Try Yulara.

Mr FINCH: I will come to Yulara in a minute.

That activity peaks on some days with almost 200 aircraft landing or taking off from Jabiru, quite apart from the hundreds of aircraft that fly over the strip.

The member for MacDonnell may recall that, as he approaches Jabiru, he is given information on traffic in the area. He will be given details of other aircraft that are approaching the strip, the type of aircraft, their speed and direction and the anticipated time of departure or arrival. The member for MacDonnell may recall that this is the current practice. He may also have had the odd experience where, even given that information, drops of perspiration have formed on his forehead because he has not been sure of the exact whereabouts of another aircraft that he knew to be in the vicinity of his own plane when approaching or departing from a bush airstrip.

Due to the limitations of human sight, it is extremely difficult to detect the small speck on the horizon that represents another aircraft, or against the background of a cloud or of the ground, particularly when such an aircraft is flying at a similar or faster speed than your own. With very fast aircraft, the risk is increased as a result of the need to detect and quickly identify something as another aircraft. Because of the peculiarities of human sight in vast air spaces, that takes time. One needs to be looking in the right place at exactly the right moment to register that first glimpse and it is then necessary to identify the aircraft and

estimate its speed and the direction in which it is moving, and to take preventive action if there is any likelihood of a collision. All that must be done in a very brief period, and it can be very difficult to accomplish on occasions.

If you have not been made aware that other aircraft are in the area, the situation becomes much more dangerous. Even the member for MacDonnell would have to agree on that. It is likely that he has flown in and out of Gove, Groote Eylandt, Tennant Creek or Tindal, where flight information zones have been established around the airports and a precise control mechanism is in place, regardless of who you are or where you are coming from, to ensure separation of aircraft. All of those flight information zones are to be deleted. For the benefit of honourable members, I will table this CAA document which contains the proposal. They will note that, in September 1991, unlike the glorious east coast of Australia, the only controlled space in the Northern Territory will be at Darwin and Tindal where it will be retained because of the military establishment. It will not apply to Yulara, which experiences 20 000-odd air traffic movements a year, and now 737s, F28s, single-engine aircraft and helicopters will all be flying on their own without the benefit of information from outside. See and be seen will be the only rule that will apply. It will be all right for the big aircraft, which may have radar, when they are flying 30 000 ft above the ground but, if they are flying in and out of Jabiru or Gove, it will be a different matter. Gove has a great mix of aircraft flying in and out, as the member for Nhulunbuy would be aware, although that will not be of interest to him for much longer. Elcho Island sees some 9000 air movements each year.

Mr Leo: The level of your comprehension is zero.

Mr FINCH: The member for Nhulunbuy may be prepared to turn his back on the safety of his constituents.

Mr Hatton: Remember the hassle of getting an air traffic controller for Gove?

Mr FINCH: The member for MacDonnell has navigated his way around the Northern Territory with its vast open spaces ...

Mr Hatton: You ought to keep your mouth shut, Danny.

Mr FINCH: ... with its smoke haze during the dry season and its cloud over the wet season, with limited visibility ...

Mr Hatton interjecting.

Mr Leo interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The members for Nhulunbuy and Nightcliff will immediately cease their cross-Chamber chatter.

Mr FINCH: Mr Speaker, this is a serious matter. It relates to the federal government's rather lunatic interpretation of commercialisation and its attempt to save a few dollars by moving 20-odd staff from Darwin. This is in addition to the vast numbers who will suffer as a result of the consolidation program in which staff will be shifted to Adelaide so they can talk on telephones to people who want to file flight plans in the Northern Territory. What will happen to the local knowledge component which is so

important in search and rescue and offshore oil and gas operations? How do those people feel about all these changes?

Mr Bell: Nervous.

Mr FINCH: It will save the destitute Labor government a few thousand dollars and it might mean the loss of a few jobs to the Northern Territory. But, my goodness, what about the potential danger? I believe that even some major commercial operators support the view which I am putting. The new arrangements may be fine for flying on the east coast in fully-controlled areas with complete radar facilities, for flying at 30 000 ft, or for landing at places like Perth or Darwin. However, it is quite a different matter at Gove, Groote Eylandt, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Alice Springs and Yulara. F27s even fly to Jabiru. If one is involved in a mid-air collision, it does not much matter whether one is in a 737 or a single-engine Cessna. The only difference is that in the 737 you will have a bit of company on the way down. That might sound emotional, but the federal Minister for Aviation Support has so far turned his back on every legitimate issue raised on behalf of Territorians. He has not addressed any of these matters to date.

Mr BELL: A point of order, Mr Speaker! The Minister for Transport and Works has been on his feet for 10 minutes delivering a most insubstantial diatribe against the federal government on an issue of vital importance to Territorians. I suggest that the minister introduce a statement about the changes at Darwin Airport and changes to airspace control. This is crazy.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I have been listening to the Minister for Transport and Works with interest and I find that he is answering the question asked by the member for Karama. I will take a very serious view of any further interruption from the member for MacDonnell in the form of an unwarranted point of order.

Mr FINCH: I understand the discomfort of the member for MacDonnell. That discomfort has been shared by Senator Collins in relation to every issue I have raised with him during the last few years, particularly since he became a minister. It demonstrates that not only is he incompetent but that he does not care about the interests of Territorians, his own constituents. He will come out ranting and raving again, and accuse me of trying to grab a headline. That will not change the basic fact that the federal Labor government's commercialisation thrust is occurring with no consideration of community interest. This proposal will only cause further concern to the local industry. Nobody likes increased costs but, even more importantly, nobody who uses aircraft, Territorian or tourist, will appreciate reduced safety levels which will come about merely in order to allow the federal Minister for Aviation Support to save a few dollars. It is up to him to change the direction which developments are taking at present.

BTEC

Mr SMITH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

One can always tell when a government is in trouble. Two questions in 33 minutes is a new record for this Assembly.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will ask his question.

Mr SMITH: We have already heard this morning why the Dunbars suffered this outrageous invasion of their liberties. It was because they dared to criticise BTEC. Because of that, an attempt was made to shut them up. Will the minister provide a categorical assurance that the Dunbars were the only property owners who were confronted with this outrageous draft deed or a draft deed containing similar provisions?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I reiterate that the Dunbars were part and parcel of the preparation of this document. Through their legal representatives, they ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! I asked a specific question about whether pastoralists other than the Dunbars received similar draft agreements. Could the minister please answer the question?

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition did refer to the Dunbars in the early part of his question. There is no point of order, but the minister will answer as precisely as he can.

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, the Dunbars were party to the formulation of the agreement which they signed in the end.

Mr Ede: Wrong.

Mr REED: Yes, as far as I am aware.

Mr Smith: As far as you are aware?

Mr REED: As far as I am aware, this clause has not been used in any agreement since. I will give an assurance that it will not be used again.

Mr Smith: So the Dunbars were singled out, were they?

Mr REED: Mr Speaker, I have explained already to the Leader of the Opposition that these agreements are struck with the pastoralists. They cannot all be the same. No one can go out with an agreement and say that every producer in the Northern Territory has to sign it. It is an indication that the Leader of the Opposition has never had to make a decision in his life. He has no idea how government works. Clearly, agreements had to be negotiated on an individual basis with individual pastoralists, to suit their individual needs, the needs of the department and - and I emphasise this - the expectations of the industry. The industry had a high expectation that the department would deliver the goods in whatever way it could in relation to ensuring that Mr Dunbar and others proceeded with their BTEC agreements. Perhaps they went a bit over the fence on this occasion.

Mr Ede: A bit over the fence!

Mr REED: However, the agreement had to be put in place. It was formulated with the pastoralist or his legal representative. The pastoralist entered into the agreement and has performed.

Mr Ede: Not that one.

Mr REED: Precisely. Not that one - because it was part of the consultative process.

Mr Ede: Oh, come on!

Mr REED: Officers of the Department of Law are as involved in this matter as are officers of my department because they were the legal representatives of my department. I would suggest that the Attorney-General could contribute very positively to this debate from the point of view of officers of the Department of Law formulating these agreements with the legal representatives of the Dunbars.

#### CLP Party Platform

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Is the minister aware of his own party's platform? Members of the government are always throwing this at us. Is he aware that article 5 of his party's philosophy reads as follows: 'The whole basis of Northern Territory Country Liberal Party philosophy is the recognition of the freedom, rights and responsibilities of the individual in an open society'. Can the minister imagine a greater load of hypocrisy than this?

Members: Yes, you!

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Stuart stands up in this House and refers to upholding one's party platform. The Leader of the Opposition appeared on television earlier this week where he upheld ALP party platform. The people listening will remember his shameful exercise on Monday night. He said: 'Communications in Australia are enshrined in the party platform. People in Australia can rest assured that their rights will be protected'.

Some 2 or 3 minutes later in the very same program, the Leader of the Opposition was asked by Dennis Driver: 'What about the party platform with marijuana?' The reply was: 'Well, we are not going to proceed with that, certainly not in our first year. Do not worry about the platform'. The next question was: 'What about the 35-hour week?' The reply: 'I think the 35-hour week has passed its time'. That is not in the platform either, Mr Speaker.

The member for Stuart has the hide to stand up here today and quote sections of party platform to me. It is absolutely incredible that the member for Stuart should have the hypocrisy to say that people should stand by their party's platform. I have no concerns about the CLP party platform. The party platform of the CLP stands firm. In relation to the agreement that was put in place, it had the interests of the industry and the national BTEC program at heart. It was negotiated with the legal representatives of the person concerned. The member for Stuart should be ashamed of himself for standing up here quoting party platform after the disgraceful performance by the Leader of the Opposition. I do not know how many times they have discarded parts of their platform and walked away from them in the last few months. The ALP cannot stand up in here and start supporting party platforms.

#### Grants to Local Governments

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I understand Darwin City Council has been critical of the Northern Territory Grants Commission and the way untied grants are divided between

councils. Is it possible for the government to provide higher funding to the council?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was a little surprised to read comments in last evening's paper that were critical of the way in which the Northern Territory Grants Commission distributes funds to local government in the Northern Territory. It is probably timely to advise honourable members on just how funds for local government are provided to the Northern Territory through FAA grants from the federal government, and then redistributed to local government bodies throughout the Territory. It is done by means of a similar process right across Australia. It is not one that is unique to the Northern Territory. The only way that the Northern Territory is unique is that the Territory government provides additional funding.

Over quite a few years, one of the areas of major concern to the Northern Territory government and to local government has been the fact that the federal government, in distributing moneys for local government, distributes those funds on a per capita basis. Given that the Northern Territory has only about 1% of the Australian population, we receive only 1% of the funds. In fact, it is a very minor sum of money. There is about \$6.5m this year from the federal government for distribution directly to local governments. This is probably one of the most disadvantaged areas of Australia. Given that local government is very new in the Northern Territory and given that there are new and emerging local governments every year, we are expected to distribute those funds, not on a per capita basis as they are provided to us, but on a needs basis.

To do that, we have appointed an independent body comprised of an independent chairman, the Director of the Office of Local Government and representatives of both local and community government associations. That body travels around the Territory, examines the needs and distributes moneys accordingly. Basically, the criteria on which it distributes those moneys have been handed down to us from the federal government. We have sought to alter the criteria at times in order to ensure that all factors are taken into account reasonably. In fact, on occasions, we have signed an agreement.

I do not make the decision on how the funds are distributed. It is done basically on agreement between the federal government and the Territory government. Only last year, the federal government believed in its wisdom that it knew best how the funds should be distributed. I was not prepared to go along with it. In fact, it withheld money from local government for quite a long period. I am not prepared to allow the federal government to impose its will on us willy nilly. We are bound by the criteria laid down by the federal government, and we distribute the funds accordingly.

Local government is fully aware of the Territory government's position on this. We have entered into a joint submission to try to have the federal government change its attitude to the distribution of local government funding. The Commonwealth has now agreed to reconsider its position on the distribution of those grants. Given that, it is surprising that local government is critical of the Territory government in this regard.

We have some 50 very disadvantaged councils in the Northern Territory which pick up about half of the local government funds from the Commonwealth - about \$3m. Another \$3m or so is picked up by the other 6 municipal councils - Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Litchfield and Palmerston. These funds are distributed in accordance with

the Grants Commission agreement that was agreed to by the Commonwealth and the Territory. Those funds are much less than what would be distributed to similar councils in other parts of the country. I know that Darwin is disadvantaged on a per capita basis. However, of the \$3m that go to municipal governments, it picks up about \$1m. The other \$2m is divided between the other 5 municipal councils. However, whilst it is disadvantaged in per capita terms, in real terms it is probably no more disadvantaged than any of the others. Certainly, based on the needs criteria that are laid down, it is not disadvantaged. We try to get that as even as we possibly can.

Because the Northern Territory government knows that the funds provided by the Commonwealth are insufficient to meet the needs of the very disadvantaged communities around the Territory, it adds a further \$11m to the moneys distributed by the Grants Commission. Those moneys go to the really disadvantaged communities. I do not think that we have anything to be ashamed of in the distribution of grants, nor do we have any answers to provide to local government or to the people of the Northern Territory, particularly in Darwin, in this regard. The answers have to come from the Commonwealth which, once again, dictates how much money the Territory receives and how it is distributed.

I know that that is pretty typical of Labor governments. I would like to outline for honourable members and for councillors who may be listening what the opposition is likely to do through its interference with local government. One of the things that we pride ourselves on in the Northern Territory is that we do not interfere with local governments in their genuine desire to provide good services to the people of the Territory. We are the first government to provide general competence powers to local government so that they can do what they want to do without interference from the Northern Territory government. We are proud of that.

At the local government conference held in Darwin recently, I was amazed to hear the opposition's spokesman say that a Labor government would interfere with the way that local governments assess rate charges in the Northern Territory. It would intervene to ensure that local government did not force people out of a particular area by the way it assesses rates. It will require local government to charge a particular rate, on a household-to-household basis that is dependent on the means of the person. I was amazed by the suggestion of that type of interference with what is clearly a matter for local government, not a matter of the Northern Territory government whether it be Labor or CLP. We pride ourselves on the fact that we would not do that.

Certainly, we will not tell local governments that they will employ full-time labour and not contract labour. Nevertheless, local ALP policy states that it will determine whether local government employs contract labour or whether it employs day labour. I think that that is outrageous. If local governments think that Labor would do better for them, I will be very surprised. Labor would also ensure that government employees work a 35-hour week for no less money. Those are the sort of interfering antics planned by the people opposite. Considering that this comment from local government came at this time, I wonder whether it was not driven by 1 or 2 of the Labor Party politicians on the Darwin City Council.

Berrimah Crossroads Reconstruction Work

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

I refer the minister to a project that I have been involved in for some 2 years with departmental staff and local citizens in ensuring that urgently-needed attention be given to drainage and reconstruction requirements at the Berrimah crossroads. Whilst I am encouraged by the inclusion of some \$700 000 in the budget this year for the project, will the minister confirm that the project will commence this year, and give the Assembly some indication as to the scope and duration of the works to be undertaken?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member is correct in acknowledging the works that have been done already in an effort to expedite the movement of traffic at that increasingly busy intersection, particularly the traffic from the Trade Development Zone and that industrial area. I am not sure whether the major upgrading works are even at the design phase yet. There is much to be done by way of traffic monitoring. I am not certain of the exact timing, but I believe that the project is due towards the end of the financial year rather than in the near future. Without any more detailed information from the department, that is about all I can say at the moment. Certainly, we will be trying to meet all of the safety-related obligations as soon as possible.

BTEC

Mr SETTER to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Has the Solicitor for the Northern Territory offered any BTEC contract similar to that offered to the Dunbars to any other pastoralists, and who instructed the inclusion of the confidentiality clause in the draft document that was tabled in this House yesterday?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have been advised that the Solicitor for the Northern Territory has not presented any contracts containing a confidentiality clause in the form that was presented to this House yesterday when a draft copy of an agreement was tabled which included a specific clause preventing a party to it talking to the media about the BTEC program in general. However, the second part of the question is more important. It asked who instructed that the confidentiality clause be included in the draft that was presented to this House yesterday.

Mr Speaker, before I go any further, it is important to realise that what has been claimed in the media and in this House this morning on several occasions is that the Solicitor for the Northern Territory presented a document to the pastoralist for his signature. That claim is patently false, and it was pointed out very clearly yesterday that it was false. In fact, the member for Stuart was censured by the House ...

Mr Ede: Come on! You gagged debate and did not even let me answer.

Mr MANZIE: It is important for us to pause for a minute and consider what we are talking about. We are talking about BTEC. We are talking about tuberculosis- and brucellosis-free cattle in the Territory and in Australia

by 1992. We are talking about a process that involves the Commonwealth, the pastoralists and the Northern Territory government. If that process is not finalised by 1992, that will totally destroy the Territory pastoral industry, not 1 or 2 pastoralists who claim to have been wronged but all the pastoralists and all the people who work for the industry, either directly or indirectly, and all the towns and the small communities that depend on the pastoral industry for their existence. As well as destroying the Territory's pastoral industry, such a failure may affect even the total Australian industry. That is how important BTEC is. Under those circumstances, it is vitally important that that program be completed and I think everyone is aware of that. The Commonwealth is aware of it. The Commonwealth is heavily involved in the campaign and the pastoral industry has demonstrated its commitment to the tune of several millions of dollars that it has put into the program.

Let us come back to this particular set of circumstances. There was a pastoralist who was doing everything he could to prevent this area proceeding to BTEC free status. Pastoralists around him were very concerned, to the extent that they were putting heavy pressure on the government to stress to that pastoralist the need to move to ensure that the Territory obtained free status because it would affect everyone in the industry. That was what was occurring. In order to come to an agreement with that pastoralist, a number of meetings were held, several of which took place on the pastoralist's own property. Present were the pastoralists themselves and an independent pastoralist as an observer. The pastoralists' solicitor and the pastoralists' junior counsel were present as well, and they were in direct contact with senior counsel in Sydney. The Northern Territory government solicitor and an officer from the Department of Primary Industry were also present. Clearly, that was not a scenario in which the government was putting pressure on a pastoralist.

The next part is very important because it destroys totally the accusations that have been made, and I am pretty sure that the member for Stuart knows that the accusations he has made are based on untruth. When discussion was proceeding on the kind of negotiated agreement and contract that would be put together, junior counsel for the pastoralists - their counsel not ours - indicated that they would have no objection to the inclusion of a media confidentiality clause in the contract. That was suggested not by the government but by the pastoralist's own junior counsel, one of 3 legal representatives who were representing him. That is where the instruction came from. After they had sat down and negotiated this, the ...

Members interjecting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Attorney-General will be heard in silence.

Mr MANZIE: After this group of people had negotiated this - a group in which the government was heavily outnumbered both by legal guns and by other people including an independent pastoral observer - the solicitors went away to draw up a document that reflected the tenor of those meetings and, as is normal in these processes, the solicitor for the government sent a draft to the solicitor for the pastoralists, and most people in this House are aware of what a draft document is. It is simply that. It is sent out for people to examine and to suggest amendments if necessary. That was what occurred on this occasion. The draft went to the solicitor for the pastoralist, who sought advice from his eminent counsel. The solicitor for the pastoralist amended the document by deleting certain words ...

Mr Smith interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: The Leader of the Opposition is having a great deal of difficulty in listening, and the reason is that he knows that his spokesman on primary industry has deliberately misled, not only the House but also the whole community, by trying to insinuate that an instruction was given to government lawyers to include something when he knew that that was not true. That is a very serious matter. The Leader of the Opposition really has to talk to the member for Stuart about the way he is doing things because I do not think that the media likes to be gypped any more than anyone in the community likes to be gypped. To mislead people deliberately is a pretty serious matter.

The normal processes were entered into. The draft agreement went out ...

Mr SMITH: A point of order, Mr Speaker! There was a suggestion by the minister that the member for Stuart had deliberately misled people. I would encourage the honourable minister either to withdraw that statement or to bring on a substantive motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order because of the debate yesterday on the amended motion of censure for deliberately misleading the House. That debate took place yesterday and this is the same question.

Mr MANZIE: The solicitor for the government sent the draft. It was amended and changed, and a new draft contract was sent to the Solicitor for the Northern Territory which included, by the way, a confidentiality clause which excluded discussion with the media regarding that contractual arrangement. That was accepted by the government. The government accepted the proposed contract. That is a normal process.

That is the end of the story, but I think it is important to realise that the government does not agree with the requirements in that draft which indicated that no discussion should occur about any aspect of BTEC. We have made that very clear. In fact, the original suggestion was made by junior counsel for the pastoralists, and the Dunbars indicated that they would have no objection to the inclusion of a media confidentiality clause. The suggestions that have been put forward have been shown to be incorrect. Certainly, we do not resile from the fact that there are problems with BTEC and that many people find it a pretty hard row to hoe. The minister has done pretty well and deserves some truthfulness in relation to criticisms of the program.

Mr SPEAKER: I advise the Attorney-General that I have had an opportunity to reread the amended censure motion which was passed by the House yesterday. Within the terms of the motion, I find no reference to the member for Stuart having misled the House. Therefore, I ask the Attorney-General to withdraw his comment.

Mr MANZIE: Mr Speaker, I withdraw the comment.

Documents Relating to Indemnities from Prosecution

Mr TUXWORTH to CHIEF MINISTER

I direct my question to the Chief Minister. If he feels he is unable to answer the question because it involves both his department and the Attorney-General's department, I ask him to refer the question to the Attorney-General. A moment ago, the Attorney-General tabled 2 documents which I assume are the ones that were circulated at the press conference yesterday. My question relates to those 2 documents. Allegedly or reportedly, they are 2 documents that provide some form of indemnity for the prostitute Rhonda. Are these documents relating to indemnity for the prostitute Rhonda the ones that were circulated yesterday, and is the Chief Minister aware that the document signed by Commander Baker is so badly drafted that it is probably of no legal value to the prostitute Rhonda at all? In relation to the second document, could the Chief Minister advise who requested Mr Minahan, the Senior Crown Prosecutor, to write this document, and under what section of what act the document has statutory force?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I will refer the honourable member's question to the Attorney-General because questions of immunity versus indemnity fall more appropriately within his portfolio. I will say that the member for Barkly is trying to be not only an amateur investigator but also an amateur lawyer. He is treading on pretty dangerous ground.

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, I gave very explicit details of the process of immunity and the documentation involved in the personal explanation which I have just made to the House. Obviously, the member for Barkly was not listening, as is usual for him. The honourable member has now to substantiate the unfounded allegations ...

Mr Tuxworth: Just answer the question.

Mr MANZIE: ... that he has made against my integrity. I would refer him to my personal explanation, which made it quite clear. There is a normal common law process under which police and Crown law officers have the ability to make decisions in relation to prosecutions.

Sanderson Primary School

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Is he aware of the situation at Sanderson Primary School, where student numbers have increased to the point at which several classes are sharing a general purpose room, and that it is anticipated that student numbers will increase further next year? If the numbers increase as expected, will the minister give an undertaking to approve an extension to the school to provide further classrooms so that the students and teachers involved are not disadvantaged?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, no formal approach has been made to me nor, I believe, the department, in relation to a requirement for extra classrooms at Sanderson Primary School. My understanding is that it is one of the schools which is close to capacity. It was a design-and-construct school and I understand

that it has a capacity for approximately 360 students. As far as next year is concerned, I believe that numbers at the school will continue to be within that capacity and that the available classrooms are satisfactory.

I understand that some classrooms in the design-and-construct schools were slightly smaller than those in the older schools in Darwin. It may be that some have seen that as being a disadvantage in the smaller schools. The whole issue of school standards is being considered by the government to ensure that the facilities are satisfactory and provide an appropriate environment for students and teachers. In the past, we had the open-classroom concept. In some cases, it worked extremely well but, in other cases, people disagreed with the whole approach. I am quite happy to take on board the concerns of the member for Ludmilla. As I indicated, I am not aware of that particular situation and I have not been approached formally in relation to it. Now that he has raised the matter, I will take it up with the department.

Lancewood and Gutta Percha

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

At recent hearings of the Resource Assessment Commission in Darwin, suggestions were made that the harvesting of lancewood and gutta percha in the Newcastle Waters area posed environmental problems. What were those suggested problems and what is the status of the project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to correct the misinformation about this project that is being circulated in the community. During the May sittings of this Assembly, I announced the issue of a licence for this project. The licence was issued to a Darwin company, Central North Trading Pty Ltd. It is a forestry licence to harvest lancewood and gutta percha from pastoral leases in the Newcastle Waters area. I might say that the Commonwealth government has issued the company with an export licence. To obtain those licences, the company had to satisfy both Territory and federal authorities that the operation would not be ecologically destructive and that it would abide by stringent licensing conditions which are aimed at the protection of the environmental, cultural and heritage values of the area.

For example, under the conditions of the forestry licence, the company must ensure the protection of special types of flora such as bulwaddy that occur in the area, as well as fire protection, protection of areas on the interim list or register of the National Trust, location and construction of roads and tracks to avoid potential soil erosion problems, protection of Aboriginal and heritage sites and the reporting of any such types found during harvesting operations. The operation involves selective harvesting by which individual trees are removed. There will be no clear felling. This is in contrast to a local television report, referring to evidence presented to the Resource Assessment Commission, in which some film was shown of clear felling operations somewhere else in Australia. In the same report, a representative of the Environment Centre was quoted as saying that some 10 500 km would be logged. Other comments about environmental threats said to be posed by the project are also in the realm of fantasy and they seek to take advantage of the public's lack of knowledge about the matter.

Lancewood and gutta percha occur in dense thickets in a band across the middle latitudes of the Territory and Queensland, and by no stretch of the imagination could it be said that they are endangered species.

Nevertheless, the harvesting operation that has been approved involves the most stringent measures to protect the environment. One item of evidence presented to the Resource Assessment Commission by a Mr Richard Whitting from the Environment Centre was a copy of an internal Conservation Commission minute which said that inadequate information was available on the timber resource. That was the case at that time, which was 2 years ago. In the period leading to assessment and approval of the project, a large amount of information was assembled and collated. This includes herbarium and fauna records, field surveys of flora and habitat, the Gulf land system surveys, the initial print-outs of the vegetation map, data on cultural and heritage sites, and special surveys of selected lancewood and gutta percha stands. This information was used to identify issues which needed to be controlled and addressed in the licence conditions, including provision for further monitoring and data collection. One of the conditions was that the company pay for a full-time research officer of the Conservation Commission to monitor the project to ensure that no damage occurred.

The project is in the very early stages of development. Only sample amounts have been harvested as part of the process of proving markets, methodologies for harvesting and environmental monitoring. If it becomes apparent during the process that any environmental threat is possible, then the company will be required, and is prepared, to take the necessary steps to prevent such a situation occurring. The licence conditions provide for environmental protection and for continuing data collection and monitoring of impact as the project gears up. In this way, we can anticipate problems and act before they have any deleterious effect.

This is one project, involving the harvesting of natural resources, that can be truly called ecologically sustainable, and it has been very disappointing to me that organisations, such as the Environment Centre and the Australian Conservation Foundation, have sought to exploit public concern for the environment by promoting totally unjustified criticism of this project. It is particularly deplorable when these organisations choose to ignore the facts presented by the Conservation Commission. I have now arranged for Mr Whitting to visit the operation site to see the project for himself. As well, an invitation has been issued to the ABC to inspect the site and, hopefully, to obtain some realistic film to accompany any of its future reports on the project. That offer has not been taken up as yet. Any other media representatives interested in the project would be welcome to visit, and I will extend the invitation too to members opposite who may be thinking of disputing the evidence of the Conservation Commission's researchers and scientists. The project is environmentally sound, Mr Speaker, and I will always stand behind it.

Mr Bailey: Release the PER, Steve, so that we can read it ourselves.

Mr HATTON: The offer is open to the member for Wanguri or any member of the media or members of the Environment Centre to look at the project themselves and to examine the evidence. It is wide open.

Mr Bailey: Release the PER so we can read what you have based it on.

Mr HATTON: If the member for Wanguri would shut up and listen ...

Mr Bailey: Can we read the PER?

Mr HATTON: ... he would hear what is going on.

Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

My question relates to the explanation made to this House by the Attorney-General today, and I do not want to comment on that statement or to discuss any of the related issues. I have 1 simple question. Is the matter of the Attorney-General's relationship with Officer Woods the subject of the internal investigation by the police which is being supervised by Bob Mulholland QC?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, honourable members are well aware of the 3 particular matters the investigation into which is being supervised by Mr Mulholland. With regard to all of the witnesses who are interviewed during those investigations, the transcripts of interviews are transmitted to Mulholland so that he can be satisfied that all that should be done is being done to pursue all the arms of that investigation to the nth degree. I think that may answer the honourable member's question.

Industries Commission Report

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

If the federal government adopts the recommendations of the Industries Commission Report announced last week, what impact would that be likely to have on the Northern Territory economy?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I thank the member for Jingili for his question. In view of Australia's current economic plight, the question is indeed very timely. Of course, the Industries Commission itself has examined in considerable detail the value of known resources not currently being developed in Australia. In particular, the commission looked at the artificially restrained uranium mining industry and Northern Territory deposits so far undeveloped. It estimated that mineral exports to the value of at least \$4000m a year could occur if uranium mining were put on a strictly commercial basis, and the great bulk of those earnings would come from the Northern Territory.

The 5-volume study commissioned by the federal government, which will go to the federal Treasurer, Mr Keating, strongly recommends that Labor's so-called 3-mines policy be scrapped and that the uranium mining industry be permitted to find its own way in the world without the dubious assistance of politicians professing to know the market and what it will pay for what volume of yellowcake. It is interesting to reflect that the infamous 3-mines policy, without doubt the most ridiculous and illogical policy statement ever issued in Australian politics, was devised by the current ALP National Secretary, Bob Hogg, and Senator Bob Collins when he was leader of the Territory opposition. It is also interesting that both now disown it and discredit it. In fact, Mr Hogg tried to list the subject for discussion at the recent special Labor telecommunications conference, and he wanted Labor's uranium mining policy to be changed at Labor's National Conference next year.

Mr Ede: It is not true.

Mr COULTER: We will talk about what is not true and what you achieved down there if you want to ask me a question about it.

In the meantime, the Labor Party in the Territory wanders around aimlessly without a real policy on the subject. The Leader of the Opposition has had the humiliating experience of serving on a national review committee that has been gazumped by the Prime Minister, ignored by the party and reduced to meaningless status. The political reviews have failed, and they have failed because the Labor Party is hopelessly divided on the issue.

The Industries Commission has come up with a factual study which is devoid of politics and the answer is the obvious and logical one. All the lobby groups had their input and, at the end of the day, the commission found conclusively that the 3-mines policy was a nonsense, and that is something that all Territorians, other than members of the Labor Party opposite, have known for years. The federal government should get out of the mining business. Hopefully, in the Hawke government's new mood of economic realism, that is what will happen. The effect of a large mine like Jabiluka opening in the Northern Territory would have a major stimulating impact on the local economy. It would mean many hundreds of jobs on site and many hundreds more in the supply and service areas.

The Industries Commission found also that the supervisory responsibilities of the Office of the Supervising Scientist should be transferred to the Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy, and that is something that we have been saying for some considerable time. I have been advocating that it go to the Northern Territory University. It has one of the best scientific laboratories in Australia today and we should have Territorians working in it to provide a future for our kids. Duplication means wasted expenditure, and the expanding empire of the Bondi-based Office of the Supervising Scientist has gobbled up large amounts of cash doing the job the Territory Department of Mines and Energy is required to do under legislation. I look forward to the day when valuable scientific work is coordinated in the Northern Territory with the added expertise of the Northern Territory University.

Finally, the Industries Commission discovered that the federal government's decision-making process about competing land use created uncertainty and considerable cost penalties for the community. The particular example quoted by the commission was the on-again off-again Coronation Hill. Who will ever forget the Leader of the Opposition returning, after speaking to Senator Richardson, and saying that Coronation Hill would go ahead? He told us that would happen 2 years ago.

It is not news to Territorians, but now another battler is to try to take it to the federal Cabinet. I have today's paper which was faxed to me: 'Button to push for states' cooperation'. He is a real battler, but he has not been doing too well lately - and nor has Kerin. It is pretty hard to get logic from the federal Cabinet. Just ask the member for Stuart's father-in-law. He had a fair bit of trouble. Senator Button says that the Industries Assistance Commission, or the Industry Commission as it is now known, has indicated that there are penalties and inhibitors in Australia to downstream value-added processing that would not exist in Europe because those countries are so fiercely independent. He intends to raise the matter at the Premiers Conference.

I hope that, when he attends the special Premiers' Conference to talk about duplication, the Chief Minister will have the opportunity to raise the

matter of ATSIIC. The federal government is seeking to avoid duplication, yet it has now created one the biggest duplication monsters in Australia's political history. I hope the Chief Minister will have the chance to support Senator Button because he will not be very successful - and we will read about that in days to come - in his hope to have this raised at the Premiers Conference. Mr Hogg was unable to raise the 3-mines uranium policy at the ALP's special conference on telecommunications. However, let us hope that some logic and common sense will prevail. Billions of dollars of wealth is locked up because of a nonsensical policy that originated in Adelaide or Hobart as an appeasement in the factional fighting within the Labor Party. Let us hope that that policy is thrown out and that the federal government can take its foot off the Northern Territory government's throat and allow Northern Territorians, both Aboriginal and European, to get on with the job of developing the vast resources that this country has. Instead of hearing about \$1800m deficit figures, as we did last week, we could actually produce some wealth for a change.

Attorney-General's Personal Explanation

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

I refer the Attorney-General to a statement he made in his personal explanation this morning: 'I certainly spoke to the police in general terms about whether or not I had given an indemnity to Rhonda, and about my general relationship with Woods and whether he had ever approached me in relation to an indemnity for Rhonda'. We heard that the honourable member had recovered from his memory lapse at yesterday's press conference and that, in fact, that conversation took place on 25 June. Why didn't he think that the issues raised with him by the police on 25 June, over 3 months ago, were of sufficient importance for him to advise the Chief Minister that he had had such a discussion with members of the police force?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I did.

Attorney-General's Personal Explanation

Mr SMITH to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

When did he advise the Chief Minister of that discussion?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, very shortly after the interview. I should reiterate that, in my being questioned as a witness, there was never any suggestion of any wrongdoing or of any impropriety in my role as Attorney-General. It is important for the integrity, not only of the Leader of the Opposition but of everyone, to ensure that before any accusations about myself, my integrity or my role are believed, the member for Barkly be asked to provide concrete evidence that the allegations about me have some truth. If that could be substantiated, possibly the following scenario could follow ...

Mr Smith: When did you tell the Chief Minister?

Mr MANZIE: Very soon afterwards.

Mr Smith: How soon? Days, weeks?

Mr MANZIE: Within the same day.

National and International Awards for Territory Schools

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for EDUCATION

Recently, I read in the NT News a letter from the President of COGSO acknowledging the many successes of Northern Territory school students. In recent times, Territory students have won national awards almost every week. Mr Creswick was joining in congratulating those involved. I understand the Northern Territory School Libraries Association won an international award. Can the minister provide the House with information on these successes?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I was indeed very pleased to note that COGSO was making positive comments in relation to some of the achievements of students in our schools system. I hope that, from time to time, other members of the community and the press will promote those major achievements by our students. The President of COGSO, Richard Creswick, referred specifically to the national competition on managing the Australian economy. Economics students from Casuarina Secondary College travelled south to compete in that competition. All states and territories were involved in the competition and the team from Casuarina won.

Recently, a student from Darwin High School won the Plain English Speaking Award. That was a major achievement, bearing in mind that we are not competing only within our own boundaries. Each state and territory has competitions to select its best student. The winners then compete for a national title. Kylie Thomas won that award, and I wish Kylie well for her future.

The member for Jingili referred to an award gained by the Northern Territory School Libraries Association. I do not think enough publicity was given to this. It won an award for its project which was titled 'Networking in the North Down Under'. The award originated at the 18th Annual Conference of the International Association of School Librarianship. The membership of this organisation is from over 50 countries throughout the world and some 25 associations applied for this award. I am talking about major library services. For example, the library services of North America competed in this competition. The point of the competition was to acknowledge outstanding and innovative work on projects which could serve as models for replication by school libraries.

The School Libraries Association of the Northern Territory was successful in this competition. Its project was called 'Networking in the North Down Under'. Such achievements, whether by Northern Territory students, teachers, associations, departments or groups, need to be acknowledged. We do fare very well in comparison with any other part of Australia and, indeed, the world. One has only to consider the fact that our school library service covers an area of 1 600 000 km to realise what an important role it plays in helping to relieve the isolation of people who live in the bush.

Congratulations are in order for all of the people who have been involved in this exercise, particularly the School Libraries Association of the Northern Territory, and I hope that there will be many such successes. Unfortunately, as I said, such successes do not seem to achieve much

publicity. However, they are major achievements and they need to be acknowledged. I understand that another announcement will be made in the near future. I cannot say anything here, but it relates to a national competition and the students of Tennant Creek Primary School have done extremely well.

All of these achievements indicate very clearly that our system in the Territory is good and that not only our students but our associations and organisations are able to compete well in Australia and in the world arena. These achievements deserve to be acknowledged.

#### Irresponsible Use of S7 Poisons

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

I ask the minister when - not will - he amend the Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act or its regulations to take account of the perceived increasing level of irresponsible use of S7 poisons? These poisons can be used in normal horticultural practices. However, a small minority of users are not using them with care for neighbours who realise that S7 sprays must be used responsibly in horticulture and farming at the appropriate times.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question presupposes a necessity to amend the legislation, which is a matter of some doubt. This matter has been the subject of recent discussions between the Department of Health and Community Services and the Litchfield Shire Council. It is true that some complaints have been made. The honourable member's question referred to 'perceived misuse', and she was quite careful not to say to 'known' misuse. That is the fundamental problem at present. One cannot say that there will never be misuse of any chemical, any more than one can say that there will never be a murder or robbery committed or any law broken. Of course, such things can happen. However, perception is not in itself enough to justify amending a law.

All persons, whether primary producers or pest control operators, who carry out spraying, as occurs with mango trees in the rural area, are bound by the Pesticides Code of Practice issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council. This is included in permits. Of course, this applies only to the schedule 7 substances referred to by the honourable member and to all situations in which a person applies pesticides for fee or reward.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You cannot police the misuse.

Mr HATTON: Obviously, as the honourable member suggests, the department cannot be present for every application. Certainly, it does rely largely on public reporting of problems. Some licences may be issued with limited provisions, as occurred recently in the Litchfield Shire when a licence required its holder to report all intended spraying to a neighbour.

The department is working on some amendments at present. Amendments can occur as a result of the work of the National Health and Research Council or as a result of amendments to the Commonwealth poisons and dangerous drugs legislation. In the current process of formulating amendments, an invitation has been issued to the Litchfield Shire Council to bring forward any matters which it believes should be taken into account in any legislative review.

However, in undertaking this process, we cannot guarantee that there will be no breaches of legislation, although people who are found to have been in breach will incur the necessary penalties. Nor will such legislation eliminate complaints which arise from nuisance smells rather than toxicity, such smells being the cause of many complaints. Neither can legislation successfully overcome neighbourhood feuds in which departmental poisons inspectors are used as weapons in border wars between neighbours. We cannot resolve such issues through legislation.

I can say that, in dealing with this problem, public education programs concerning appropriate use of poisons are vitally important. For the vast majority of people, who really do want to do the right thing, education and training in the appropriate use of chemicals, which are necessary in the horticultural industry, can and should be made available. I might say that I am advised by the minister responsible that the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries is running workshops etc for people on the appropriate use of chemicals as part of that public education process.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: But, unfortunately, the irresponsible people do not go to those workshops.

Mr HATTON: That is exactly the point. The irresponsible people do not go there. Some amendments to the legislation are under way. If the honourable member herself has any specific suggestions on amendments that need to be made, I invite her publicly to make those available and I will ensure that they are considered.

#### Attorney-General's Personal Explanation

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

In the Assembly this morning, the Attorney-General indicated that he had a meeting with police on 25 June and, by interjection, he indicated that he advised the Chief Minister of that meeting on that same day. Yesterday, at a press conference, the Chief Minister indicated that he had no knowledge of any interview of the Attorney-General with the police until last week. Who is telling the truth?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the explanation is this. When I was asked yesterday, at the press conference, I replied that it had come to my attention recently. However, the Attorney-General has informed me, and I accept it totally, that indeed he mentioned to me that he had been interviewed by the police some time ago.

Mr Smith: Did you minute it?

Mr PERRON: No, I did not minute it at all.

Mr Speaker, let me make a point which is very important because the Leader of the Opposition is becoming a little guilty of believing the member for Barkly in this matter. Irrespective of when I was advised that the Attorney-General had had a meeting with police officers, the facts are these. In this country today, thankfully, no person is guilty of any wrongdoing by the mere fact that he has spoken to a police officer or a police investigator. Each year, hundreds of people are spoken to about investigations ...

Mr Smith: It is not too often that they are Cabinet ministers, and first law officers.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I have been interviewed by police officers, though not in regard to these matters. I have been interviewed on a number of occasions about incidents in our community that have possibly involved me as a witness or otherwise. The Leader of the Opposition is drawing a long bow if he thinks that Cabinet members are somehow immune from police investigations. In the atmosphere prevailing at present, it is very important to say that, because a person has been interviewed by police, that does not mean that he is guilty of anything whatsoever. I would hope that our society stays that way. And I would hope that, in many respects, there is a large degree of privacy about these matters, and that people who are interviewed by the police do not have that fact broadcast. I would think that most citizens would appreciate that very fact.

The honourable members opposite have received a very brief description by the Attorney-General of what he was questioned about. The member for Barkly has decided, of course, that there is much more to it than that even though he has no evidence whatsoever. It does not matter when it was brought to my attention that the Attorney-General was interviewed by police because, if the Commissioner of Police believes that there is any implication that would impact on a member of the government, I have a long-standing arrangement with him that such matters will be brought to my attention forthwith for any action that I might care to take as Chief Minister. Of course, that is entirely appropriate, and I am sure that it is a practice that operates elsewhere. However, until such time as there is some evidence - not allegations, but some evidence - that a member has done wrong or is implicated in a crime of some description, then that person ought not to have his status changed as a result of that interview. Honourable members are trying to read a great deal more into this than is the situation.

#### Construction Industry

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

Last week, the Chief Economist of the Commonwealth Bank, Mr Paul McCarthy, predicted a 2- or 3-year Australia-wide downturn in the non-residential construction industry. Could the minister advise whether or not this gloomy outlook for both the residential and the non-residential construction industry applies to the Northern Territory and, if so, to what extent?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, naturally enough, the Northern Territory will suffer its share of this downturn in the construction industry that is being well and truly experienced interstate already. In summary, approximately \$90m-worth of downturn in the Northern Territory is projected for this year. Fortunately, the Northern Territory government's budget is almost on line ball and, as a result of the foresight of the government in terms of the Supreme Court project and the Parliament House project, that figure has been maintained at a reasonable level. Of course, that is not the case for the federal government. In the last 3 years, we have seen a halving in its capital works program from almost \$60m to less than \$30m. Of course, that was up until last year. We have not been able yet to get the 1990-91 cash flow into the Northern Territory from federal capital works programs even at this late stage. Industry needs to know how much cash will be spent on what

projects during this financial year, and it needed to have known it well before now.

The only project on which I have been able to get any idea of cash expenditure this year, and that came from industry itself, was the fitting out of the new office for Warren Snowdon, the federal member for the Northern Territory. \$100 000 will be spent on that little project.

Mr Collins: He could go flying all over Australia for that.

Mr FINCH: In fact, he did fly all over Australia for \$100 000, but that was only 3 months expenditure.

However, whilst that might be good for those people who are working on fitting out that office, it is not much good for the thousands of other Territorians in the construction industry who are being made aware by the Master Builders Association that, whilst it cannot get information on cash expenditure, at least it has been informed that defence spending has slipped, that the 2nd Cavalry facilities have been delayed, and that the significant expenditure on Larrakeyah Barracks will not be undertaken this year. It is an abysmal situation and it will be until Warren Snowdon comes clean on this business.

It is no wonder that the federal government did not print its capital works program this year, because we all know that it is miserable. It is miserable for Territorians. That is not to mention, of course, that the honourable federal member himself is not too shy about having \$100 000 spent on a new office, which is totally unnecessary, so that he can relocate his computer and other devices for the purposes of the Territory Labor Party candidates in the forthcoming election campaign. That is all well and good. He loves the trappings of office, but he turns his back on his responsibility to Territory businesses. Until we get some straight answers from him, Territorians will not know what is in store for them in this forthcoming year.

It was a lie in the Wanguri by-election to refer to \$500m-worth of capital works when only \$30m was spent. They are even telling lies now. Questions were directed to the Sessional Committee for Expenditure in the federal parliament as follows. What are the cost savings of not printing the papers this year? What is the explanation for not expending the moneys allocated in previous years? What cash will be allocated this year? What projects have been deferred or cancelled? The answer is 12 lines which say simply nothing. There will be no state-by-state breakdown. There will be no explanation of this year's federal capital works program.

#### ABC Interview with Chief Minister

Mr EDE to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to an answer he gave in an interview on ABC radio this morning. In response to a question, he said: 'Can I say to you this. I do not know, and I say this in all honesty, I do not know who the politician is who was referred to by the prostitute in the 7.30 Report'.

Mr Perron: Do you know?

Mr EDE: Can the Chief Minister advise this House honestly that, following serious allegations on the 7.30 Report, a member of his government

was implicated in this matter yet he never sought to find out who it was and what his side of the story was?

Mr Hatton: It might have been you.

Mr EDE: No, it is the government.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is really somewhat of a pantomime. If the Leader of the Opposition who, sadly, holds quite a high office in the parliamentary process in the government, is prepared to accept his public duty to have a full police briefing on the matters that are under investigation and that are being supervised by Mr Mulholland, members of the opposition will have the answers to basically all the questions that they are seeking to obtain publicly. He has refused, persistently and absolutely, to accept a briefing. I would really like to hear an explanation from the Leader of the Opposition one of these days as to why he is not prepared to have a briefing. We can all assume that the reason that he does not want to have a police briefing is, firstly, because it will give him the truth and, secondly, it will deprive him of the opportunity to make a song and dance in the parliament.

Mr Smith: Tell us the truth.

Mr PERRON: Mr Speaker, I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that I do not regard myself as an investigator, amateur or otherwise - and amateur is certainly the category into which members opposite fit. I will not respond to allegations made by self-confessed drug addicts and prostitutes or the 7.30 Report which takes some morbid interest in this matter. I leave investigations to the police. I do not know who was the person who was referred to in a conversation and who allegedly was a friend of a friend of somebody else in this amateur hour show that the 7.30 Report put on. As Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, I have better things to do than to pursue such allegations.

Mr Ede: Worry about the propriety of your ministers.

Mr PERRON: Honourable members opposite seem to think that all and any allegations that are made have some substance or a shred of truth. They are running their campaign to obtain publicity on the basis that people have things to hide. Because a drug pusher and prostitute cares to say that someone said something to her allegedly about a member of government, that does not mean that we should all fly into some sort of tizzy and believe any of it. I fail to fathom the preoccupation of members opposite with wasting the time of this House on these very matters. I can inform the Leader of the Opposition that I have no idea who was the supposed member of government referred to. It may well have been myself.

Local Government Staff Qualifications

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

What steps are being taken to improve the qualifications of staff employed by the Northern Territory government who operate in the vital areas of community development and local government?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I would begin by referring to the very good work that is carried out by field officers of the Northern Territory government, particularly in relation to Aboriginal communities. Over the last few years, I have been proud to be associated with the Office of Local Government and the very good field worker staff that we have in that office. The office operates with a fairly limited field staff when compared to organisations such as ATSIC, DEET and the land councils. Those organisations maintain very large field service operations.

We have a fairly lean field worker staff in the Office of Local Government and some other departments carry field workers as well. Quite clearly, our organisation is on top of the job of dealing with remote communities in the Northern Territory. In fact, their efforts are one of the reasons why the Northern Territory government spends such substantial sums on the ground compared to federal agencies. The Office of Local Government spends 90¢ of each dollar of its budget in Aboriginal communities or in communities generally. ATSIC, with its enormous bureaucracies, will not have even the level of funds that DAA had available to put on the ground. Even DAA expended less than 50¢ in the dollar. Probably, because of the enormous bureaucracy, it was closer to 40¢ than 50¢ in the dollar that actually landed on the ground in Aboriginal communities. We are well aware that, notwithstanding the fact that they have run Aboriginal funding into great debt, the land councils do not put any legitimate dollars on the ground in Aboriginal communities. I use the word 'legitimate' advisedly.

Something we see to be absolutely essential in the Northern Territory is that our staff are well trained. In the delivery of services to people in remote communities, it is essential that we ensure that training is available to our field staff. Consequently, we have advertised for, and retained the services of, a Territory-registered company by the name of Concord which, in conjunction with the Northern Territory University, is now designing a course for field workers which I believe will probably prove to be the forerunner of similar courses around the country. The states and federal agencies, like DAA, ATSIC and DEET, have shown some interest in the course. It will provide training for our field staff through the auspices of Concord and the Northern Territory University. It will ensure that the number of young people coming into the field service areas of government departments will have the continuing capacity to deliver.

I would like again to commend the field service area of the Office of Local Government for its efforts in past years, and the Office of Local Government generally for its handling of this situation and on gaining the interest of interstate and Commonwealth agencies in using the facility that we will have in place.

Bagot Community Council Funding

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I refer him to a question he answered in this House last week relating to the reduction in annual funding to the Bagot Community Council. In referring to this, he spoke about the community moving to a more commercial approach in handling its affairs. Firstly, is he aware that a special committee to assist the Bagot community to achieve this aim was set up in 1987? It has met, but it never seems to reach any conclusions. Secondly, will he instruct his departmental staff once again to initiate

assistance to the Bagot community to enable it to decide whether there are steps that can be taken to excise services which are normally Northern Territory government or Darwin City Council responsibilities and, if not, will he adequately compensate them for providing those services?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, in answer to the first part of the question, whilst I may have been told, at some stage, that such a body was established in 1987, I am not aware really that such a body is in existence. However, let me say this. When representatives of the Bagot community came to see me a week or so ago, I assured them of the support of the Office of Local Government in taking up the challenge, and it is a challenge to them, to commercialise their activities in some way. I made it clear also that we would provide support in drawing up a plan for them to achieve that situation.

I am aware of some anomalies among the town camp organisations, not only at Bagot but throughout the Territory, which need to be addressed by municipal councils in those areas. However, there are also some anomalies which I think perhaps over-generously subsidise those communities. There is a clear responsibility on individuals in town camps to take up part of the burden. I am not saying that some are not doing that now. Some are, but some are not. There are some areas where I believe a town camp could be likened to a unit title development and, to my mind, we should be working towards a situation where people in those communities bear their fair share of the burden. Municipal councils must bear their share also and, where it is appropriate, I can guarantee that the government will maintain its commitment.

#### Government Policy on Ministers and Police Investigations

Mr BELL to CHIEF MINISTER

I refer him to his previous answers in respect of the investigation being supervised by Mr Bob Mulholland QC and to the aspect of that investigation that involves the relationship between the Attorney-General and Officer Woods. I would point out that ...

Mr SPEAKER: I ask the honourable member to ask his question.

Mr BELL: ... what I believe and what the Chief Minister believes about that relationship is irrelevant. I remind the Chief Minister that a Premier of New South Wales stood aside in very similar circumstances ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member for MacDonnell to direct his question now to the Chief Minister.

Mr BELL: Is it this government's policy that ministers in the government, who are subject to investigations of this sort, should stand aside?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I know little of the matters relating to the former Premier of New South Wales, but I understand that, in that circumstance, either he was charged or allegations had been made relating directly to him. In this situation, other than what has been said by the member for Barkly under privilege in this House, there has been no suggestion whatsoever of any impropriety at all on the part of the Attorney-General. I repeat that, if

at any time, as a result of any investigations at all, matters come to the attention of the Commissioner of Police that he believes should come to my attention, he will lay them before me forthwith in order that I should make a decision as to whether or not it would be appropriate for a person to continue in office.

With regard to the Attorney-General, I can assure honourable members that there is no information that I am aware of, from any source - and I discount the drivel put forward by the member for Barkly. Interestingly, that honourable member thought the police investigators were fine fellows when they were investigating his former activities as far as travelling allowances and possible credit card fraud etc were concerned. They were fine investigators then and did not need any supervision at all. However, apart from his allegations, none have been made about the Attorney-General. Being interviewed by police in order to assist them in their inquiries does not imply even that the person interviewed is necessarily involved in any way.

Mr Smith: How do you know?

Mr PERRON: If he was involved, I would be told. Right?

Draft Codes of Practice for Animal Husbandry

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Is the minister aware that the second draft of the draft model Codes of Practice for Animals has been issued recently by the subcommittee of the State and Territory Agricultural Council? The subcommittee deals with animal health. To my knowledge, drafts have been issued covering pigs, poultry, deer, goats, transport of animals and saleyard practices. I know the Northern Territory government has representatives on this committee from the Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries and, whilst in no way querying their professional qualifications, nevertheless I believe that there is a serious lack of consultation with the public on the 2 draft codes that I am concerned with - namely, poultry and goats. This lack of consultation amounts to a certain untenable arrogance which cannot be tolerated. If a sensible, community-oriented ...

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member for Koolpinyah is testing the patience of the Chair. I ask her to put her question immediately.

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH: When will the minister ensure that there is input to these draft model Codes of Practices from members of the community concerned with those particular animals and animal practices in the Northern Territory?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the honourable member is correct. Draft Codes of Practice are being prepared. I understand that they are available and that there is consultation. If the honourable member is not satisfied with that consultation, I will ensure that the consultative process is broadened and that she and other members of the industry are involved. I understood that officers of my department had been in touch with the industry in relation to the various matters that she mentioned - pigs, poultry, cattle, sheep etc. Now that this has been drawn to my attention, particularly as it relates to the subject of goats and poultry, I will ensure that she has an opportunity to provide whatever comments she wishes.

Work Health Act

Mr SMITH to CHIEF MINISTER

Following public concern about the operations of the Work Health Act, the minister responsible has agreed to review the operations of the act. The Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act is in a similarly bad state in terms of benefits payable to people injured in motor vehicle accidents. Will the Chief Minister undertake to order a review of benefit levels under the MACA legislation?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I can take on board the honourable member's suggestion. I appreciate that there are some similarities between the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act and the Work Health Act in terms of benefits payable. In fact, logically, some of the benefits have been tied together reasonably closely. However, they are not identical.

I would like to make a particular point because the opposition seems to be taking only one side in the debate about benefits to citizens who are injured in accidents, be they at work or in motor vehicles. I guess that the bottom line is that you get what you pay for. It is quite clear that a government can set the benefits at any level at all and that the corresponding premiums will flow from those levels. In the Northern Territory, we have abolished common law actions under the Motor Accidents (Compensation) Act and the Work Health Act. That has been a very significant step forward, although I would not go so far as to say that it has been copied by the states. In fact, some states had limited common law application in their motor accident schemes even before we abolished common law completely. However, the appalling backlog of claims, and the size of claims which are being awarded under the common law system across Australia, has caused such concern and such an enormous debt level for future premium payers that governments have looked increasingly towards limiting the cost of these workplace and motor accident claims. In the Northern Territory, in abolishing the common law, we have made it a no-fault scheme. In my view, those 2 principles are tied together.

It must be remembered that many people benefit under the Motor Accident Compensation Scheme who would not benefit under a common law scheme because of the no-fault principle. Many, perhaps even most, of the road accidents in the Northern Territory are single vehicle accidents. Under the common law fault scheme, the injured persons, particularly the drivers, had no claim to any benefits at all. The driver did not receive any medical benefits, let alone any weekly benefits. Victims of hit-and-run accidents also missed out entirely. Under the MACA scheme, if you can demonstrate that you were injured by a motor vehicle, even though that motor vehicle may never be identified, you will be covered by the full benefits under the scheme. Under the old scheme, unless you could find somebody to lay charges of negligence against, you went straight on to the Australian social security system and received whatever payments were due to people who could not work. Your hospital bills were picked up by the welfare system as well. In considering the benefits that are payable to people under these schemes, particularly the Motor Accident Compensation Scheme, I urge members to take a balanced view and to bear in mind that there are very significant advantages under our MACA scheme which would not apply if we reintroduced common law and dropped the no-fault scheme.

Alice Springs Hospital Services

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for HEALTH and COMMUNITY SERVICES

In the minister's budget statement in the Assembly last week, he referred to improvements in the delivery of services at the Alice Springs Hospital. Can he give more details of progress made in this regard?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am happy to provide more details in respect of this. It is true that some significant changes have been introduced to the delivery of services. I should point out that these follow from recommendations arising from a major review of the management of the Alice Springs Hospital. That review began in September last year and was initiated as part of the Department of Health and Community Services' normal process of regular review of service delivery areas.

The purpose of the review was to assess the organisational structure at the hospital, with particular reference to the senior staff structure. Partly as a result of this review, the hospital gained 10 new jobs in 1990-91, including a chief executive officer position, a nurse clinical instructor, an equipment officer to free up more nursing staff hours, a staff counsellor, an operations manager and 5 Aboriginal health worker positions. The liaison mechanisms between the hospital and the community have been improved considerably. In September 1989, a liaison nurse was appointed. In November 1989, a social welfare officer was appointed, with emphasis on child protection. In November 1989, a community liaison team was formed, comprising 3 social welfare staff, the community liaison nurse, the paediatric liaison nurse, 2 Aboriginal staff and the hospital's Aboriginal health workers in mental health and pediatrics.

In February 1990, new proposals for substantial increases in staffing of Aboriginal health workers were introduced to enhance the cultural relevance and continuity of care elements of the hospital's services. In April 1990, a senior health worker was transferred from Rural Health to the hospital to provide clinical access, communications and liaison services. In September 1990, 5 new Aboriginal health worker positions were provided, as was mentioned in the budget debate. In addition, revised staff orientation programs, a series of on-campus seminars surrounding Aboriginal culture, and an approach to the Institute for Aboriginal Development for assistance are examples of initiatives taken to enhance the hospital's staff awareness and understanding of Aboriginal culture.

The department is working also to improve its relationship with the independent health services in the Alice Springs and Barkly Region. This process of consultation will continue, and I am sure that positive results will flow from it. That is in addition to a range of other surveys that have been and are being conducted in respect of the hospital to address a number of issues. During the course of this year, a major nurses' review has been undertaken at Alice Springs Hospital. Results are expected very shortly from some preliminary information on that review, which was conducted in conjunction with the Nurses Federation. I authorised 5 additional positions to alleviate some of the pressures that the nurses are under in the hospital. I must say that the hospital efficiency review at Alice Springs showed an exceptionally good result for the performance of our staff at the Alice Springs Hospital, and they should all be congratulated for the work that they are doing, often under very trying circumstances.

In addition, a medical officer's review is under way at the hospital and we have now completed a very substantial review of the hospital's physical assets and layout. The latter has been included in a submission to Cabinet concerning the staged upgrading of the entire hospital campus at Alice Springs. That project is important, and I am very confident that it will gain the support of government over the next 3 years and will improve a range of services, including disability services, mental health services, drug and alcohol treatment programs as well as in-hospital programs, pathology, MEB and the outpatients area. All areas have been fully reviewed, including the staff quarters. The planned upgrading of the entire campus will bring the hospital up to date. A similar process is occurring in respect of the planned upgrading of the Royal Darwin Hospital. Of course, this year we have announced the final ward upgrading at the Katherine Hospital.

This is a part of an ongoing program of review and updating of physical facilities, backed up by review of the staffing services and training and support for staff throughout the Department of Health and Community Services. I am sure that honourable members will find that these programs will not only maintain our excellent health services in the Territory but will focus them more appropriately, particularly in places like Alice Springs where the emphasis on Aboriginal health issues means that the cultural appropriateness of service delivery is very important. The review has included rural services and hospital services with involvement from the Central Australian Rural Practitioners Association, CARPA. The aim is to ensure that the hospital and rural health services work together as effectively as possible. I am sure that all honourable members and people in the community will be quite pleased with the results of all this work.

Undertaking by Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries

Mr EDE to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I remind the honourable minister of a statement he made at his press conference last Wednesday following revelations of an attempt to stifle a certain pastoralist's freedom of speech. He stated that he would have the matter investigated and that it might lead to a reprimand. Leaving aside the question of ministerial responsibility for the moment ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will ask his question.

Mr EDE: Has the minister instigated an investigation? If so, is the investigation complete and has any action been taken as a result?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that the honourable member repeated precisely what I said. My recollection is that I was asked what action might occur, and I think that there was a suggestion of a sacking or something along those lines. I said that we would look at what had happened and determine what action might be appropriate. As far as that process is concerned, I have asked the department for a full report. I have some information about what has transpired although the investigation has not yet been completed fully. It seems to me that perhaps there has been no particular breach. It was indicated that there had been no repetition of the actions which occurred in this case and I have instructed the department not to repeat them in future negotiations concerning such arrangements.

I would make it clear that the confidentiality clause does feature in other contracts. I will read from this document, which is from the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service. I will quote the clause in Australian Construction Services contracts that I understand is still being used: 'The contractor shall not issue any information, publication, document or article for publication in any media which includes details of the work under the contract without prior approval of the principal'.

I indicated that those types of clauses are common in agreements that are struck between different parties. The matter under discussion is no exception. The point is that the issue is of little concern to the pastoral industry. There has not been a murmur from the industry in relation to the matter. That is an indication that the industry which funds the program does not view this matter seriously at all. As I indicated in the House last week, the industry's concern was to have the program put in place and to ensure that the eradication of disease proceeded without hindrance. In this case, I reiterate that it was a point negotiated between the 2 parties. The few words that were included in the draft will not be included again. However, it is a fact that such confidentiality clauses are common in commercial agreements. The industry is quite happy with the way the program is proceeding. All it wants is for the diseases to be eradicated. If there is any action to follow from what I have asked the department to report on, I will advise the Assembly and the honourable member in due course.

#### Assistance for School Leavers

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for LABOUR, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES and LOCAL GOVERNMENT

What help can the government give to young Territorians who will be leaving school and looking for jobs at the end of this year?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the question is timely because we are drawing close to the end of the school year and young people will be considering what their future may be. It is probably appropriate that we let those young people know exactly what is available for them in the Territory. The Territory government believes it must encourage and help young Territorians to seek jobs when they leave school. We seek to keep those young people in the Territory. Where job opportunities exist, they ought to be local because it is important that young people continue to have the support of their families. In the past, some have had to go away from their families - some interstate - to gain employment. The onus has been on the Territory government to create employment much closer to home.

One of the ways that the government has done that is by creating a healthy local economy. We can talk about the hype of a downturn in the economy. I would suggest anyone who is concerned about downturns in economies should look at the states. Do not look at the Northern Territory for an economy in downturn. Look at Victoria, look at Tasmania, which is broke, look at South Australia, which is almost broke, and at Queensland which is going broke. We are all aware of the problems in Western Australia. It too is in a situation that the Northern Territory will not find itself in under a Country Liberal Party government.

The range of programs that we have developed in the Northern Territory has been good in that it has included private industry. We have not promoted a government-led proposal to create employment. We have included

industry at all levels in providing jobs for our young people to avoid their having to go interstate for a career. We want our young people to know that they do not have to live thousands of kilometres from home in order to get advanced technical, professional and other post-school training to succeed in their chosen careers. The Northern Territory government has created a strong TAFE sector and provides a sound university education. Whereas people had to go interstate in the past, now they can study here.

The programs we have instituted help to promote the Northern Territory not only as an attractive place in which to raise a family but also as a place which can offer secure prospects for the up and coming generation of Territorians. A range of programs is providing assistance in the form of pre-vocational training through to tertiary scholarships for 749 Territory school leavers this year. Similar levels of assistance will be available at the end of this year and these programs include the Australian Traineeship System, which is a scheme that is supported by the Northern Territory government in which the public service and private enterprise employers employ trainees in a range of projects. They spend 3 days a week at work and 2 days in formal off-the-job training.

There are also cadetships. The Northern Territory government subsidises the salaries of cadets employed by private enterprise in technical professions, mainly architecture and engineering. Cadetships last for 4 years and encourage the recruitment and training of local staff. The disadvantaged scheme is one of which I am particularly proud. We put it in place only in the last couple of years, and it provides jobs for people who are either physically or mentally disabled. The scheme is coordinated through a local agency that specialises in assessing the skills and abilities of disabled people.

The pre-vocational courses have been operating very successfully in the Territory, though not so successfully interstate. However, the federal government, which has assisted with pre-vocational courses in the past, has ceased funding them and we will have to phase them out. Fortunately, the processes will be picked up in other ways. Pre-trade training strengthens employment prospects for young people who have left school without adequate skills to enter into trades. We provide a 1-year course, and the proposal now is that that training will occur in the final years of high school. Assistance will be provided, but it will be provided within the school system.

Scholarships are available to people in the public and private sector to undertake degree studies at the Northern Territory University. Studies cover 4 disciplines: finance, administration, the arts and science. If appropriate courses are not available in the Territory, the scholarship program will support study at an interstate institution. The Tradeswoman on the Move Program is now under way. That is a program that was initiated in the Territory by my department, and handed over to the Department of Education to administer. There is support from the federal government, but it is a program that cannot operate without the state or territory's support, and we were one of the first to have this program in place.

The group training companies and other employing organisations receive funding to assist their objective of employing apprentices in various industries. Assistance was necessary because of the limited number of companies big enough to afford to recruit and train apprentices full time. Under the scheme, apprentices are indentured to the group training company and are transferred between operating enterprises appropriate to their needs. That has worked extremely successfully in the Northern Territory.

Currently, there are 3 group training companies in the Northern Territory and these are providing ongoing support and training for apprentices in a range of industries.

There are miscellaneous schemes that have been developed to suit individual needs, and those are in some rather way-out occupations perhaps. There is one in saddle making - there was seen to be a need for a limited saddle-making course - and also one for sewing machine mechanics. Mr Speaker, as you would be aware, sewing machines have become very common at the Trade Development Zone and there is a need to provide mechanics to attend to the maintenance of those machines. We have been able to provide courses in that area.

A similar range of courses to those will be available next year, and I think that young Territorians can be assured that they will not have to travel interstate to obtain training for their chosen professions next year, unless it is something that is fairly unusual and something that we cannot provide here as a result of lack of numbers. The range is very broad now and the possibilities are there for anyone who really wants to be trained in a trade for the future of the Territory.

I commend those private sector organisations which have taken part in the training schemes that we have in place. In fact, the group training companies are now taking over much of what the government has been doing in the past, and are providing input from their own resources which was not available to such a degree in past years. I commend them for their efforts, and they can be guaranteed of continuing government support.

#### Alice Springs Power Station Industrial Dispute

Mr COLLINS to MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY

My question relates to the industrial dispute at the Alice Springs power station. The workers at the Alice Springs power station have been very loyal over the years, and are non-union oriented. Is it true that, across the board, the workers at the Alice Springs power station are 2 levels on the pay scale below their counterparts at Channel Island?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, this is a timely question because I understand that a stop-work meeting is being held at this moment. I believe it was due to commence at 10.30. The facts are that a new award structure was established at Channel Island for multi-skilling when the power station went on gas. A deal was struck and, in fact, the Channel Island power station people have been receiving an additional allowance because of that multi-skilling award which was struck. At the Ron Goodwin Power Station, multi-skilling does not exist.

Mr Collins interjecting.

Mr COULTER: They are not driving the crane there at the moment. I do not know where the honourable member gets his information in terms of their being very loyal people and anti-unionist.

Mr Collins: Over the years, when Stokes Hill was ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Sadadeen will allow the minister to answer the question.

Mr COULTER: Mr Speaker, I have provided the member for Sadadeen with a briefing on this matter. Perhaps I can read it for the benefit of all members. I understand that it is now business as usual in Tennant Creek. They have lifted the bans at Tennant Creek. That would not be of much concern to the member for Barkly because he is not standing in that electorate. He intends to stand in Goyder. The only reason he is going to Goyder ...

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister for Mines and Energy will answer the question asked by the member for Sadadeen, otherwise I will ask him to resume his seat.

Mr COULTER: Yes, Mr Speaker.

The maintenance workers at the Ron Goodwin Power Station have taken industrial action since last Thursday week over claims for higher payment. This industrial action started with a 2-day strike and, since a return to work, it includes work bans. The workers are seeking wage parity with Channel Island Power Station workers. When the Channel Island station was commissioned, workplace agreements were established with the unions to man the station with a more broadly-skilled and a flexible work force. These arrangements are the very essence of what award restructuring is about and the Power and Water Authority has negotiated comprehensive agreements with unions to achieve these benefits across its work force.

The Ron Goodwin Power Station maintenance workers are trying to achieve these benefits through industrial action rather than under the award restructuring process and, unfortunately, they are being supported in this endeavour by some local union officials, despite the existence of industrial agreements to the contrary. The authority has acted urgently to remedy this situation by bringing it before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. Despite the fact that the commission has recommended the lifting of the bans, this recommendation has not been supported by local union officials and the bans remain in place. The current situation is that, if they continue, they may affect power supplies to the Alice Springs community and, if the station is required to run on diesel instead of gas, the escalation in fuel cost will impact on the authority's budget.

It is not the authority's intention to escalate this dispute. As I said, meetings are occurring there today. We replied to the union demands yesterday. We hope that we can obtain a settlement and that the bans will be lifted. We are happy to negotiate with them and to pay them the extra money - about \$20 a week - provided that they become involved in the multi-skilling and broad-banding which has been achieved at the Channel Island Power Station.

Mr Ede: It has been done already.

Mr COULTER: It has not been done, Mr Speaker. As I understand it, they have a painter and a welder, and nobody in the place can do any painting or welding other than that painter or that welder.

Mr Ede: That will come later, when you have award restructuring.

Mr COULTER: No. We have had this brought before the Industrial Relations Commission and Commissioner McKenzie has recommended strongly that they return to work and that they do not have a case.

Mr Ede: No, that is not it.

Mr COULTER: I will provide you with the information. As usual, I think you will find that, when it comes to the facts, you are wrong.

I hope that this matter can be resolved. We are trying very hard. We do not want to give in and simply hand out the money. It has to be arranged under the conditions in the industrial awards which have been struck with the union movement. We will not buckle under any blackmail in this case, especially when the Industrial Relations Commission has said that the bans should be lifted immediately. We are trying to resolve this matter, and I hope that it will be resolved today.

There are some problems. The No 9 turbine in Alice Springs is due for maintenance and an expert from Sweden is here at the moment. It is very expensive to bring experts to Australia to have the gas turbine stripped. I understand that the workers are refusing to work with that person to allow that turbine to have its scheduled maintenance. I do not agree with the member for Sadadeen that these are loyal people and that they have been very loyal over the years. They have put some very stringent demands on the authority.

Mr Ede: They simply want equal work for equal pay.

Mr COULTER: Their demands are outside the recommendations that have been put to us by Commissioner McKenzie. It is as simple as that. If they do equal work and, if they come under the same awards, we will pay them.

#### Mulholland Brief

Mr BELL to ATTORNEY-GENERAL

My question relates to the police investigation supervised by Mr Bob Mulholland QC into matters which were the subject of a 7.30 Report program in April this year, matters which have been the subject of debate in this House and of public comment on a number of occasions by the Attorney-General and the Chief Minister. I refer the honourable Attorney-General to his answer to a question on 28 September, when he was interviewed by Mr Tony Walker of the ABC. The question put to him was: 'Have you ever met Rhonda?' Rhonda, of course, is the pseudonym of the prostitute who is involved in these issues. The Attorney-General's answer was: 'No. To my knowledge, I have never met her and I have no knowledge of any illicit affair occurring'. Can the Attorney-General confirm that he has never met Rhonda and that his answer was truthful?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, that answer was truthful. To my knowledge, I have never met the woman.

#### Illegal Capture of Native Fauna

Mrs PADGHAM-PURICH to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

What is the success rate of Conservation Commission officers who are involved in seeking people who capture fauna illegally in the Northern Territory? If it is necessary to seize fauna, where are the fauna specimens kept until legal proceedings are finalised? What forms of identification are used to distinguish specimens? What is the ultimate destiny of the seized specimens? I understand that the minister has had prior notification of this question.

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I have not received prior notification of the member for Koolpinyah's question, but I will certainly seek to obtain the details which she has requested and to make them available during the course of these sittings.

Proposed Closure of Roper River to Commercial Fishing

Mr SETTER to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

I understand there has been a recent proposal to close the Roper River to commercial fishing. What is the current state of play in relation to that proposal?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, it was intended that the Roper River be closed to commercial fishing at the beginning of this year. However, that did not occur because of subsequent legal action. A decision has now been taken to seek public submissions in relation to the future of commercial fishing in the Roper River and whether it should or should not continue. That will be done by means of a call for submissions from commercial fishermen, the general public and amateur fishermen. The call will be made in advertisements which will appear soon in the media, and 1 month will be allowed for receipt of submissions. I hope that interested people will take the opportunity to put forward their views on this matter, which has created much interest and has been the subject of considerable attention in recent months.

I will be asking the Barramundi Fishery Advisory Committee to put forward its comments in relation to the matter. In fact, it will be meeting this coming Thursday. At present, the committee is considering the draft plan for the barramundi fishery and, in conjunction with that, I will be asking it to consider the future of the Roper River. I thank the member for Jingili for asking the question. The issue is the subject of much interest. Anyone who seeks to put forward a submission in relation to the matter will have the opportunity to do so in the very near future.

Proposed New Waste Incinerator at Royal Darwin Hospital

Mr BAILEY to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

In this House last week, the minister made some confused comments in relation to the proposed new waste incinerator at Royal Darwin Hospital. In response to a previous question, he said that the specifications for the incinerator met both the New South Wales Pollution Control Guidelines and the anticipated amendments to those guidelines, which are assumed to comprise the forthcoming national scheme. A recent edition of 'Waste Management and the Environment' said specifically that the guidelines recommended that a buffer zone of 500 m should exist between the incinerator and any hospital or sensitive receptor. Can the honourable minister clarify how an incinerator built within the actual hospital building can comply with the 500 m separation guideline? Further, given that one of the purposes of the incinerator is to burn cytotoxic waste, can the minister explain to this Assembly what cytotoxic waste is?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the member for Wanguri might like to take advantage of his remaining time as a member to revisit the officers of the Department of Transport and Works to gain another full technical briefing on this matter. Quite simply, he failed to understand his first briefing. Officers of the department advised me that they had explained the matter to him, and I have no reason to doubt that.

The member for Wanguri has been wrong in all his comments on this matter to date. The consultants re-checked and advised that, in fact, the incinerator did meet the guidelines and the expected amendments to the guidelines in so far as the technical specifications of the equipment itself were concerned. I will repeat for what is probably the third time, for the benefit of the honourable member, that there were questions about operational modes and sequences relating to the equipment in terms of whether they would serve the purposes advocated by the honourable member. In his vain attempts to represent a minority radical environmental group, the member for Wanguri should reflect on his performances in this place during the last 2 years.

Mr Bailey: 1 year.

Mr FINCH: I am sorry. The time has gone so slowly. I recall the abysmal performance of the member for Wanguri in his response to the environmental statement put forward by the Minister for Health and Community Services.

Mr Bailey: You cannot answer the question, Fred. What a load of tripe!

Mr FINCH: His performance on behalf of the Green Independents, who put him into this place, was shocking. He gave a 3-line response to a ministerial statement of which he had 24 hours notice. I suggest that he do his homework a little more carefully this time. I will arrange for yet another briefing, although I think he ought to take along Dennis Bree or someone else from the opposition's staff, who has some intelligence, to hold his hand so that he gets it right this time.

#### Artificial Reefs

Mr FIRMIN to MINISTER for PRIMARY INDUSTRY and FISHERIES

Late in the dry season of 1988, the oil rig tender Marchart 3 was scuttled some 20 nautical miles west-north-west of Darwin to create a new artificial reef near Fenton Patches. Has that project been successful, who benefits from it, and has the minister any plans to create additional artificial reefs in this region?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, of course, the member for Ludmilla is a well-known boating enthusiast and keen fisherman. The sinking of the Marchart 3 on the Fenton Patches in August 1988 has been a very great success. My predecessor in this portfolio, now the Chief Minister, began a program of establishment of artificial reefs for fishing and diving for use by the people of the Northern Territory. It has been a most successful program. Within a couple of weeks of the Marchart 3 being located at Fenton Patches, fish were congregating around it. That has continued to such an extent that the number of boats visiting the area sometimes makes it quite congested. It is

a very popular diving spot and an extremely popular spot for reef fishing. It is attracting fin fish and game fishing is improving greatly.

An FAD, or fish aggregating device, has been located in the area in association with the Marchart 3 and, given the success of the Marchart 3 artificial reef, it is intended to locate another similar reef nearby. In fact, the member for Ludmilla will be pleased to hear that tenders have been called for that project. Because no derelict ships are available at the moment, discarded steel materials will be used. These include an old crane body and jibs, the crane framework and a few pontoons. The materials will be joined together and placed on the ocean floor within a couple of kilometres of the Marchart 3. Further FADs will link the 2 artificial reefs and will provide a trolling alley. There are plans to place further wrecks in the area as the years go by.

This program has received a great deal of support. I am sure that fishermen in the Darwin area and elsewhere will be pleased to hear that the artificial reef at Fenton Patches is to be expanded. Details are available in the Northern Territory Fishing and Boating Guide, which I launched earlier this year. I do not believe that I have had the opportunity to table it before, but I will do so on this occasion. The booklet is the first produced in Australia by a fisheries department and it is one that has been very well received, not only in the Northern Territory but nationally. It has attracted considerable attention to the fishing potential of the Northern Territory and is certainly providing a boost to our tourism industry. The guide provides a good deal of information about the artificial reef program, the fish that can be caught on the reefs, and the other benefits that derive to recreational and game fishermen in the Northern Territory. I am pleased to advise the member for Ludmilla that we are about to proceed with the extension of the Fenton Patches artificial reef and I am sure that he will convey that information to fishermen in his electorate. Mr Speaker, I table this document.

#### Territory Wildlife Park

Mr POOLE to MINISTER for CONSERVATION

Next month, the Territory Wildlife Park will have been operating for 12 months. Can the minister report on the progress of the park's development, and its potential as a major visitor attraction?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, the first anniversary of the opening of the Territory Wildlife Park is this Saturday, and this is an appropriate time to give an update report to this Assembly on the success that the wildlife park is enjoying. The Minister for Mines and Energy has developed a particular affinity with one of our rare and endangered species which is benefiting greatly from the scientific work under way at the wildlife park. I am referring to the bilby which is quite a pretty animal and one which is the subject of a very successful program of management, development and repopulation into the wild. I am pleased to note that my colleague is so keen about conservation matters.

As honourable members are aware, the wildlife park commenced 12 months ago with a week of free visitation to the park and some 27 000 people visited it during that first week. That really introduced local Territorians to this new asset of theirs, because it is very much an asset of the people of the Territory. Since then, we have seen depredations on

the development of that park as a consequence of the Hawke-Keating inspired pilots' dispute of last year. That dispute was pushed very strongly, clearly for the sole purpose of paving the way for deregulation in the interests of their mates in the big airlines, and I must say they did it very successfully. It was done at the cost of some thousands of small businesses in the tourist industry. The wildlife park did suffer during that period. However, as a result of a very excellent promotional campaign being run by the park, we have seen attendance build up steadily during the course of this year. I can advise that visitor reaction has been exceptionally favourable and a total of 79 800 people have visited the park since its opening. Visitation has been increasing steadily. In addition, there has been a seasonal pattern of tourist visitation which resulted in 13 282 people visiting the wildlife park in July this year - the best month since the park began regular operations.

This park has lived up fully to our expectations and, in some months, has exceeded projections. Stage 1 of the park has been completed, with the exception of the aquarium, and the total cost of the development was \$8.7m. With respect to the aquarium, a matter of some interest to everyone who asks a question about the wildlife park, work is proceeding to correct the design faults that were discovered. I can advise that the critical glazing has now arrived. I understand that work is to commence next week on the glazing of the aquarium. The glazing, water filtration, air-conditioning, quarantine area, drainage and landscaping will be proceeding and it is expected that the aquarium will be completed in December of this year. An interesting aspect of that is that the aquarium is located about halfway around the wildlife park and, when the air-conditioning is installed there, visitors will have the opportunity to cool down before proceeding on through the bird walk and other exhibits.

Of equal importance is the fact that design work has been approved for the construction of stage 2 of the park, at a cost of \$4.1m. This additional development will include a birds-of-prey display, a diurnal display, a macropod area, a butterfly house, an education building and a fast food and bistro facility. Design briefs for stage 2 have been completed for the birds-of-prey display, the macropod area and the educational centre, and \$2m has been provided in this year's budget for the construction of the new exhibits and facilities.

The park is steadily building up its displays through the acquisition of birds and through births among the resident animal population. Quite apart from the continually breeding bilbies, 2 very popular youngsters at the wildlife park are the 2 dingo pups which are gaining a great deal of support. Honourable members will remember that we have 2 dingoes in the park who go by the name of Bonnie and Clyde. They have produced pups and have developed into a nice little family at the park. Visitors greatly appreciate the opportunity to see these young pups and their parents in a family group.

Mrs Padgham-Purich: You had better tell Wicking so he can do something on them.

Mr HATTON: I am sure Wicking would love to have a look at the dingo pups at the wildlife park.

Recently, 5 red kangaroos were acquired. These are now in quarantine and will be on display very shortly. We have 5 Rusa deer which were acquired from a deer park in New South Wales, and these will complement the existing feral animal display. Rusa deer were introduced to Australia in

the latter half of last century and are found on a small island near Groote Eylandt.

A commercial operation commenced recently to provide visitors with an attractive alternative way to get to the park. A company called Waterways and Wildlife Tours is operating a 9.7 m catamaran from the Darwin wharf on a tour to the park via the Blackmore River. This is an innovative idea which is very much in line with government's intention that the development of the park should provide opportunities for commercial operators. I wish Waterways and Wildlife Tours every success in its venture. We are still in the early days of park development but, with the enthusiastic response by visitors, we are particularly encouraged. Certainly, it confirms the potential of the concept of this wildlife park.

A 10-year development plan for the park is being prepared on behalf of the Department of Transport and Works and it is expected that that will be completed in the very near future, certainly by next month. This park is creating an interesting and important additional tourist attraction for Darwin. We have Litchfield Park, Kakadu and other facilities, but we have had many calls for man-made displays to hold people in the area for longer periods. Certainly, this wildlife park is the most exciting and successful such venture in the Northern Territory. It adds to the loop tourist route through Batchelor and into Litchfield Park. It provides not only a display for tourists to enjoy, but also an important research and educational unit to further understanding of our wildlife and for developing management techniques for the protection of fauna in the wild. I am quite confident that this wildlife park will develop as a scientific facility as well as a very successful centre for tourism.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member for Karama.

Mr PALMER: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I did not realise that my weight loss program was so effective as to make me almost invisible.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to resume his seat.

#### Hats Program by Schools

Mr COLLINS TO MINISTER for EDUCATION

No doubt the minister is well aware that, as an anti-cancer measure, certain schools in the Territory have a program to encourage the primary children to wear hats and to adopt sensible attitudes towards being in the sun. It has been brought to my attention that some schools are reluctant to adopt the program despite the fact that parents and others believe it to be a very worthwhile project. Will the minister do what he can to encourage principals and school councils to consider the matter most seriously and to take it on board?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, I indicate to the member for Sadadeen that I fully support the efforts of people to have their children wear hats. As the member pointed out, many school councils are supporting that proposal. There is no departmental policy in relation to the uniform wearing of hats. We are unable to enforce the wearing of hats. However, I am sure that most members of this Assembly and of the community would believe that children should wear hats and that, wherever possible, school councils and staff should encourage children to wear hats. In a climate such as ours, we must be very

much aware of the risks that the sun poses for us and that skin cancer is a serious problem. I support moves to have students wear hats. All honourable members should be encouraged to promote the wearing of hats in the schools in their electorates.

#### Victoria Highway Upgrading

Mr PALMER to MINISTER for TRANSPORT and WORKS

During the last federal election campaign, amid much fanfare and beating of chests, it was announced that \$94m would be spent on the upgrading of the Victoria Highway. How much cash has flowed to that project?

ANSWER

Mr Speaker, of the \$17.1m committed by the federal Labor government for this project prior to the last federal election, only \$10m has been allocated to date for this financial year. That is of great concern to us. We have designed and documented the first lots of work to be put out for tender: Scott Creek roadworks at some \$2m, 13 bridge widenings at \$4.5m, and roadworks to be let between now and February at \$5m. Unless we receive some cash commitment for the Victoria Highway, as promised by the ALP, we will not be able to proceed with those works. We will not be able to spend the \$17m if we do not receive commitment for it now.

Despite the protests of Warren Snowdon prior to the last federal election, when he suggested that he received agreement on these works from the federal minister, Bob Brown, at Christmas last year, we still do not have the cash. This federal Labor government will be remembered for this budgetary year as the 'no speaks' Labor government. We have received a very positive commitment from Snowdon, from Brown, from Collins and even from the Territory ALP President, Margaret Gillespie, who jumped on the band wagon when Helen Galton had the audacity to question where the cash was. Margaret Gillespie said that all the cash had been promised. It is typical that we witnessed all the beating of the chest and the trumpeting and, when it comes to the crunch after the election, it has all disappeared. We have \$10m out of \$17.1m. In December of last year, we were promised that 2-lane bitumen seal would be provided as part of a special program to complete the national highway network. That was a \$200m commitment from the federal minister and half of that was to be in the Territory. I do not know where that money has gone. The \$10m that we have to date has come from the highways program.

There is also the \$100m Provincial Cities and Rural Highways Program. Bids for that came in at the end of last month from around Australia. For the \$100m that Bob Brown has to distribute, he has had bids amounting to \$300m or \$400m. How is the Territory to obtain its \$7.1m out of that total package of \$100m for Australia when promises are being made around the country? Yesterday, we heard that he is in trouble in his own electorate of Newcastle. Peter Morris said: 'The pork-barrelling is finished. We are in trouble'. We are not after pork-barrelling here. We want a commitment and a promise to be fulfilled. We have had promises from Warren Snowdon and promises from the ALP president, who now aspires to be a Labor member in the northern suburbs. It is time for them to start answering. How will Warren Snowdon find the \$7.1m that he has promised, not to mention the funds that he is now telling Maggie Hickey that he will find for the diversion of the Barkly Highway? There is a big gap in Labor's credibility. No wonder people become cynical when they see broken promises followed by more broken promises.

ANSWER TO QUESTION  
Immunity from Prosecution

Mr MANZIE (Attorney-General): Mr Speaker, during the adjournment last night, the member for Barkly asked a question relating to immunity. I supplied some information then, but I have further information now.

An immunity or indemnity is a formal document under the hand of the Attorney-General granting a person an indemnity from prosecution for offences which he or she may have committed. Generally, it is given when witnesses in a case will incriminate themselves when giving evidence, and such an immunity or indemnity allows witnesses to give their evidence without the fear that they may later be charged with criminal offences. However, there are others in the prosecution process who can give an undertaking that charges will not be laid. A former Attorney-General for the United Kingdom stated:

True immunities are uncommon because it is now the practice not to go further than to give an undertaking that any confession obtained as a result will not be used against the maker. For example, a person who is involved in a drug plantation may subsequently leave and, on being interviewed by police, make a statement incriminating himself. Generally, if the person is prepared to give evidence against the others involved, the confession obtained will not be used against the person who made it.

The effect of these undertakings by a law officer of the Crown was discussed in *MacDonald v R* 1983. The Privy Council approved the New Zealand Court of Criminal Appeal which said:

It is, in our view, immaterial whether such an undertaking is one which is a matter of law strictly binding on the Crown. We say that because it is quite unthinkable that such an undertaking would not be honoured and, in reality, the importance of such an undertaking in relation to the evidence of an accomplice lies in the practical effect it will have both in protecting that accomplice and in bringing about a state of mind on his part wherein, as far as possible, he is removed from the fear of consequences of giving evidence incriminating himself and knows that he has nothing to gain by giving false evidence.

The Attorney-General's formal role arises only when a specific formal document is required for presentation in court. This has not been required in the matters concerning the prostitute known as Rhonda. After consultation with commissioned police officers, the Senior Crown Prosecutor gave an undertaking that this person would not be charged with any criminal offence which occurred as a result of the instigation of a member of the police force. That was an exercise of prosecutorial discretion, given the peculiar circumstances of how the alleged commission of these offences occurred. To think that this undertaking would not be met is, as quoted above, unthinkable.

In relation to indemnities, honourable members would be fully aware of the unsubstantiated allegations that were made by the member for Barkly in relation to his proposal that, somehow or other, I had some improper arrangement with Officer Woods and that, as a result, I issued an indemnity. You will recall, Mr Speaker, that yesterday I called on the member for Barkly to substantiate those 3 allegations and to produce some

sort of proof. It is 24 hours since I asked that that be done and nothing has occurred. I asked that the honourable member substantiate the allegations or publicly apologise to myself and my family because he cannot substantiate them, or withdraw, or resign. Mr Speaker, 24 hours have passed and the member for Barkly still continues to hide behind the protections of this coward's castle. I ask him to get out of the gutter and be a man. It takes a man to apologise, Mr Speaker, and I would like to see some action in that regard.

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