



NORTHERN TERRITORY
***of* AUSTRALIA**

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Member for Fong Lim

HANSARD EXTRACT

DELIVERING FOR TERRITORIANS

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higher community standard. Territorians want to move freely around their communities, go to the shops and enjoy our parks and public spaces without being confronted by unacceptable alcohol-fuelled antisocial behaviour.

The CLP government's crime focus continues, with legislation targeted at minimum mandatory sentences for cowardly assaults on frontline workers on track to be finalised today. Assaults on police, paramedics, nurses, doctors, teachers, Corrections officers, retail and hospitality workers, bus and taxi drivers and any other NT worker are unacceptable.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, reducing crime, rebuilding the economy, restoring lifestyle—easy to say, but hard to do all of them.

We on this side of the Chamber acknowledge that, but we are genuinely following through on plans to realise those aspirations. They are not motherhood statements or political slogans; they are part of an actionable plan, and we are following through with legislative amendments to deliver that strategy.

My learned colleague, the Treasurer, has already articulated some of the first tranche measures we are employing in the economic space. I draw reference to a couple of those items, noting how significant they are. We have already discussed the home building scheme, which is critical to the Northern Territory's economic rebuild. We are in the middle of a housing crisis nationally, and the Northern Territory is not immune to these pressures.

The key factor is we are seeking to stimulate supply. Economists across the country will agree on little about what to do in dealing with the housing crisis, but they all agree that we must stimulate supply, which is why our grants are targeted at people building new homes.

It is also worth contrasting that when we came out at election time with a plan to stimulate supply, we were immediately followed by the Territory Labor government trying to up the ante on our plan. Has everyone forgotten that part? The difference was that where we were offering \$50,000 to build a new home, the opposition was offering \$60,000. They missed the fundamental point ...

Ms Uibo: Only for Territorians though.

Dr RAHMAN: That is right, Opposition Leader—for Territorians only. You missed the trick on the fact that it is about stimulating population growth. That is what we are doing. The eligibility on our side is for citizens and permanent residents to support population growth because over eight years you have overseen demographic decline; we have no workforce to build any of the houses. We will stimulate the population growth and workforce support.

The home building scheme is of great significance to my constituents at Northcrest in Berrimah. Northcrest is a place filled with potential. It reminds of the place I grew up in—Karama. Young, aspirational families trying to get a leg up and multigenerational families trying to create a space in a community from which to advance have been held back by Territory Labor's failure to support that development, so it does not have the number of houses that it needs to flourish. Instead, it has stagnated; there is no Australian mail service, council service, supermarket provision and no progress on the mere possibility of creating schools. Why is that? Is it because of a failure on the part of the residents? It is a failure on the part of the former government. Its economic policy was negligent and failed to support stimulating housing supply.

We are stimulating housing supply and population growth. We are supporting both in tandem. We know that remote housing is important, but so is urban housing stock which has dwindled under eight years of economic mismanagement.

The Treasurer will speak on our payroll tax initiatives today, the details of which will be elaborated later. I need not speak to the granular detail, but it is important for everyone to understand why we are taking the calculated risk to spend own-source revenue on cutting payroll tax and making ourselves a competitive place to run a business. It is because we are trying to stop businesses foreclosing, giving up, shutting down and leaving as they have been for years as the economic conditions were parlous because of Labor's negligence and mismanagement.

We are incentivising businesses to stick with us, hang in there and reinvest. We are asking you to reinvest in your businesses, staff, capital and plant, and we will stick with you to rebuild the economy along the way. Fong Lim is the industrial hub and engine of Darwin. I represent more active businesses in my electorate

than any other electorate in this House throughout Stuart Park, Winnellie, Berrimah and I hope increasingly through Wishart, East Arm and all the strategic industrial land we have that has not been capitalised upon.

I am urging those businesses in Fong Lim, which I will be spending more time with, to stick with us, reinvest in their businesses and have confidence that this CLP government will back them to restore integrity to the economy. We will ensure their businesses can flourish in a place that has a functioning, viable economy managed by people who are paying attention to the details and not just coasting on ventures of vanity and nonsense major projects that are reminiscent of an episode of *Utopia*.

Tangible achievements have been documented by my government colleagues. These include our delivery on legislative amendments. I am grateful for the contributions from everyone in this House, most recently the preceding contribution from my colleague, the Member for Casuarina.

I will reference what my colleague, the Member for Karama, pointed out because it is a critical thing that was overlooked in the last parliament—the CommSec State of the States reports. We reached the point with the former government being so filled with hubris that it would dismiss CommSec repeatedly and say, ‘It does not apply to us. It does not matter that we are last on seven out of eight metrics consistently over time.’

Will we suddenly come out of that and be first on every metric overnight? Of course we will not. We know that and are facing economic reality. Labor was in denial repeatedly on every economic metric. We were seen to be the most underperforming basket-case jurisdiction. It was not because we lack natural resources, gumption or the right people; it was because of policy failure in the economic space. The former government must take responsibility for that.

Part of what we are achieving in this government is facing economic reality. That is a tangible deliverable. You probably have to read between the lines in our plan to figure it out, but that is what we are doing. We are facing reality, as opposed to pretending there is nothing wrong and saying, ‘Nothing to see here; it is fine.’

Supporting mining, gas, agriculture, tourism and Defence will also require attendant workforce support, population growth and homes to house that population. We must engage with Southeast Asia to leverage our geographic proximity and cultivate better relationships to generate commercially viable investment options.

That is why we have delivered, in a short time, our promise to deliver the new ministries of Trade, Business and Asian Relations and of International Education, Migration and Population. Why did we do that? Because they are signals to the market and to Territorians. Aside from the granular detail, they signal that it is time for courage and that we are committed to being courageous.

In that spirit, I thank the Chief Minister for having the courage to embark on a package of bold reform. I thank her for her ministerial statement. I thank my colleagues for giving weight to her assertions that we are delivering. I look forward to our continued demonstration of courage from this strong, 17-person CLP government with a mandate to reduce crime, rebuild the economy and restore our lifestyle.

Mr PAECH (Gwoja): Madam Speaker, if there was an award equivalent to the Grammy or the Oscar the Member for Fong Lim would win it. The Member for Fong Lim only a few months ago was a member of Territory Labor and was rubbishing every current Cabinet minister for their poor performance as an opposition team.

The Member for Fannie Bay, during the election campaign, told people the opposite of what the CLP’s plan was. She was not telling people at their doors that she would put 10-year-old kids in prison; she said the opposite, as did the Member for Fong Lim.

Let us be clear: if we want to talk about delivering, then maybe every one of the CLP members who want to deliver something should deliver themselves to their cars and get their backsides to the bush where they will see what has been delivered. There were more roads sealed than by any other government in the history of the Northern Territory. There were more houses built in any remote community than in the history of the Northern Territory. That was delivered by us.

When the CLP was last in government, one brand-new house was built in the last two years of their term. It is nothing to be proud of. The only reason we continue to see record investment across the bush is Labor. Labor settled that agreement and got that investment into the remote communities. Labor’s legacy will continue when none of us are left in this place.