

Topic : MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

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Member : Mr STONE

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Mr STONE (Chief Minister): Madam Speaker, I rise to make a statement on zero tolerance policing. I do so in my capacity as head of government because the policy when put into effect will involve an integrated approach across government.

I propose to introduce zero tolerance policing on a formal basis in the Territory. I can reveal that the Commissioner of **Police**, Fire and Emergency Services, Brian Bates APM, and his senior officers have already been trialling elements of the strategy in Darwin, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Katherine with great effect. I say 'elements of the strategy' because, as I indicated at the outset, it does involve an integrated approach across government, and the Commissioner of **Police** has only had the opportunity to deal with those matters relating to policing.

I further advise that I propose a review of **police** powers to ensure that Territory **police** have means to deal with aberrant and antisocial behaviour. I do not propose to recriminalise public drunkenness at this stage, although I leave that option open. I want to make it very clear that government has not ruled out that option. If other strategies do not work we will revisit this particular area.

Rather, I propose to seek a stricter enforcement of the *Summary Offences Act* provisions.

Mr Stirling: You were rolled.

Mr STONE: If I was the member for Nhulunbuy, I would not interject on this. If anyone has been rolled, it is the member for Nhulunbuy who has ended up on the back, back, back bench of the longest-serving opposition in the history of the Commonwealth. The Power of One could not deliver on what he really believed in. I do not seek to demean him in any way. I have a high regard for the member for Nhulunbuy. I know what he really thought and what he really wanted to do. But the troglodytes of the Labor Party have dictated otherwise.

Before the member for Nhulunbuy interjects further, he should think again. Let me say clearly for the record that, if he sees elements of his ideas appearing in a CLP ministerial statement, I congratulate him. No government should close the door on ideas from the other side. Why should it? Isn't it the mark of good government, the mark of a statesman, to be prepared to pick up good ideas from the other side?

Members interjecting.

Mr STONE: It is almost as though they are choking on the notion!

Ms Martin interjecting.

Mr STONE: The member for Fannie Bay interjects. The member for Fannie Bay has contributed absolutely nothing to this debate. At least I am prepared to have a sensible conversation with the member for Nhulunbuy, who has demonstrated through intellectual rigour that he does have some ideas relating to law and order – unlike all of his confederates who sit over there. So, while I will cop his interjections, I certainly will not cop the interjections of some airhead on the front bench who has never put a single proposal on law and order and who has done nothing more than ring the office of the Chief Minister to ask for assistance over drunks. That is the best we have had from her. She is a person who has absolutely no credibility in this Chamber. She has done absolutely nothing to deal with the antisocial behaviour in her own shopping centre and instead runs to me on each and every occasion to solve her problems.

I will move along to place on the public record once and for all the position of the government on zero tolerance policing. I do not propose that we reintroduce the offence of vagrancy, but the existing offence of loitering will be re-examined and strengthened. I do not want members opposite to underestimate what I propose and I hope that I have their support.

Further, the government will look to increase support for night patrols, sobering-up shelters and refuges. There will be a concerted effort to improve support and resources to aid victims of crime. My government will shortly determine its final response to the review of the *Crimes (Victims Assistance) Act* and there will be a complete review of psychiatric and counselling services within our corrections system. We will look at where responsibility should lie for these services.

There will also be a complete review of sentencing across all offences in the Northern Territory. I am particularly concerned about sexual offences and offences committed against older and younger Territorians. These are the most vulnerable people in our community. I want Territorians to know that I intend to prosecute very vigorously those who visit offences against our senior Territorians and Territorians of a tender age.

Finally, I propose a complete reassessment of our needs in the area of correctional services, consistent with the new direction of government. We have the legislative means, save for some amendments ...

Mr Stirling: Absolutely!

Mr STONE: I pick up the interjection from the member for Nhulunbuy because, according to his policy document, no amendments are needed. He is wrong on that score. Quite clearly, he could not interject earlier in the speech that he supported the revamping of loitering and now say that the government does not need to make any amendments. We do.

The CLP government has the resources, manpower and the determination to deal effectively with antisocial behaviour. That includes mandatory sentencing, which I note that members opposite do not support. What we propose is a ...

Mrs Hickey interjecting.

Mr STONE: Did I hear a stutter then or did you blink?

The reality is that the Leader of the Opposition sent the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to the **Police** Association conference yesterday, and he reassured the conference that the opposition – the Labor Party – does not support zero tolerance policing and/or mandatory sentencing. Perhaps, by the time she gets to the dinner tonight, the Leader of the Opposition may be able to clarify her position.

What we propose is a strengthening of an integrated, whole-of-government and community approach to deal with the problem. Antisocial behaviour is not the government's problem alone. It affects the whole community and, if we are to reclaim the streets, then we must have a real partnership between the government and the community.

We need to focus on the underlying problems, not simply allow disruptive groups to move camp every time they are asked to desist from poor behaviour. For example, a blitz in the Port Darwin electorate simply exacerbates the problem in Fannie Bay. Similar attention in Fannie Bay simply shifts the problem to areas like the Water Gardens in Jingili. There are many examples in every urban centre in the Territory.

The best efforts of government and non-government agencies, including churches, **police**, local government, members of parliament from both sides and concerned citizens, have been of only marginal and temporary effect. The problems are and remain the same: drunken, abusive and, at times, dangerous individuals of all colours and shades, who have scant regard for our amenity of life. Be they black, white or brindle, they are individuals locked in the vicious cycle of alcohol abuse and violence.

As a community, we have been largely tolerant. We have tried to understand and to empathise with those who litter our streets, parks and shopping centres with little regard for the impact that they have on those around them. The sad reality is that most of them would not even understand or comprehend their own behaviour. The public drunkenness that leads to verbal abuse, physical assault, criminal damage, theft and, at times, death, has become rather too matter-of-fact and too mundane. In some ways, as a community, we have become desensitised, until it impacts directly upon us. Unfortunately, our visitors and tourists are not so forgiving.

Since becoming Chief Minister in May 1995, I have introduced a number of measures aimed at making our Territory community safer. Such moves have not all been welcomed by some, but I make no apology for assisting them anyway. **Police** resources have been increased substantially. Between the financial years 1995-96 and 1998-99, there has been an increase of \$27m in **police** resources. In that same period, the **police** personnel establishment has been increased from 775 to 861. That number will increase to 880 in 1999-2000.

I noted that the member for Wanguri and Deputy Leader of the Opposition was critical on ABC radio this morning. He articulated the view that, if zero tolerance policing was introduced, we would have to spend more money. Quite clearly, the opposition does not accept or recognise the fact that we have committed that additional \$27m and the **police** are more than adequately resourced. Indeed, at the **Police** Association conference yesterday, it was made abundantly clear to me that **police** are of like mind. It would have been clear to members opposite had they bothered to turn up to the conference rather than trooping off to Kalkarindji. What a pathetic performance! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition came along and said that he had to apologise for the absence of the Leader of the Opposition who was otherwise occupied in central Australia. He did not say that she was at Kalkarindji. He did not have the courage of his convictions to reveal where she was. He then indicated that the opposition spokesman on **police** would not be at the conference either, and offered the

absurd reassurance that Syd and John would be at the dinner tonight, because they think that is more important than being in parliament. This is the first time in the history of annual conferences of the **Police** Association that the Labor Party has not sent its shadow minister. What does that say?

Mr Stirling interjecting.

Mr STONE: The member for Nhulunbuy interjects with: 'Goodness me!'

It sends a very strong message to the hardworking **policemen** and **policewomen** of the Territory. That message is that the opposition basically has its priorities upside down. Why did they all need to troop off to Kalkarindji when they could have been adequately represented at the **Police** Association conference?

Mrs Hickey interjecting.

Mr STONE: I will tell you what it shows. It shows that when the land councils tell you to jump, you jump, and when they tell you to turn up, you turn up.

It must have been a great disappointment for the Leader of the Opposition to turn on the television last night and realise she did not even get a guernsey. Daryl Melham was given a guernsey, as was Denis Burke. Jack Ah Kit was shown in side profile which took up most of the screen. However, about the Leader of the Opposition, the alternative Chief Minister, not a word was said. They were not really interested.

Madam Speaker, the government has a fully integrated approach to prosecutions, with the co-location of **police** prosecutions with the Director of Public Prosecutions. We have a dedicated Coroner, a full complement of magistrates and judges, and the best-resourced court system in all of Australia. Clearly, we have the manpower. However, that begs the question as to whether we can use our resources to better effect.

Since becoming Chief Minister, I have overseen important legislative changes in the criminal justice system – most of them opposed by the Labor Party. Truth-in-sentencing legislation ensures that offenders serve their time with very limited remission. In the Territory, a life sentence means no review until at least 20 years have been served. Mandatory sentencing has now been implemented for just over a year. The documented decline in property offenders and offences is there for all to see. Yet, the Labor Party still proudly proclaims that it is opposed to mandatory sentencing and – in the unhappy event that it is elected to government – it would repeal this legislation.

Mr Stirling: Yep!

Mrs Hickey interjecting.

Mr STONE: 'Yep!', says the member for Nhulunbuy – not that he speaks with any real authority from that side. However, I notice that the Leader of the Opposition joined him in the interjection. I hope those who sit opposite continue to tell Territorians that that is their policy position, that the Labor Party will repeal mandatory sentencing. I hope they circulate that view far and wide.

The *Criminal Code*, the *Summary Offences Act* and other related legislation remain important tools in the fight against crime. We have the legislative means to deal with most problems save, perhaps, public drunkenness, vagrancy and loitering.

Mr Stirling: How long has the 2 km law been on the books?

Mr STONE: The member for Nhulunbuy says it has been on the books. Has his party just decided to endorse the 2 km law? After 20 years of opposition, are Labor members finally standing up to say they support it? I cannot accept anything that the member for Nhulunbuy interjects, because he is the Power or One. He does not speak with the authority of the other 6. We do not know whether his interjections reflect the accurate policy position of the Labor Party at this point in time. I have hope for him. I have confidence in him. I believe he would be a very effective leader of the opposition. We want to help him. Next time, we will come and count for him.

Our legislation enables a **police** officer to take a publicly drunken person into protective custody under section 128 of the **Police Administration Act**, while loitering is covered by section 47A of the *Summary Offences Act*. I will return to those issues later in this statement. However, the question arises as to whether the legislation is being implemented in the most effective way.

While the criminal justice system understandably has a sharp focus on both the offender and the victim, the underlying causes of crime have not been ignored. For example, the Living With Alcohol program in the Territory is pro-active, innovative and generously funded by the CLP government. Aboriginal night patrols, such as the one recently commenced by the Aboriginal and Islander Medical Support Services in Darwin, together with the long-established night patrols in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine, are funded and supported by the CLP government.

Women's shelters and refuges are assisted and supported by the CLP government. Although recurrent funding to women's shelters comes under a Commonwealth-supported accommodation assistance program, it is administered and monitored by Territory Health Services. The Territory Department of Local Government and Housing provides and administers additional one-off funding for capital works through the Commonwealth crisis accommodation program.

The domestic violence programs run through the Office of Women's Policy are generously funded and supported by the CLP government. Specific programs have been tailor-made for the Aboriginal community. Community policing initiatives, such as school-based constables, the DARE program, Neighbour Watch, Safety House and Crime Stoppers, continue to have the support and the commitment of the CLP government.

The above list - hardly exhaustive - provides a snapshot of the initiatives and strategies of the government that are addressing the underlying causes of the problems that we confront. They are not recent inventions, but longstanding programs implemented by successive CLP governments – often opposed by those who sit opposite, the ALP.

The question also arises as to whether the combined effort of government agencies ...

Mr Stirling interjecting.

Mr STONE: ... can be better coordinated. I thought the member for Nhulunbuy would have learned his lesson by now, but he continues to interject. He invites attack, but it would be like punching a pillow. Although it is hard to resist, I will leave him alone on this occasion.

The CLP government has the determination to deal with the problems. That cannot be doubted. Any government that sees through mandatory sentencing against the avalanche of criticism,

condemnation and legal challenges that has occurred demonstrates determination, commitment and leadership. One of the great disappointments for me has been the preparedness of those who sit opposite, including the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Nhulunbuy, to back interstate organisations and international agencies, such as the United Nations, against our mandatory sentencing regime. I expected them at least to stand up for the Territory and not simply fall into line with those interstate and international agencies.

There has been a considerable shift in many jurisdictions over recent years from rehabilitation and reform of the offender to punishment. That trend is most evident in jurisdictions where legislation underpinning truth in sentencing has been introduced. The community generally has moved towards a position of demanding deterrence through incarceration and at the same time exacting retribution.

There will always be a considerable difference of opinion between the various stakeholders in the criminal justice system. One of the issues that divide the CLP from the ALP in the Territory is that Labor will not embrace the notion of retribution as opposed to rehabilitation, at the other end of the spectrum, which means that it effectively has a greater preoccupation with the offender. The CLP stands proudly for the victim. That has always been the case and always will be the case. In any event ...

Mr Stirling interjecting.

Mr STONE: The member for Nhulunbuy interjects again. Let me remind him that mandatory sentencing was very widely canvassed before the last Territory general election. The people delivered their verdict on 30 August 1997, and it was overwhelming. There was an avalanche of support.

Clearly, we have the legislative means, the resources, the manpower and the determination. What we need now is a truly integrated, coordinated approach, with outcomes measured so that we can know that our resources are being used to best effect.

How can we achieve this? Zero tolerance policing involves a tough approach to crime, particularly low-level crime, disorderliness and quality-of-life issues. What attracted me to the concept of zero tolerance policing was its simplicity and the inescapable fact that it works. I hope that, when the member for Nhulunbuy gets to his feet, he makes the concession – based on his own observations in Los Angeles and New York – that it works. He knows it works. Despite what the troglodytes of the Labor Party may have done to him on his return to Australia, if he is going to be true to himself he will stand up in this Chamber and make the concession that it works.

The 2 km law, if it is rigorously enforced as a form of zero tolerance, will be to the benefit of the community in the same way that mandatory sentencing works to the benefit of the community. Statistics show that, since the introduction of mandatory sentencing in early 1997, crime has gone into decline – in contrast to every other state and territory jurisdiction, where crime just keeps on climbing. If members do not believe that, they should inquire into what is going on in other places. In *Recorded Crime Australia 1996*, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that the Northern Territory achieved decreases in reported crime per 100 000 population across 7 of the 14 major offence groupings: murder, manslaughter, driving causing death, kidnapping and abduction, blackmail and extortion, and the 2 unlawful entry with intent categories.

Mr Stirling interjecting.

Mr STONE: The member for Nhulunbuy seeks to trivialise these serious crimes. It really is quite remarkable. This is a man who aspires to lead the opposition. Yet he trivialises our accomplishments

in bringing down crime. While I am happy to stand here and cop his interjections, the reality is that he is trivialising the efforts of the hardworking Northern Territory **police**.

Nationally, while we were achieving these milestones in the Territory, there were increases in 11 of the major groupings. The Territory was going in the opposite direction to the rest of the nation when it came to bringing down crime.

In 1997, the Northern Territory achieved decreases in reported crime per 100 000 of population across 12 of the 14 groupings. I hope members opposite will listen carefully to what I am about to tell them. Murder was down 54%, attempted murder down 44%, manslaughter down 3%, driving causing death down 4%, assault down 5%, sexual assault down 14%, armed robbery down 22%, unarmed robbery down 41%, unlawful entry involving taking of property down 10%, other unlawful entry down 17%, motor vehicle theft down 12% and other categories of theft down 8%. Nationally, at the time the Territory was heading in that direction, there were increases in 9 of the major groupings.

I table graphs which set out those remarkable achievements of the Northern Territory **Police Force**. They are there for all to see, and I hope that members opposite will take the time and trouble to read them.

Coupled with the decreasing levels of crime is the knowledge that the Territory charges and prosecutes a higher proportion of offenders than other jurisdictions. Added to this evidence are results from an unpublished survey, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics Household Survey, styled 'Population Survey Monitor'. The figures that were released in May 1997 indicate that 71% of the Territory community feel satisfied with services provided by the **police** in the Territory. Encouragingly, 94% of Territorians feel safe at home alone during the day, and 82% feel safe at home alone after dark.

Overall, the statistics indicate a positive for the Territory and for policing, in that there have been continued decreases in the majority of offence groupings compared to increases nationally. Also, the diligence of Territory **police** is highlighted, in these figures, through the higher proportion of offenders being charged and prosecuted than in other jurisdictions.

In search of strategies to deliver a safer Territory community, I resolved to lead a delegation to Los Angeles and New York. That delegation comprised the following: the member for Nhulunbuy and then shadow Attorney-General, but no longer, Mr Syd Stirling, Labor MLA; Mr Andy Bruyn, chairman of Crime Stoppers Northern Territory; Mr Don Kennedy, managing editor of News Ltd; Hon Austin Asche AC QC, president of the Law Reform Committee of the Northern Territory, former Chief Justice and former Administrator; and Commissioner Brian Bates APM.

Mr Asche has produced a preliminary report which I can commend to all those who have an interest in the matter. It is thorough, balanced, and provides in clear English an overview of the theory and application of zero tolerance policing. Madam Speaker, I table a copy of that preliminary report for the benefit of members.

The chairman of Crime Stoppers Northern Territory, Mr Andrew Bruyn, has also provided a report from the perspective of a concerned citizen, and I table that report and commend it to members.

The rationale of zero tolerance policing is based on the 'broken windows' theory developed by Wilson and Keilling. Put simply, if one broken window is left unrepaired, that it is taken as a sign that there are no authority or sanctions in place, and more broken windows follow. In the context of the criminal justice system, it follows that minor offences that are left unchecked lead to major offences.

What is evident is that zero tolerance policing has been defined and applied differently in jurisdictions. It has never been the intention of the Northern Territory government to import zero tolerance policing as it is applied in New York and other large US cities, but rather to learn from the experience of other jurisdictions. The inescapable fact is that zero tolerance policing works. Even opponents of the theory can see that the crime rate in a number of US cities has fallen dramatically in the last few years.

The other fact that needs to be borne in mind is that zero tolerance policing is not just about policing. It is about an integrated approach by government, and other important stakeholders, to deal with a range of offences and antisocial behaviour. There is little point in simply moving the problem around. Not only must the offenders be dealt with but the underlying and associated causes must also be dealt with. The most immediate priority is to deal with both the victims and the offenders. Both groups are symptomatic of wider social problems.

In terms of policing, zero tolerance is as much to do with management style, the effective use of resources, and the informed and intelligent use of **police**, as it is about the strict enforcement of the law. Our own Commissioner of **Police**, Brian Bates, has described zero tolerance policing as a 'back to basics' style of policing. I table his report on the issue, *Back to Basics*, for the information of members.

As I mentioned, Commissioner Bates accompanied me to New York and Los Angeles and has set about the task of implementing, on a trial basis, a number of the strategies that he observed. One such strategy is styled 'targeted policing' and concentrates on hot spots – that is, geographically located spots - and particular types of offences. Over the past 11 weeks, this strategy has been put to work with great effect in parts of Darwin, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Katherine.

In essence, it comes down to allowing **police** greater autonomy, simultaneously with a greater sense of accountability in terms of performance. Critics of mandatory sentencing and zero tolerance policing claim that they lead to a higher level of incarceration and prison population at great expense to the taxpayer. Such comments are consistent with the debate of deterrence and retribution as against rehabilitation.

The inescapable fact is, however, that the criminal in prison or in a detention centre cannot commit other crimes in the community. Also, the cost of crimes committed in the wider community far outweighs the cost of incarcerating those same persons. While the critics are very quick to quote the daily cost of keeping a person in jail, they conveniently gloss over the cost to the victim, society generally, and the criminal justice system in apprehending and prosecuting the very same criminals.

It does not follow that zero tolerance policing will have application in each and every situation. Former New York **Police** Commissioner Bratton, who introduced zero tolerance policing, also promoted problem-oriented policing where **police** and the community work together. Zero tolerance policing and problem-oriented policing are not inconsistent and can complement each other. In recapturing the streets, parks and shopping centres through zero tolerance policing then, arguably, problem-oriented policing or community policing provide for an ongoing complementary strategy.

Zero tolerance policing is not just another political slogan, or another throwaway line in the rhetoric of a politician. Zero tolerance policing is a strategy which, in my view, if used in a complementary way with other **police** strategies, will make for a safer, more harmonious community, a community of which all Territorians may feel proud.

Some of those other complementary strategies include problem-oriented policing - sometimes called problem-solving policing - which deals with offenders as well as the underlying causes of crime, and

community-based policing - sometimes referred to as community policing - which involves a partnership with the community and is best illustrated through programs such as Neighbourhood Watch, Safety House, school-based policing and local **police** officers.

It is important to remember that zero tolerance policing is not an all-embracing, overarching strategy, but rather an approach that, if applied sensibly and pragmatically, will make for a safer community. In the Northern Territory, most of us have been immune from serious crime. Rather, in the community, quality-of-life issues such as public drunkenness, harassment and verbal abuse confront us. This type of behaviour impacts seriously on an important industry in the Territory, namely tourism. Those commentators who want to pretend that it has no impact on tourism need only examine the surveys completed by regional tourist associations in Darwin and Alice Springs.

Sadly, public drunkenness inevitably goes hand in hand with abusive language and behaviour, whether one is confronted at the local corner store or when walking in the Mall in Darwin. People come away with a sense of outrage and disgust. They avoid visiting certain parks or recreational areas because of previous encounters with drunk and abusive people.

While my political opponents continue to stress the underlying causes, and go so far in their own policy document as to state, 'attacking the problem - not the people', they gloss ...

Mr Stirling interjecting.

Mr STONE: I notice that has been picked up by members opposite by way of interjection. That is their position, that is their view. What they conveniently gloss over is the fact that offenders have to be dealt with before getting to the underlying causes. That is the reality of it.

One welcome development, however, from the ALP has been its final recognition of and support for the 2 km law after some 16 years of opposition. I think I said before that it had been 20 years, but it was 16 years – 16 years running around in the wilderness, telling us that they would not support it. Finally, they have come on board. No doubt, they have had an opportunity to talk to the land councils about it, and the land councils have told them it is alright for them to sign off on this, and that is precisely what has occurred.

The ALP says: 'The target must be criminal behaviour, not people'. I will say that again because it demonstrates the profound difference between the ALP and the CLP. 'The target must be criminal behaviour, not people'.

Mr Stirling: Offenders.

Mr STONE: How extraordinary! How can the behaviour be targeted if the offender is not dealt with - the criminal? These are the bleeding hearts, the hand-wringers of the Labor Party who are more concerned about the underlying social issues than they are about the people who disrupt our lifestyle and destroy our amenity of life. Who can forget a former Leader of the Opposition actually writing to prisoners in Darwin jail to canvass their views on law and order?

Members interjecting.

Mr STONE: The member may well sigh, but that is exactly what happened. The opposition leader of the day wrote to prisoners in jail, including a number of convicted murderers, seeking their Berrimah views on law and order.

Mrs Hickey: One.

Mr STONE: 'One', she says. They only wrote to one convicted murderer. However, that was one too many. Are they for real? The Labor Party formulates its policies, based on canvassing the opinions of convicted felons, including a convicted murderer. It is no wonder the Territory community and electorates do not take members opposite seriously.

If we expect our **police** to enforce the law rigorously then they must be allowed the autonomy to act accordingly ...

Mr Stirling: Hear, hear!

Mr STONE: ... and with autonomy must come accountability. I am pleased to hear the interjection from the member for Nhulunbuy. When we sit down to the business of working out **police** powers, I look forward to receiving his support.

It has never been suggested that **police** would have free range outside the parameters of law. However, they should have the confidence of knowing that they can strictly enforce the law without the usual diatribe of those who have a greater preoccupation with the offenders than with the victim.

Accountability is best reflected, to a large degree, in the statistical analysis of the outcomes achieved by **police**. In New York, computer-generated statistics (Comstat) are inextricably linked to zero tolerance policing. Crime statistics are compiled on a daily basis, according to type, place and time. They are published weekly and provide a valuable tool in pinpointing particular types of offences in geographical areas. Further, **police** confer on a regular basis to achieve a better understanding of the types of problems that they are confronting on the street.

Accountability is as much to do with **police** justifying their actions as it is about demonstrating outcomes. To fail on either front is to risk transfer and demotion. Rather than being seen as a negative by **police** officers, zero tolerance policing provides them with an opportunity to get back to the basics of policing, demonstrate their competence, and achieve the outcomes the community demands. Effective and efficient policing is a pathway to promotion and career enhancement, and so it should be.

When **police** make their commitment to a rigorous enforcement of the law, consistent with the strategy of zero tolerance, they have to do so with the confidence that they will be supported by management and government against frivolous complaints from commentators who are inextricably opposed to this strategy. I will include in that net the opposition. I hope that we will have none of the carping criticism that has been the hallmark of the opposition in the past when the **police** get down to the business of getting on with their job. We have had numerous examples of it in this Chamber, when the opposition has come here and sought to make the **police** the whipping boy of policies and strategies that needed to be put in place.

Mrs Hickey: When? Give some instances.

Mr STONE: I will pick up the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. She requests some instances. How many spurious investigations has the Leader of the Opposition launched, only to find that they were absolutely baseless and without any foundation?

Mrs Hickey: What are you talking about?

Mr STONE: The Leader of the Opposition may well ask what I am talking about. She has priors for this. She does it all the time. She will come here and make an allegation that prompts an inquiry. Then it all fizzles out because it was based on a figment from the deep recesses of her imagination.

Mrs Hickey interjecting.

Mr STONE: Members of the Labor Party are notorious for fabricating these sorts of complaints and allegations against **police**. I hope that, in the time ahead, they will change their ways and get behind the Northern Territory **police** as they move down this path.

Police officers need to know that they have the support of the community in dealing with antisocial behaviour on our streets. It is not good enough for the silent majority to stand idly by while the so-called civil libertarians and others deride and demean the work of **police**.

The Leader of the Opposition had a great deal to say by way of interjection. What better example than what happened in Tennant Creek when the drinkers from the schoolyard were told to move on? Surprise, surprise, the Leader of the Opposition made her front lawn available to them.

Mrs Hickey: Rubbish!

Mr STONE: She interjects 'rubbish'. It is now a well-documented case, with her neighbours jumping the fence because they were so outraged by what she did. In her haste to pander to these people, who were making a real nuisance of themselves while drinking in the schoolyard, she invited them over to her place, and her neighbour jumped the fence. The local paper explored the whole issue. It became a front-page story.

It is particularly important that **police** management, from the commissioner down, stands by and supports the troops. It may seem trite to make such an observation but, in some jurisdictions other than the Territory, one gains the impression that it is every man and woman for themselves.

The importance of statistical analysis, in assisting **police** to deal with antisocial behaviour, falls into an elusive category, not always captured by traditional enforcement methods, and requires targeted programs aimed at deterrence, displacement and apprehension. The success of any program will be dependent on timely and accurate performance indicators. Targeted policy activity, to which I referred earlier, replaces mere reactive activity.

A system has now been set in place whereby each of the Territory's centres reports on public disorder activity on a weekly basis and in a uniform manner. At weekly meetings, reports are broken down into comparative statistical data so that trends are clearly shown on a regional basis. In larger centres, the activity in central business districts is illustrated as subsets of the overall data. Senior **police**, responsible for each district, are held accountable for levels of antisocial behaviour and the success or otherwise of programs within their areas of responsibility.

In summary, the meetings seek to positively influence **police** activity in the following ways: firstly, the availability of performance indicators will translate into effective program analysis, enabling fine tuning or radical changes as the program develops; secondly, consistency of approach and methodology across the Territory will create a common high standard of performance; thirdly, each region will be exposed to initiatives trialled by others; fourthly, emerging trends can be analysed, and dealt with, in a

sensible and pragmatic way; and, finally, regional commanders and **police** management will be better placed to positively market new initiatives in a coordinated and uniform way. Senior officers have been encouraged to use every available means to positively market these initiatives.

As a result of a review and resetting of priorities in enforcement activities, patrol-generated activities have increased. For example, Tennant Creek has been able to reduce complaint-generated activity by 50%, while the greater Alice Springs area has seen an overall decrease in antisocial behaviour of 11%. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will applaud the success of zero tolerance policing in Tennant Creek since it does represent the major urban area in her electorate.

In the Darwin central business district, we have actually had some complaint-free days – a direct consequence of increased patrols as opposed to **police** simply reacting to complaints. Weekly statistics are now carefully analysed to direct patrol activities positively throughout major centres and to known hot spots – areas where social disorder is likely to occur.

Progress to date has been achieved using the existing information technology, which is about to be substantially and significantly upgraded. In March 1998, the CLP government funded the Northern Territory **Police**, Fire and Emergency Services to acquire new information technology systems. The new systems, called PROMIS and Intergraph computer-aided dispatch (CAD), will provide an end-to-end policing solution and a totally integrated package of information. They will provide **police** with a state-of-the-art operational management tool.

PROMIS will provide a case management system accessible by investigators and management, giving support for: the initial reporting and assessment of an incident, event or complaint, and the steps taken in assessing and actioning the matter; investigation planning; recording and managing the actions undertaken during the course of an investigation; recording and managing information gathered and processed during the course of an investigation; and the management and coordination of operational activity within and across investigations. When this investigation and case management system is coupled with the computer-aided dispatch system, it will have the ability to record and display patterns and trends of criminal activity as they are reported.

Operational **police** officers will gain productivity efficiencies through the reduction of duplicated entries into different computer systems. Instead of accessing several computer systems, **police** officers will access one computer system that will provide information on a suspect's name ...

Mr Stirling interjecting.

Mr STONE: ... and all related information, including address, incidents with **police**, photograph, driver's licence details, vehicle description, warrants and domestic violence orders. **Police** will know where the offences have been committed, once reported, and where the nearest available **police** vehicle is. All of this will be visually displayed on computer screens.

If I got the gist of the interjection from the member for Nhulunbuy, he fails to understand that the system that we are putting in place excels anything he would have seen in Los Angeles or New York. It has no rival in all of Australia. It is a ground-breaking initiative. And while the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and member for Wanguri, John Bailey, would bleat that we need to increase resources, the reality is that we have, by some \$27m over 3 years. This is exactly how we have been spending that additional money.

Mr Stirling: You began from a low base.

Mr STONE: I will pick up the interjection 'from a low base'. Per head of population, the Territory has more **police** than anywhere else in Australia. The member was very critical of me before lunch, about statements I made. It really is a case of 'don't do as I do, do as I say'.

With the integration of CAD, criminal activity can be visually displayed in type overlaid on a map so that **police** can analyse trends and find tactical and strategic solutions to provide better policing services to the areas that most need it. The major benefits that will be delivered are: a significant improvement in the collection, collation and extraction of data that will provide **police** with greater access to usable information and greater interaction between operational units; significant improvements in the ability to enter and manipulate information gathered in the course of **police** activity; and the ability of the organisation as a whole to have a clearer view of operational activity in line with achieving the outcomes of dealing with antisocial and criminal behaviour.

This new technology will facilitate the intelligent and more informed use of **police** resources. It will identify hot spots, to borrow the terminology of New York, that require close **police** attention – and by close **police** attention, I mean the rigorous enforcement of the law. Unless there is rigorous enforcement, we will not achieve the outcomes that we are seeking.

I now turn to the issues of **police** powers, vagrancy and public drunkenness. I am not yet persuaded that the recriminalisation of public drunkenness will deliver the desired outcomes. Rather, the government will make a concerted effort to establish additional night patrols and sobering-up shelters. I have no intention of clogging up the criminal justice system with habitual drunks, although I do give the undertaking that any related behaviour that stems from that drunkenness will be rigorously prosecuted.

Being poor and down and out is hardly a crime. To be a vagrant, which was commonly defined as not having visible means of support, does not warrant intervention of the criminal justice system.

I intend a major review of **police** powers to ensure that **police** have the capacity to deal with offenders and offences. That review will be headed by the Minister for **Police** and will include a representative of the **Police** Association, a nominee of the Commissioner of **Police**, Fire and Emergency Services, the deputy secretary of the Attorney-General's Department, Mr David Anderson, and 2 members of the wider community. Further, the **Police** Commissioner will be requested to issue directives for the rigorous enforcement of the 2km law.

With all of the strategies that we have in place, we already have a discernible decrease in crime. That has been amply demonstrated by the release of figures from *Recorded Crime Australia, 1997*. I table a copy of that report for the benefit of members and urge all to take the time to read it.

I intend to review the outcome over the next 12 months of the strategies and **police** directions that I have set out. In the intervening period, a criminal justice statistics unit within the Attorney-General's Department will be established.

Zero tolerance policing has a role to play in the Northern Territory. The intelligent use of **police** resources, an integrated approach by government, and a more accountable sentencing regime will deliver a safer Territory community. I hope that we are able to have a constructive debate today on this very important issue and the strategies and policies that have been set out.

The Leader of the Opposition took issue with my reference to the incident in Tennant Creek. It may

well be a matter of speculation as to what happened. However, I say to the Leader of the Opposition that she cannot have her cake and eat it too. She cannot pander to members of her electorate and at the same time pretend that she supports the **police**.

She may well take issue with the reports that appeared in the *Tennant and District Times* and the *Centralian Advocate*, which I now table, but they were there for all to see. The Leader of the Opposition never repudiated the stories, headlined 'Drunks Attack Security Guard' and 'Fracas Outside Hickey Home'. I make the point again that members opposite cannot on the one hand say that they support the **police** and all the strategies and initiatives that they have in place, and on the other hand pander to people in their electorate for simple political gain.

Madam Speaker, I move that the Assembly take note of the statement.

Mrs HICKEY (Opposition Leader): Madam Speaker, let me get that last issue out of the way first. I assure the Chief Minister that the prospect of having drunks residing in my front yard is not an appealing one. I refute utterly any suggestion that I ever invited people to drink in my front yard, other than guests of mine who are there for a social purpose. That was not so in the case of those people who behaved in an antisocial way. I am just as strongly of the opinion as the Chief Minister and members opposite that we have to do something about it.

A matter of weeks ago, we heard the Chief Minister shooting his mouth off again, telling Territorians he was on the verge of recriminalising public drunkenness – declaring war on the drunks and introducing zero tolerance policing, New York style. Today's statement demonstrates yet again the Chief Minister's approach of launching a political strategy in a completely over-the-top manner and then looking into the issue with a degree of thought.

The Chief Minister was happy to declare war on drunks and all the rest of it because he wanted a headline. The Labor Party, by contrast, deliberately thought about this very long and hard and put out its statement on tackling antisocial behaviour early, so that we could be part of finding solutions to what is a very difficult problem. Over many months, the Labor Party has toiled hard on this issue. I pay tribute to my colleagues, including the member for Nhulunbuy.

The member for Stuart took the trouble to get out into the areas around Alice Springs and distribute a questionnaire on these very vexed issues. He asked the hard questions and he got the hard answers back, and those were incorporated in a report that he produced to the policy group of the Labor Party. You see that, and the hard work of my colleague the member for Nhulunbuy, in this document, *Alcohol Abuse and Antisocial Behaviour Action Plan*, put out by the Labor Party. Madam Speaker, I seek leave to table that document so that honourable members can read its contents and judge for themselves.

Leave granted.

Mrs HICKEY: Madam Speaker, obviously the Chief Minister does not need a copy. He has one already, because so many reflections of our document are to be found in the statement that he made today. It is certainly pleasing that the Chief Minister has toned down some of his over-the-top rhetoric and followed Labor's lead on some matters relevant to this issue. Indeed, again and again reflected in the document is some of what the Chief Minister has spoken of today: targeting **police** patrols at hot spots, enforcing existing laws and using the courts. We oppose making public drunkenness a crime, and we oppose the removal of discretions or tolerance from Territory **police**. Again, the Chief Minister says he is taking another look at public drunkenness. He is not, after all, acting to make that illegal at the moment, and he is talking about providing the **police** with responsible discretion. That is very

good. I dare say that, if Labor had not broadened the terms of the debate, the Chief Minister would have come here with a pure law and order strategy.

We disseminated this in the community as widely as we could. The commentary we have had about that document has mostly been good, but some has been bad. The Chief Minister himself knows full well that, while that document is not perfect in every degree, it does set out a strategy. It does address many of the major issues to do with public drunkenness and antisocial behaviour in a reasoned and practical way. That has been demonstrated by what the Chief Minister has said today. A few weeks ago, what was proposed were draconian measures: clamping down and declaring war on drunks, zero tolerance policing and so on. We are now seeing a much more reasoned approach, and we support it.

I am glad we played a role in demonstrating that there is much more to the problem than simply enforcing the 2 km law. However, the Labor Party is disappointed that the Chief Minister has not gone far enough in providing directions that will lead to lasting solutions. The focus is too much on fixing the easy-to-see and easy-to-fix mess that the Country Liberal Party government has created over 23 years.

The Chief Minister says the Labor Party is all about – how did he put it? – rehabilitation rather than retribution, and that the Country Liberal Party government wants to focus its attention on vengeance. However, I say to the Chief Minister that, if these problems are to be fixed in the long term, the rehabilitative aspects that cost time and money and effort must be looked at. If he intends something other than the quick fix, that has to be done. He knows that, I know that, and it is time we got on with it.

As I pointed out in the statement *Alcohol Abuse and Antisocial Behaviour Action Plan*, which I released a month ago, alcohol-induced antisocial behaviour is not a new problem facing the Territory. The Country Liberal Party has been in office for 23 years and, during that uninterrupted stint in power, the unacceptable problem of alcohol-induced antisocial behaviour has been neglected.

Members interjecting.

Mrs HICKEY: The members of the Country Liberal Party government have to be condemned for failure and can blame no one but themselves for the position we now face. For the benefit of the interjecting members on the other side, I will go back to a few facts from the history of this ...

Mr Elferink interjecting.

Mrs HICKEY: Many years ago, the former member for MacDonnell in this House tried time and time again to have the parliament fix its attentions on the issue of alcohol abuse and to do something about it by forming a committee of this House to look at the problems around the Territory. Members opposite would have their chance to fix up the problems by way of introducing recommendations into this House. For a long time, that was resisted by the government. It was finally accepted that it was a good idea, and we saw the establishment of the Sessional Committee on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community. Living With Alcohol emanated from the recommendations of that committee. Living With Alcohol, one of the better initiatives that has emerged from this House, was equally to do with the Labor Party and with the Country Liberal Party. In many ways, it had far more to do with the initiative, work, passion and determination of the former member for MacDonnell.

A member: He was a fruit loop.

Members interjecting.

Mrs HICKEY: Well, if government members want to talk about fruit loops and the position of the members for MacDonnell, I suggest they look at the current member for MacDonnell.

The Country Liberal Party must be condemned for its failure and can blame no one but itself for the position we now face. The statement of the Chief Minister should be seen in that context. Over 23 years they have presided over this place. They should blame no one but themselves for the mess we now find ourselves in.

In preparing Labor's plan, as I said, I was greatly assisted by the efforts of the member for Nhulunbuy who, along with the Chief Minister, went to New York to look at the zero tolerance policing experiment. The Chief Minister returned and, when he saw our document, said that my colleague had been rolled. That is very interesting. If my colleague, the member for Nhulunbuy, has been rolled by the Labor Party, what can one say about the Chief Minister? The Chief Minister was breathing fire and vengeance about what was to happen to drunks and those who perpetuated antisocial behaviour in our streets. His statement today is very closely in line with what we are proposing here. It is a moderate and reasoned response, and we approve of it. We approve of it because it is ours.

The Chief Minister's statement does recognise some of the matters that are of concern in the community. Alcohol-induced antisocial behaviour must be combated by sustained, responsible action. We must involve all relevant people and use all the tools available. That includes the **police**, community organisations, health programs, education, parliament, family and community networks and the perpetrators of antisocial behaviour.

The Chief Minister's statement recognises some of this, but it does not go far enough. It entirely ignores the role education has to play. It ignores the role the parliament should play. I alluded before to the alcohol committee, and it is my belief that the Sessional Committee on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community should be reinstated in this parliament forthwith. That would mean we can get on with the continuing job of monitoring what is happening and providing recommendations to parliament.

The Chief Minister's statement only briefly mentions the role health can play. It does not talk about what can and should be done outside the urban areas. Labor has said all along that enforcing zero tolerance policing, as adopted in New York and other large US cities, is not right for the Territory and will not work. I must say that what the Chief Minister has provided us with, what is now happening and what the **police** will undertake, could not really be called 'zero tolerance policing'. It would be more accurate to call it 'getting back to basics'. That is the term Commissioner Bates used - quite rightly, I believe. I believe the **police** themselves would be far more comfortable with that term in exercising their duties than 'zero tolerance policing'. That has connotations that take us into the areas of underworld drug cartels and major crime in enormous cities with millions of people. They are very different situations from that of the Northern Territory. We know that the major problem we are seeking to combat on the street is not major organised crime; it is the manifestation of alcohol abuse.

The Chief Minister said that Labor's package, which contained this statement, demonstrated that Labor was being soft on criminals. What a stupid comment! Labor has said from the outset that New York's zero tolerance policing is centred around a huge population, hard drugs, crime gangs and guns, and that those are not the challenges facing the Territory. Labor's approach on this matter can be summarised as being centred on the following: introducing **police** patrols at hot spots, one thing the Chief Minister mentioned; enforcing existing laws, which we have been calling for for years and

years; improving grog abuse intervention and treatment of drunks; and using the courts to tackle grog abuse. Our statement made it very clear that we oppose making public drunkenness a crime, and also that we oppose removing the discretion or tolerance from the Territory **police** to undertake their duties. I am pleased, and I congratulate the Chief Minister – or the authors of the speech he made – that those are to be the tenets of the policy that will be undertaken.

I will look now at the initiatives Labor advocated and relate them to the Chief Minister's statement. Labor advocates combating alcohol-induced antisocial behaviour by introducing **police** patrols at hot spots. Around the Territory, there are 9 places where existing laws are being broken and the level of antisocial behaviour is unacceptable. Labor says regular **police** foot patrols are needed at these hot spots. They should operate in major population centres and focus on hot spots at peak times for antisocial behaviour, such as on pension days. A stronger **police** presence on the streets and in public areas will help deter unlawful behaviour and will put **police** on the spot when antisocial behaviour occurs. Labor is very pleased to see that the Chief Minister's statement promotes increased foot patrols.

We would really have to say that the Chief Minister is trying to take credit for the initiatives of Territory **police**. While this was announced in a flurry yesterday, and it talked about the secret trials that were going on, I do not think it was much of a secret to most of us. Indeed, I was invited to an information morning at Tennant Creek **police** station when this was first introduced there. It is clearly an initiative of the Commissioner of **Police**, in concert with and with the cooperation of the **police** force. They were extremely excited about this, as was the whole Tennant Creek community, the law-abiding community of Tennant Creek, the major Aboriginal organisations, and so forth.

I have said before in this House, and I will say it again, that Julalikari Council in many ways spearheaded the fight to have the regulations regarding alcohol implemented and some restrictions imposed in Tennant Creek. It did so in desperation, a couple of years ago, because the 2 km law was not being enforced. It commented to me and to others that, had that law been enforced at the time, it is possible that those alcohol restrictions would not have been necessary. We knew for a long time that the enforcement of the 2 km law would go a long way to preventing some of these problems, provided it was married with decent alcohol treatment and rehabilitation programs and some effort was put into supporting the night patrols.

In his reply, I would like the Chief Minister to further elaborate on why he thinks **police** can undertake the hot-spot duties and other initiatives mentioned in his statement without either obtaining new resources or neglecting other functions. He talked about the \$27m that was being spent over 3 years. I make this point to him. He has to keep up the **numbers of police**. It is insufficient to say that they will be increased to a certain level and then everything in the garden will be rosy from then on. We see constantly - and I think it is a credit to the Territory **police** force - our **police** being poached by other jurisdictions. They know that our **police** force is well trained. It is an effective force and it works very well, particularly in remote areas. Those people are very much coveted and wanted by other **police** forces around the country. If we are to retain our **police** officers, we need to ensure that the conditions that they work under, their terms of employment and career path opportunities are appropriate and available to them, otherwise they will and they do leave. That is a fact of life. We have to ensure that the effort is maintained.

In Tennant Creek, while this trial was being undertaken, we have seen 2-person foot patrols on the streets. That has been a mighty effort by the **police** officers. It is being done during the dry season, and, I suggest, will be a much harder job for them during the hot summer season. That will provide a much more uncomfortable situation. There will have to be a quicker turnover of officers. It is not an easy job to be slogging the streets in the sort of heat that we endure, both in the Centre and, in the

wet season, in Darwin.

We want to ensure that those resources remain at a level that is adequate to allow continuity for those **police** resources to undertake the foot patrols. I think the government will probably provide that, to do it justice. The reason I think it will do it is that it has probably noticed, from the trials that have occurred already, how very popular this is and the level of approval with which it is met by the community. People in my area have said they feel safer now because they know that **police** officers are operating in these areas. They know for sure that the **police** will be around. They know also that it is not a question of a blitz once in a blue moon. The community knows that this is a regular event and that it is scheduled into normal **police** activity. We do not want to see that level drop.

In Labor's plan, we acknowledge that Aboriginal community **police** officers have demonstrated an outstanding capacity to deal with these types of matters effectively, especially in terms of alcohol abuse. I commend the work of the **police** officers in the Borroloola area. I was there not very long ago and a very volatile situation arose because of a dispute between 2 families. The volatility of that dispute increased as the night went on, and people came out of the pub and out of their homes, where they had been drinking. I saw the 2 **police** officers who were available, plus a community elder, Roy Hammer, who I have to say would be a hero by anybody's standards, going quietly into that group of people. There was just the 3 of them and scores of people around. Very quietly and very efficiently, they moved people on.

That demonstrated experience. That was keeping one's cool. I would say that it showed courage, too. I pay tribute to Keith Currie, who was there, and to his constable, whose name, unfortunately, I do not recall at this moment, and to Roy Hanna, for undertaking that sort of work. I think it takes real guts, but it also takes good training. It also calls for the stand-back approach to a situation and not to go in boots and all. That is one of the big issues in all of this. We do not want to see our **police** officers placed in a position where they need to go in boots and all. We want them to be able to exercise discretion at the time when it is suitable and when it appropriate.

Community-run night patrols that pick up drunks and take them to sobering-up shelters were pioneered in the Northern Territory. In fact they were pioneered in my electorate. Julalikari Council was the first council in the Northern Territory to start night patrols. That work has been recognised internationally. They are an effective means by which to deal with drunks who crash out and sleep in public areas. Night patrols enhance the work of Territory **police** by allowing them to get on with other activities the community wants **police** to attend to - preventing and dealing with crime. Night patrols must be properly trained, supervised and resourced, and have stable funding arrangements. The delay in securing night patrols for Darwin and Palmerston must not be repeated.

The Chief Minister's statement committed the government to establishing new night patrols and sobering-up shelters. The Chief Minister should be detailing those plans, or perhaps one of his colleagues might do so to let us know exactly what he has in mind. It is all very well to come here and deliver statements across the board.

Mr Reed interjecting.

Mrs HICKEY: What we want to hear about is the nuts and bolts. I suggest to the member for Katherine that it is a very different matter for a Labor opposition to be putting out an action plan. It is another matter for the member, who has carriage of the Treasury, to be able to say how many dollars the Chief Minister and his Cabinet intend to put into this matter. The Chief Minister should detail those plans.

The prior record of this government on this front is absolutely appalling. It took 2 years for the Darwin night patrol to get up and running. The Chief Minister should put on the record the specifics for his commitments, including time lines. Time lines are very important. We do not want these things implemented several years down the track. We want them now. As we highlighted in the budget sittings, the Country Liberal Party's lack of up-to-date and accurate information about habitual drunks is alarming. The Chief Minister should try harder to get the facts before he sets in concrete his plan of action.

Labor has set out in its plan that it wants the existing laws, which already target antisocial behaviour, properly enforced. We say there are laws on the books which cover the situations in question. Everybody in the Territory knows the 2 km law has been enforced erratically only since its introduction in 1982. Labor has always said that, if a person who has been drinking commits an offence, they should be dealt with according to the law. If anyone can find anything in that that is soft on crime, I will go 'he'.

The Chief Minister's statement was sadly lacking in relation to the issue of improving grog abuse intervention and treatment of drunks. Everyone knows that tackling grog abuse becomes harder as the abuse and damage caused to the perpetrator becomes worse. For the person concerned, and the general community, it is far better to nip problems in the bud. Labor's plan promotes initiatives in local Aboriginal health centres on this front. The Chief Minister did not mention treatment services for drunks. Labor's plan talks about the preferred model for getting drunks off the grog permanently. Labor's plan stresses promoting worthwhile anti-alcohol abuse programs and general literacy and health programs in Territory prisons.

One thing that the Chief Minister did flag, and we are pleased about, is in relation to a review of psychiatric services in prisons. We look forward to seeing the results of the review and participating in that debate. I think it is a timely debate and will be very important.

Labor believes the Chief Minister's statement should also have looked at using the courts more creatively to deal with the issues in question. This side of the House believes the law allowing the making of prohibition orders by the courts should be improved and could be used in appropriate circumstances. Participation in rehabilitation programs should be utilised by the courts as a bail condition in appropriate circumstances. This requires legal practitioners to be better informed about alcohol abuse and rehabilitation programs.

Labor has said all along that public drunkenness should not be a crime. It is a good thing that the Chief Minister has resiled from the idea of turning the clock back. However, he did indicate that he may change his mind. The notion is, as he knows, foolish and will clog up the criminal justice system. Public drunkenness stopped being a crime in the Territory in 1974 because the law proved to be futile, unjustified and a huge waste of **police** time. It should stay off our books.

Labor does not resile from the statement that 'the target must be criminal behaviour, not people'. The Chief Minister seemed to suggest that you could not deal with one without dealing with the other. Obviously, the people who commit criminal offences must be tackled, but the Chief Minister's media comments have sought to demonise the drunks. Labor says the target is criminal and antisocial behaviour, not the people themselves. To make public drunkenness a criminal offence again would leave the **police** to deal with drunks alone. That assistance which is currently provided by night patrols would be impossible to administer. The night patrol operators have no power to administer the criminal law. They would have to get out of that particular aspect of the work which so enhances the work of the **police** and assists them these days.

Labor is pleased to see the statement does not include a proposal to remove discretion or tolerance from Territory **police**. The Territory Labor Party believes that effective and appropriate policing requires discretion. Removing tolerance from **police** may sound a good idea to some at first glance, but it is not realistic and it will not work as a policing strategy. It is far more about politics than about achieving results. The Territory **police** force has proved itself capable of exercising its discretion wisely. To remove that discretion would demonstrate an unwarranted lack of trust, and would tie **police** up when dealing with trivial matters. **Police** know a great deal more about policing than the politicians in this House do.

The Chief Minister's statement is silent on many of the things that need to be done to get to the bottom of antisocial behaviour. Labor knows that alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour in the Territory are ongoing problems which require sustained attention and action. The rush-in, rush-out approach adopted by the CLP government over the past 23 years has failed. The link between unemployment, social behaviour and alcohol-induced antisocial behaviour is crystal clear. A Labor government in the Territory would attack those underlying causes by providing better life opportunities through enhanced education, training, health and economic development for all Territorians.

As members of the House well know, in 1997, the Country Liberal Party administration axed the successful parliamentary Sessional Committee on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol by the Community. We want that body re-established, as it would be ideally placed to assess the success of alcohol programs and initiatives and to set new targets.

In conclusion, the statement of the Chief Minister was not as bad as we had expected. Labor is pleased that the terms of the debate have been broadened by the release of its plan. We urge the government to look further at initiatives in Labor's document, which it has not adopted. It needs to recognise that it must be in there in order to find lasting solutions.

There are a couple of other points that I would like to make. First of all, I want to congratulate the **police**, every last one of them, for the way in which they are tackling their work and specifically for the way in which they are tackling the initiative of foot patrols, of monitoring the offences that take place in the Northern Territory, and for taking on board very seriously the concerns of Territorians about the maintenance of law and order. As I have said before, often they place themselves in situations of danger. It is only by applying a sensitive and rational approach that we achieve real results. The **police** are then able to retain a relationship with the public which does not put them at odds, or set them up for situations of confrontation.

I think that was one of the major concerns expressed by some **police** officers. They felt that something as draconian as what the Chief Minister trumpeted when he first came back from New York was something for them to be mighty concerned about. They felt that it would completely change the relationship they had with the general public and with those people who, unfortunately, they have most contact. Those, we have to say, are the drunks and the down and outs, and those people who behave in antisocial ways. The **police** did not want that situation to deteriorate. They wanted to ensure that they had an ongoing relationship with those people and that they could maintain respect for the law by enhancing and upholding the law. It is a fine line for those **police** officers to walk, and I congratulate them on the excellent work they do in that regard.

The Chief Minister mentioned also a review of policing powers which is to be chaired by Minister Reed. I suggest to the government that it is appropriate that a member of the opposition be a part of that committee too. This is something we should be tackling together in the way that we did with the Use and Abuse of Alcohol Committee. I make that recommendation to him, and I make it in good faith, on the basis that the opposition is very interested in participating. I offer him that because I

believe that while, from time to time, we come into this House and we have a bat at each other on a political level, and we criticise the government and the government criticises us, at the end of the day we all want our streets made safer. We want them made safer for ourselves, for our kids and for our communities.

We also want something done for those people, and to those people, who are behaving in antisocial ways at the moment. When one looks at them, it is not possible to say that their lives are full of joy. They are pretty miserable individuals by and large. They are in the grip of alcohol, and usually they have alcohol-related illnesses of one sort and another. Their personal lives, their family lives, are in tatters and we are doing them no favours by allowing them to continue in that mode. We need to do what we can, for our own sakes as well as theirs, to get them off that cycle. If we can do that effectively, we will be doing the whole community a service. That is what is not addressed in this document. I suggest to the Chief Minister that it is something that needs to be tackled by this government in an ongoing way.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition's time has expired.

Mr REED (Police, Fire and Emergency Services): Madam Speaker, I want particularly to contribute to this very important debate. It is a matter of great importance and I think there is plenty of substance to the statement by the Chief Minister. I am pleased the Leader of the Opposition has seen fit to support it, as she expressed in her opening remarks. I will pick up a few of the points she made.

I want to pay tribute to the **police** at the outset. They do a wonderful job on behalf of Territorians. It is not a particularly easy job. In some circumstances, it is most difficult and, in others, quite dangerous. One of the most perplexing problems they face is trying to apply laws that address antisocial behaviour and the difficulties that go with that. We often consider that people who consume too much alcohol and create a nuisance of themselves in public through their antisocial behaviour are not sophisticated in terms of their antisocial behaviour. One would not think they spent much time trying to find means by which they can get around **police** activities. However, I think the 2 km law is an excellent example of **police** facing very difficult problems in trying to **police** a law. There are many criticisms from the public that the 2 km law is not applied. However, the difficulty in applying it is that those to whom it is applied have found some very cunning ways to frustrate **police** over the years.

I will give an example. One situation arising regularly in Katherine when **police** attend a group of people drinking grog is that the drinkers buy a plastic bottle of soft drink containing a drink whose colour is similar to wine, empty the container and fill it with wine. It is very difficult for **police** to determine whether the drinker is consuming soft drink or wine, and therefore whether that person is in breach of the 2 km law. While **police** might tip out the alcohol from the soft drink bottle, the original container of alcohol could have been stashed away in the long grass. As soon as the **police** have gone, the stash in the long grass is accessed and the people are drinking again – thus creating the impression that the **police** have not adequately dealt with the problem. That activity is precisely the kind of problem the **police** have.

Nor does it help **police** when a policy document such as this is released by the Labor Party. We have just had a reading of it by the Leader of the Opposition. She was re-reading a document that did not actually set the world on fire. Honourable members may recall that, when it was released, it was on about page 8 or 9 of the *NT News*. That was the only mention it received in the media. That is the level of interest it achieved in the community and generated among the media. It was a total failure from the day it was launched. One has only to glance through it to see that there is no substance to it.

On behalf of **police**, I make the point that on the one hand the Leader of the Opposition says in her

contribution to the debate that we as a government should give more credit to **police** and offer them more support. On the other hand, the Labor Party in its policy document alleges the **police** are not doing their job and that they have only erratically enforced the 2 km law since its introduction in 1982. Is that support for our **police** force? In a Labor policy document, they criticise the efforts of **police**. I have just demonstrated the difficulties **police** have at times in enforcing the 2 km law. Labor criticises **police** for not doing the job effectively when, in fact, the **police** are trying very hard to do a difficult job – and I think, on balance, doing it quite well.

Mr Stirling interjecting.

Mr REED: That is why ...

Mr Stirling: You can't have it both ways.

Madam SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nhulunbuy.

Mr REED: Calm down. You will end up in hospital.

Mr Stirling: He has just contradicted the Chief Minister. I point that out.

Mr REED: The honourable member will end up in hospital or somewhere if he keeps shouting like this. He will have a heart attack or something like that. Then we will have 6 of them instead of 7.

Mr Stirling interjecting.

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Mr REED: Madam Speaker, if the honourable member will just calm down – he is not doing his health any good at the moment by getting all excited like that.

I will continue with my response to the comments from the Labor Party. One must bear in mind that this follows a very long period – in fact, since the 2 km law's inception – of criticism of and opposition to the law by the Labor Party. It is only in recent times that they have seen fit to support it. We members who have been in this House for a while will recall the many very strident debates over the years in which members of the opposition have very strongly criticised the 2 km law, its application and its unfairness. All of a sudden, they now see fit to support it.

To pick up the interjection of the honourable member, I do not deny that there have been difficulties with the policing of the 2 km law. As he said, the Chief Minister himself touched on this subject. However, my point is - and this is the point that has made the member for Nhulunbuy so sensitive – that it is not the fault of **police** that the law has been erratically enforced, as the Labor Party document demonstrates. It is the difficulty that **police** have when people respond to the law in different ways. Members opposite can accuse the government of taking credit for some of the good work **police** do when, in their own policy documents, they criticise **police** for what they perceive to be poor work.

To pick up the point of the Leader of the Opposition in relation to our criticism that Labor is 'soft on crime': yes, Labor as a party is soft on crime. The best demonstration of that has been that Labor members have criticised every initiative we have brought forward to try to address antisocial behaviour. From a personal point of view, I recall an announcement I made when I was Health

Minister. It related to the provision of funding to town councils so that they might be able to work with **police** by employing wardens, or whatever else they might want to call them. The wardens could address this problem in their respective communities and make people aware of the fact that they were participating in antisocial behaviour. The council officers, funded by the government through the Living With Alcohol program, could assist the community in addressing that problem. Where did the greatest amount of opposition come from for that initiative? From the good members opposite. It was another demonstration of how every time we have tried to find measures to address these critical issues in the community, but the mob opposite has stridently opposed it.

Another excellent example was the now-successful mandatory sentencing. Madam Speaker, you might recall that, in the lead-up to the election of August last year, the media – try as they might – could not obtain a commitment from the Labor Party in relation to mandatory sentencing. They simply muttered and changed the subject. A commitment? Never! Immediately after the election, they were saying how dreadful mandatory sentencing is. As I said this morning, they have 7 members, 7 stomachs and 7 intestinal-free zones. Leading up to an election, they did not have the intestines to clearly state to the people of the Northern Territory, so that they might judge the policies of both parties, that they were opposed to mandatory sentencing. Territorians had to wait until after the election to be advised of that fact.

Perhaps that is what the good member for Nhulunbuy was alluding to only a couple of weeks ago when he challenged his boss for the leadership. He said Labor members did not know where she was coming from, and that Labor had to be more definitive in its policies. Perhaps that was what he was getting at.

That is just a quick look at where the Labor Party is coming from. It is a demonstration that the Labor Party is soft on crime. It says the government has done nothing and that we face a terrible problem. However, in relation to the alcohol programs for which the Leader of the Opposition tried to take credit, this very week a national body that does assessments of alcohol programs and the funding provided by governments to combat excessive consumption of alcohol, and the education programs that go with it, has judged the Territory to have an exceptional performance.

Mr Burke interjecting.

Mr REED: Where has the Leader of the Opposition been? Does she not listen to the radio? Of course, she has a selective ear. She does not hear the things that the government does that are reported on favourably; she wants only to hear the negative. I understand that report shows the Northern Territory government was 20 times better than the national average. I recall from that news item that New South Wales spent somewhere in the order of \$6 per head on alcohol education programs and similar activities, whereas the Northern Territory spent well in excess of \$70 per head on similar programs.

As the honourable Minister for Health, Family and Children's Services has just pointed out, it is the fourth time the Northern Territory has received a very favourable report card. I suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that, as much as it might hurt her, she should not be so selective. It would do her a great deal of good in the constituency that she represents, and in other parts of the Territory, if she were to honourably and honestly portray the facts, rather than selecting only those that meet her political needs.

The additional actions, within resources, included in the statement by the Chief Minister, to which the Leader of the Opposition took exception, have been fulfilled. In relation to her comments that there should be assurance of a minimum staffing establishment, which she linked back to the activities

outlined in the Chief Minister's statement, that assurance is there. **Police numbers** are rising. Not only is the assurance there, but the figures were included in the Chief Minister's speech, although the Leader of the Opposition seems to have overlooked them. The precise funding levels were somewhere in the order of \$4.5m in the 1998-99 budget for extra **police** establishment **numbers**.

As I advised the **Police** Association meeting yesterday morning, the forward estimates for the **Police** Department include \$6m a year from 2000 onwards. This will ensure that the staffing establishment of the **police**, once it reaches 880 in 1999-2000, will be maintained at that level. If it is in the budget, and the funding is provided, I find it difficult to understand why members opposite cannot accept that those figures will be maintained. I might also remind them that it was this government in the lead-up to the election last year that made a commitment to increase **police numbers** by 150. It was the opposition ...

Mr Stirling: Who pushed you into it.

Mr REED: ... who made a commitment to increase **police numbers** by 100 if Labor were elected.

Members interjecting.

Mr REED: You were going to give the **police** an extra 100 officers ...

Mr Stirling: 100 minimum, and you think that is nothing?

Mr REED: That is what you thought of them. We made a commitment to give them 150 extra.

Mr Stirling: After we forced you to do it.

Mr REED: Intestine-free zone that you are, you could not force anybody to do anything, you great wimp!

Mr Stirling: You were not even going to ...

Mr REED: Fancy you suggesting that you forced anybody to do anything. What a joke!

Madam SPEAKER: Order!

Mr REED: What a joke, Madam Speaker!

The commitment we made to provide an extra 150 on the establishment of the **police** is being kept. The funding is in the forward estimates for **police** to enable the force to continue that increase through to 880 officers in the year 1999-2000 and beyond.

With regard to **police** resources, it is interesting to compare, as the Leader of the Opposition suggested, the interest of other **police** forces as they try to headhunt and attract **police** officers from one **police** force to another. It saves them a little in training money, I suppose, if they can attract a trained officer. There are always circumstances where an officer in one particular force might seek employment in another jurisdiction, even for personal reasons.

Over show weekend in the member for Barkly's electorate, I had a few drinks with some officers. We

were chatting about different things, including the equipment they have. I inquired about the remote-area **police** patrol vehicles, the 4-wheel drives, that were implemented just before Christmas last year. I inquired about their suitability and how those patrols were working out. The officers I was talking with have fairly close contact with the **police** at Camooweal. Of course, the officers at Avon Downs have a similar contact. One officer gave me a comparison of the sorts of equipment that we have in the Northern Territory for the **police** and those that are provided in Queensland. There are 2 officers stationed at the Queensland **police** station at Camooweal and, between them, they have one car. If one officer is called out to attend an accident or some other matter, they take the **police** car. If something else happens in town while that officer is away in the **police** car, the second officer has to use his own vehicle. He has to trot down, arrest someone and cart them back to the **police** station in his private vehicle. If it is an incident that is considered serious enough, they get on the radio or the telephone to our **police** at Avon Downs and ask for a paddy wagon to be taken across.

Members of the opposition should never undersell the level of equipment that is provided to Territory **police**, or the work that they do with it. It ill behoves them to underestimate either the commitment of our **police** to the job or the level of equipment that is provided to them by this government. Of course, if we had our druthers, we would like to do much more in many areas of government. However, there are limits to the amount of expenditure that any government can undertake. We think that the allocation of resources, \$27m extra to the **police** over the last few years, is sufficient to meet the needs of the Northern Territory.

I will be getting the review of **police** powers under way in the very near future. The **Police** Association will be represented on that and 2 members from the community. I heard the comment by the Leader of the Opposition in relation to the potential for an opposition member to be on it. I do not know who they would have. The Leader of the Opposition sacked the member for Nhulunbuy who was previously opposition spokesperson on **police**. Given the strident opposition to everything that this government has done, as far as new initiatives are concerned, to combat the sorts of problems that we are discussing here today, one would find it difficult to recognise how opposition members might contribute successfully and meaningfully to the review.

There are a number of issues that we should look at, quite apart from the matter that the Chief Minister raised today. They are issues that distract from the activities of the **police**, or call them away to do non-**police** type work. The things that I will look at include complaints made about **police** and how they are investigated and reported on. That system may not be as efficient as it might be. I know it calls on many **police** resources. There may be a way to do it without creating the amount of work involved at this time.

In addition to that, there are some other matters such as the reporting procedures and the declaration of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. I think they need to be revisited. I am not saying they need to be abolished, but I think the parameters were set too loosely. For example, if **police** were pursuing an Aboriginal person in a car and there was an accident and that person died, I believe that would be treated as a death in custody. If, as happened recently, **police** were called to an incident and spoke to a person who was subsequently admitted to hospital – not by **police**, who had left the scene – and died, that would have been considered a death in custody simply because **police** had attended to that person beforehand. Those sorts of situations and deaths in custody reports take an awful lot of **police** resources. I think we need to look more closely at the use of **police** time and how their resources are allocated.

I very strongly support the statement made by the Chief Minister. I am sure that, as it is implemented, the measure he has outlined will result in benefits for the Territory community.

Mr STIRLING (Nhulunbuy): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the Minister for **Police** criticises members on this side of the House for never sitting down and talking with **police**, having a beer with them, and going over their normal day-to-day activities. I say it is interesting because, just a couple of weeks ago, I released a media statement and spoke on ABC radio about the **numbers of police** officers based at Nhulunbuy. My point was, and the fact is, that with just 3 officers more, a 24-hour **police** station could be run there.

I also pointed out that I had attended the last couple of **police** graduations, at which the Minister for **Police** had officiated. Something like 25 or 28 officers came into the **police** force on each occasion. They are off to Casuarina, Katherine, Berrimah, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and everywhere – but none for Nhulunbuy out of about 50 new **police** officers coming into the force. So I raised that matter and - surprise, surprise! - thanks to the level of paranoia that exists in some levels in the Northern Territory government, the **police** station had phone calls to try to establish who had been speaking to the other side, who had been speaking to Syd Stirling about what was going on.

That is the sort of response we see if we ever dare raise anything publicly, if we ever dare speak to a public servant, if we ever dare speak with the officers in charge of the local **police** station. They have phone calls back through the system asking who on earth is talking to the member for Nhulunbuy and why are they talking to him, because he is from the other side of politics. So, the minister might like to take that on board and suggest that they be a little bit more relaxed and less paranoid about this. It should be acceptable for them to talk to their local member who, after all, is there to represent their interests as much as those of anybody else in the community. That is simply what I was doing as the local member.

However, we particularly welcome the statement and its content. We most definitely welcome it, because it is remarkably similar to the document released by myself and the Leader of the Opposition on behalf of the Labor Party just a few weeks ago.

I was planning to go through the detail of the trip to Los Angeles and New York but I will first turn my attention to the points raised by the Chief Minister and Attorney-General in his statement. I will cross-refer them to the document we have had out for weeks, just to make certain that members of this House understand how closely the documents relate. After doing that, one really must ask the Chief Minister what parts of our document he did not agree with, given the similarity overall. The fact that much of our paper will be implemented is welcomed by us, although I note that there is no acknowledgement anywhere within his speech of our input - of course!

At the start of his document, on page 2, he says he wants to seek a stricter enforcement of the *Summary Offences Act*. Page 4 of our document is headed, 'Labor will combat alcohol-induced antisocial behaviour by enforcing existing laws'. Labor wants the existing laws that already target antisocial behaviour properly enforced. Consuming grog in a public place, being 2 km from a licensed premises, comes under the *Summary Offences Act*, as do offensive conduct, offensive language, provoking fights, abusing others, indecent exposure, fighting, threatening people, demanding money and swearing in public. When we looked at formulating a statement and a discussion paper, we found that all the provisions were already there.

On page 3 of the Attorney-General's statement, he said he looked to increase support for night patrols, sobering-up shelters and refuges. On page 3 of our document, we said we wanted to run community night patrols that picked up drunks and took them to sobering-up shelters. We said it is an effective way of dealing with drunks who crash out in public areas, and that night patrols enhance the work of Territory **police** by allowing them to get on with other activities. It is all there, exactly the same.

On page 4 of the document of his speech, he said: 'We have the legislative means to deal effectively with antisocial behaviour'. On page 8, he said: 'The *Criminal Code* and *Summary Offences Act* remain important tools'. On page 8 again he said: 'We have the legislative means'. On page 12 are the same words: 'We have the legislative means'. That is exactly what we found when we put our document together.

I thought it was interesting that the Chief Minister said:

It has never been the intention of the Northern Territory government to import zero tolerance policing as it is applied in New York ... but rather to learn from the experience of other jurisdictions.

He says elsewhere in the document that it works. I recall him saying at one stage that we have some of it in the NT. Given his statement today, I have a question: why did he attack me publicly when we released our discussion paper on our return from that trip, as having been rolled over by my caucus when he has released almost exactly the same statement? It is almost exactly the same policy. He wants to accuse me of being rolled over, yet he was the one who was gung-ho about zero tolerance policing and how well it works and how it would be implemented in the Northern Territory.

On page 19 of his statement he talked about the strategy of targeted policing, concentrating on hot spots. Our document also contains references to hot spot policing and the need to target those areas where social problems occur. It is covered in the first point of the summary: 'Targeted **police** patrols at hot spots'. On page 21, the Attorney-General says: 'We can call this policy "zero tolerance policing". We can call it "problem-oriented policing". We can call it "community policing". We can call it "problem-solving policing". He invites us to pick any term that suits us, but he wants us to stay away from 'zero tolerance policing', because he wants to back away a little bit from that statement. He has come up with 4 or 5 terms that all mean the same, but he wanted to move a little bit away from 'zero tolerance policing'.

Farther on in the document, from page 24 to page 27, he talked about the statistics system that had been put in place. Each of the Territory centres reports on public disorder activity on a weekly basis in a uniform manner. One of the impressive aspects of what we saw in the United States was the statistical recording by the Los Angeles and New York **police**, and the ease with which they seemed to be able to produce statistics on a weekly basis. We said in our document that the Country Liberal Party's lack of up-to-date, accurate information about violation of the law and perpetual drunks is alarming. Strategic policing requires up-to-date crime and complaints statistics. Implicit in that is the need for a huge upgrade of information technology systems.

On page 28, the Attorney-General talked about patrol-generated activity having been increased as part of hot spot foot patrols. He talked about a stronger **police** presence on the streets and in public areas helping to deter unlawful behaviour and putting **police** on the spot where and when antisocial behaviour occurs. We have learned from the Chief Minister that **police** have been doing exactly that in a number of Territory centres over the last few weeks. He did not mention Nhulunbuy in that statement, but I am firmly of the view that **police** have been doing it in Nhulunbuy over the past 8 or 10 weeks as well.

On page 29, he talked about the Darwin central business district having complaint-free days in the Mall. This was a direct consequence of increased patrols as opposed to **police** simply reacting to complaints. Again, that is covered substantially in our document. At page 31, he talked about a substantial and significant upgrading of information technology so that '**police** will know where the offences have been committed, once reported, and where the nearest **police** vehicle is', all visually

displayed on computers. We welcome that. That is exactly the sort of thing that we are talking about in our document, released a few weeks ago.

Before I go into the detail of the trip itself, I want to put on record my thanks to Gary Shipway from the Chief Minister's office and Al Merchant and Matt Harrison of the Northern Territory Tourist Commission office in Los Angeles, who worked particularly hard. The 3 of them as a team worked very well to ensure that the itinerary held together and people knew where they had to be at what times for meetings, and they ensured that the whole thing rolled smoothly.

Our first meeting with **police** was with Chief J I Davis and senior staff at South Central **Police** Headquarters, located in the toughest criminal jurisdiction in Los Angeles. Los Angeles has an estimated 60 000 gang members responsible for break-ins and a wide variety of drug-related criminal behaviour including homicide. When the Los Angeles **Police** Department busted the 18th Street gang in mid-1997, crime fell in that area by 86%. They used a form of injunction to achieve their objective, alleging the gang was an unincorporated body engaged in criminal activity constituting a public nuisance. This meant that gang members could be arrested if they assembled on the street – similar in some ways to early Australian laws making it an offence to associate with a known criminal.

The *Los Angeles Times* on 16 May 1998 carried a relevant editorial. I will not quote it, but the subject was the imprisonment for 25 years to life of a person named Benson for the theft of a carton of cigarettes. Benson had a conviction for break and enter and theft some 15 years before. They broke that into 2 offences, so the theft of the cigarettes became his third offence. Prosecutors have a discretionary power to call a minor theft – normally a misdemeanour – a felony under the '3 strikes and you're in' rule. In the Benson case, they separated 2 connected misdemeanours and upgraded them to felonies and called the theft of a carton of cigarettes a third felony. Under '3 strikes and you're in', Benson is doing 25 years to life.

The Benson case is similar to the confusion now surrounding our own mandatory sentencing laws under which a number of charges can result in a defendant going down for 14 days on a first offence, 3 months on a second offence, and 12 months on the third, with additional 12-month sentences for each conviction thereafter. It is absurd sentencing which will result in many people being imprisoned for years, possibly for quite minor property offences. Sentencing such as this places property before people in the eyes of the law. That is a situation calling for far more consideration.

In New York, we met with Deputy Chief Pat Kelleher, an Irish New Yorker who is very proud of what has been achieved in crime reduction in the past 6 or 7 years. He said he used to be embarrassed to say that he came from New York. But now, with business booming, tourism back on a grand scale, hotels full all over town, rentals and property markets sky-high and the streets safe to walk at night, he is enormously proud. It was clear that the **police** themselves are held highly accountable for crime in their areas. There is no attempt to analyse underlying causes of crime – it is simply up to the **police** to combat it.

The crime statistics arrive in the office each Monday morning at 11 o'clock. In fact, Pat Kelleher was eagerly awaiting them when we met him. The statistics are analysed on Tuesday and precinct commanders are called to account at 7 am each Wednesday, to outline what strategies they are implementing in their precinct. The areas of crime are noted and **police** resources are dedicated to hot spots to knock out criminal activity there.

The weekly provision of statistics in a city of 7 million-odd and a **police** force approaching 40 000 compares very favourably with our own production of statistics. In April this year, the Attorney-General was able to give Territorians statistics only up to the previous January. Commissioner Bates was most

interested in the compilation of statistics, and I thought it was an element of United States policing of great relevance to the Territory. I understand now from the Chief Minister's statement that we will be moving very rapidly to put in information systems that will give us similar results.

Following the meeting with Kelleher, we spent over 2 hours with Inspector Jesse Peterson. He gave what I considered to be a valuable background to the whole New York situation. He explained that problems on the streets were incremental. A dozen or so drunks sleeping in cardboard boxes under a bridge for protection from the elements were initially ignored. Their group steadily grew to 200, then to 500. The city authorities found they had a centre for homeless drunks and drug addicts with associated crime and hygiene problems right under their nose.

A similar situation existed with squeegee men, fellows at stop lights who wash car windscreens for middle-class New Yorkers whether they want it or not, and demand a \$1 payment. Soon their demands turned to harassment and intimidation. Eventually, Jesse's wife and mother were accosted. They pointed out that their windscreen was clean. The man spat on the windscreen, smeared his hand over it and said, 'It isn't now'.

Harassing Peterson's wife and mother was it for the squeegee men. According to Norman Segal, the director of the Civil Liberties Union, war was declared on them. They were made public enemy No 1. Segal claimed that there were only ever 76 squeegee men, trying to make an honest living. They and the prostitutes and the panhandlers, which is what Americans call beggars, were harassed and hounded through the courts until the streets were clean. No one could say where they went. Segal's opinion was that they had been banished to the fringe of the business and tourist area of New York, Manhattan Central. Certainly, women walk alone in the streets at 11.00 pm or midnight – something apparently unheard of a few years ago.

The city has a work experience program – work for the dole – for people who come through the courts. Some of them do go on to full-time employment but, obviously, many would not cope. Drug deals were common on New York streets in broad daylight when New York **Police** Department officers had no jurisdiction to deal with narcotics, in order to protect them from corruption. The pushers could only be dealt with by drug enforcement officers. Once the NYPD was given jurisdiction, drug trafficking in the city areas was quickly cleared up. Again, it was displaced to upstate New York, to Westchester, where authorities complain of increasing **numbers** of drug dealers who have found New York City too hot a place to operate in.

All categories of crime show a major reduction within the city. Homicides are down from 2200 5 years ago to 778 last year.

An example used to illustrate the efficacy of zero tolerance policing is that of turnstile jumpers – subway fare evaders. When the **police** concentrated on picking them up, they found they were picking up many offenders on outstanding warrants, from homicide to littering. Often these people were carrying concealed weapons.

Before the election of Mayor Giuliani and **Police** Commissioner Braddock, **police** attention remained focused on the big crimes of homicide and drug dealing. Concentration on the small items has made the city safer and friendlier – albeit with a prison population of 20 000, which is higher than that of 40 entire states of the USA.

Los Angeles has built 21 prisons in the past 20 years and 1 university. Education expenditure has decreased by 4.5% while corrections spending has increased by the same amount. There appears to have been no public criticism of that balance of expenditure.

In the District Attorney's office in New York, we first met with attorney Ray Costello. He explained that the office prosecutes absolutely every offence. The increased workload has been handled by paralegals drawing up more simple charges on uniform charge sheets, saving the resources of trained lawyers. They use video-conferencing with **police** to save them time spent in court. An enormous number of cases involve plea bargaining, in most cases rubber-stamped by the judge. A second felony in a 10-year period means state prison. Repeated minor offences - misdemeanours - can be elevated to felonies. This is in the criminal code.

Costello said he had observed a difference on New York streets in 3 years. The same pride exhibited by the **police** was apparent. He also remarked that violent crime was now being reduced to the extent that there is not enough work for all the senior attorneys. Robert Morgenthau, at 77 years of age, is the dean of all District Attorneys in the States. He was US Attorney-General under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

Austin Asche and I met with Norman Segal, who is Mayor Giuliani's biggest critic on issues of **police** brutality. The mayor actually appointed Segal to a task force to come up with recommendations to combat **police** excesses. By the time we met Segal, the Mayor had disbanded the task force and Segal had produced a dissenting report outlining examples of **police** brutality.

I believe Segal was moderate in outlook, and he appeared perplexed that New Yorkers had not lined up with him to criticise the mayor and **police**. He maintained that the squeegee men were victimised because they happened to harass a small number of middle-class citizens. In support of his theory that problem people had been banished, some **police** were happy to tell us that the NYPD was getting complaints from upstate that drug trafficking and other problems were on the increase because New York had become too hot.

Segal also pointed out that, although 32% of NYPD officers are non-white, only 10 of the captains are black, 6 are Hispanic and 1 is Asian. That is simply not representative of the population. Segal believes that the **police** effort is directed against the poor, the homeless, alcoholics, drug addicts and the mentally disabled who transgress New York's laws, and that the make-up of the **police** contributes to the singling-out of minorities.

That has a direct application to the Northern Territory, particularly if we recall the Chief Minister's call to the community to monster and stamp on drunks. In fact, there were 2 extremely serious clashes with drunks within a short time of that statement. While I draw no direct link, as Chief Minister, he should be much more careful in his public utterances because he knows his remarks will be widely reported. Who knows what maniac will act on such statements at any time?

To lock up drunks and homeless people as a short-term legal fix, without consideration of long-term social and economic imbalances that contribute to their problems, will be ultimately self-defeating with more and more people being locked up for longer and longer periods. In that sense, zero tolerance policing is, in itself, an admission of failure in that society has not addressed the initial socioeconomic problems. Banishing problem people to the outskirts of our towns, as appears to have occurred in New York, is simply not an option for the Northern Territory with its smaller towns and populations. In addition, in the main, we are talking about traditional owners of the country in which we live and work. In the end, do we, as a community, retain a level of compassion for those less fortunate than ourselves and extend resources at least to try to assist and rehabilitate these people? Or do we go the way of New York, and clinically clean the city in such a way that no one can see where all the people causing the problems have gone?

We met with the criminal justice coordination office, which is the policy development body for the mayor. It was equally proud of what had been achieved. However, the one glitch on the horizon was that, despite crime reductions across the board, this ...

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr TOYNE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, I move that the member be granted an extension of time.

Motion agreed to.

Mr STIRLING: Mr Deputy Speaker, I will be brief.

The one glitch on the horizon was that, despite crime reductions across the board, this office reported a recent increase in juvenile crime. This was in such sharp contrast to all the trends across the state, and recent theories such as the little-brother theory that if older siblings are in prison the younger generations behave themselves, that the people we spoke to were unable to offer any explanation for it. It was a relatively recent phenomenon and no one was able to come up with an explanation. It would be worth watching over the next 12 months or so.

Zero tolerance policing, as a means of targeting **police** resources, appears to have worked in New York with its population of 7 or 8 million. However, crime continues to decline in most United States cities, including many which do not have any form of zero tolerance policing. There are suggestions that some reduction is due to a strong and growing economy with increasing employment opportunities. The huge decrease in homicides, the cleaning of the streets of drug dealers, addicts, the homeless, the poor and the alcoholics have been, in the main, little more than a displacement to the city's outskirts by many of them, and prison for the rest.

I believe the Los Angeles and New York **police** management information system's production of weekly crime statistics should be looked at very closely. From the Chief Minister's statement today, we know that the Northern Territory government is doing exactly that. I believe we can have an even better system because, obviously, if they can do it in New York with a population of 8 million and a **police** force of 40 000, we could do it here. Regular strategy meetings with senior management throughout the Northern Territory could be conducted using video-conferencing for the remote regions.

Some aspects of zero tolerance policing apply already, of course, in the Northern Territory and the relatively recent *Kava Management Act* is a prime example. If it had not been **policed** at zero tolerance level, it would have been a waste of time passing it in the first place.

However, in respect of public drunkenness, which would come under zero tolerance policing if it were to be recriminalised, what would be gained by shunting offenders in and out of prison without resorting to any form of rehabilitation?

I welcome the Attorney-General's statement today. The government is not looking, at least at this stage, at the recriminalisation of drunkenness. Many of these people are lost to their communities and have nowhere else to go. However, as the opposition in this House, we must continue to demand of the government that, as with substance abuse and domestic violence in Aboriginal communities, a long-term strategy be implemented to deal with the socioeconomic imbalance that exists across the Northern Territory which contributes so much to the origin of these problems.

Labor's response to alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour has been issued as a discussion paper throughout the community. I have pinpointed the similarities between what the Attorney-General has presented today and what we put out a number of weeks ago. Of course, in our view, that strengthens what the Attorney-General had to say today. I believe our paper represents a considered, humane and comprehensive response to these social difficulties. The opposition considers government has gone at least some way down the path, if not as far as we would have wanted it to go.

Mr MANZIE (Asian Relations, Trade and Industry): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to support the statement by the Chief Minister. It was a most comprehensive statement. It indicated the value of travelling, looking at innovative processes that have been implemented in a particular area, and being able to pick up on the successes that others have had and translate them in a way which will benefit Territorians.

At the outset, I will comment on some of the remarks made by members opposite. The Leader of the Opposition was rather cute, criticising media reports of statements made by the Chief Minister that the government would be targeting drunken behaviour, zero tolerance policing and the offence of drunkenness. That is what this is about. This is about antisocial and drunken behaviour by undesirable elements in our community. This behaviour has made it difficult for Territorians to go about their daily business in safety and without harassment.

Tourists visiting the Territory should be able to enjoy the amenities of the Territory without being interfered with, either directly or indirectly, by people who are drinking to excess and who have an unreasonable attitude. At the extreme, these people become totally antisocial and create dangerous situations for Territorians and visitors.

I was very surprised by the Leader of the Opposition's comment that the CLP government had copied Labor policy. Over the years, Labor policy has been abysmal when it comes to policing, and I have to ...

Members interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: You will get a go later. If you want to get up and talk on this, you will have an opportunity to do so later. Wait your turn.

I remember the lack of support by members opposite for moves to empower **police** to fingerprint criminals. I remember the lack of support when the government enacted legislation to enable suspects to be held for a period of time for questioning. I remember the lack of support by the opposition for a bill that was introduced and passed by the government to remove the automatic provision of bail for offenders. I remember the lack of support when legislation was debated in relation to the power to demand a person's name and address. We are all very aware of the lack of support for the mandatory sentencing option which provides a direction for courts to provide a sentence for people whom **police** bring, under quite difficult circumstances at times, before the courts.

I certainly remember the Labor Party's support for providing **numbers** for **police**, and trying to force **police** to wear **numbers**, and also for doing away with provisions which would enable identification of offenders. Therefore, members opposite should not talk to me about the CLP government copying Labor policy when, in fact, Labor's policy with regard to law and order has been not only soft, but anti-**police** and pro-criminal. The record shows that very clearly. If anyone in this House or outside, or anyone reading this transcript at a later time, has any doubt about that, a little research in the library will show clearly the veracity of what I have said.

Another example of the Labor Party's attitude was the debacle at Nyirripi a few years ago. Labor members in this parliament supported the 10 people who carried out a cowardly attack there on 2 **police** officers. A **police** car was completely destroyed and people attempted to kill those 2 officers. I remember members in this House trying to make an issue of the incident, blaming the **police**. I mention that to indicate further the Labor Party's attitude to **police** and to law and order.

Another matter the Leader of the Opposition brought up was how hot spots can be **policed** without resources. It has been made very clear that, as well as the extra \$27m that has gone to **police** over the last few years, **police numbers** have certainly increased dramatically. **Numbers** have increased from 775 to 861 and will increase to 880. That is outlined on page 7 of the Chief Minister's statement. There are far more **police** per head of population here than anywhere else in Australia. I think the average of Australia is about 1 member of **police** personnel to 600-odd people.

Mr Ah Kit interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: In the Territory, it is about 150.

I am glad the member of Arnhem mentioned that. I will say it again: he can look at the records. The ALP did not advocate an extra 100 **police**. In fact, their policy document said they would force an extra 100 **police** to go on the beat, but they would not increase it by 100. They had a wishy-washy attitude, which has been well and truly identified in this parliament. Perusal of the records will show just how mealy-mouthed their attitude is in this area.

Just to finish up on their attitudes, I will comment on their alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour plan: 'Attacking the problem, not the people'. Obviously there must be a bit of attack on the offenders, otherwise the problem will not be solved. I will read out the opening paragraph of this document:

Alcohol-induced antisocial behaviour is not a new problem facing the Territory. The Country Liberal Party has been in office for 23 years. [I am glad they accept that fact.] During its uninterrupted stint of power, the unacceptable problem of alcohol-induced antisocial behaviour has been neglected.

That last statement is total and utter rubbish. I speak with some authority. I have been here for many years, much longer than most of the opposition, with the exception of a couple of members ...

Mr Ah Kit interjecting.

Mr MANZIE: I defer to the member for Arnhem.

Obviously, the people who wrote this are later comers. When I was working as a **policeman** 30-odd years ago, the problem of alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour, in comparison to our population size, was much worse. We used to have up to 60 to 70 people an evening locked in the **police** cells in Bennett Street for this sort of antisocial behaviour. In Alice Springs, on some weekends, up to 600 people would be apprehended over the weekend for antisocial and drunken behaviour. There were no sobering-up shelters, support mechanisms, anti-alcohol programs or programs of any sort regarding support or education. A statement like that in the first paragraph just shows how out of touch the ALP is. With a little bit of research – and it does not take much effort to go to the library – even they could have been able to get it right from the very first paragraph. Obviously, getting it right is not as important to them as writing a bit of rubbish that suits their left-wing trendy members.

Another comment: 'Looking for a simple solution, zero tolerance policing is not the answer'. It is good

to see the ALP is now supporting the concept of zero tolerance policing in the Territory, because it was not so long ago that this was written. Obviously, they were catering to their left-wing supporters in saying they do not support it.

It is also worth mentioning that, on page 3, it says a strong **police** presence on the streets and in public areas will help to deter unlawful behaviour - 'putting **police** on the spot where and when antisocial behaviour occurs'. One of the problems, of course, is that when **police** are on the spot where antisocial behaviour occurs, it does not happen. The problem is having a system in place that enables problem areas to be targeted in a way that catches offenders as well as stopping the offence. That is quite important.

Another comment on page 3 relates to an effective way of dealing with drunks who crash out and sleep in public areas. They are not the people who are creating antisocial behaviour problems. In fact, if a drunk is asleep under a bush - out of sight, out of mind - he is not harming anyone. It is the person who is accosting people, demanding money, swearing, abusing or attempting to assault people - that is the sort of person we are talking about, people who make life uncomfortable for ordinary Territorians. They are the people this particular program is aimed at.

The member for Nhulunbuy made a couple of comments. He said he would like the Minister for **Police** to encourage **police** to talk to their local member. I think that, on a couple of occasions, he has given them a good chance to talk to him. I would have thought he would be looking to keep out of their way after his past experiences.

The other point I think is very important to note is that the concept of zero tolerance policing is one of total approach. It is one that requires the **police** to utilise the options that are available. It is one that requires support right across the board for those actions. **Police** presently have the tools to tackle antisocial behaviour. There is legislation. The member for Nhulunbuy listed a number of street offences covered by legislation that is presently on the books. This parliament passed that legislation. We should all be aware of what it is. However, it is no good just having the legislation there without the options. **Police** have the ability to provide a broad approach to crime, but they cannot be locked in without having the ability to use all the options that are available to them. They must have the ability to use their discretion.

However, the fact is there is no point in having the discretion option there with no support forthcoming through the court process, health services, the general community, or members of the opposition. Why would they choose an option that will create hassles for them? Why would they not use the easy option, such as taking the person into custody or just dropping him or her off at the sobering-up shelter? Factors such as the performance of some lawyers, some members of the opposition, the pressure groups, and the lack of support in court sentencing make life very difficult for **police**. **Police** officers are only human and so they will take the easy option of removing the problem during their shift. Then, if the problem returns after they finish work, it will not be their concern.

We, as a community, have to make sure that we provide support if **police** are to have a management regime that requires them to be able to utilise all the options that are available. At the end of the day, it certainly will make life much better for Territorians. It will make our community safer. It will allow law-abiding people to enjoy the quality of life. However, it certainly will require people to think very carefully before they automatically go into criticism mode of the **police**. The member for Stuart provided a good example of how easily that happens when he was commenting on **police** actions at Jabiru. He fell into the trap of making comments critical of **police** behaviour without finding out the full details, and without thinking about the very difficult task involved. Such off-the-cuff comments may pander to the left-wing members of his party, but people like the member for Stuart have to bite their

tongue. They have to realise that there is always more than one side to a story.

If we are to have our **police** force operating under a zero tolerance policing policy, if we are going to reclaim our streets and reclaim our community, we as community leaders have to be supportive or, at the very least, refrain from publicly criticising the actions of **police** until such time as full details are at hand. If we do not provide that support in all our administrative mechanisms, and if we do not provide that support through our actions, we will find that **police** will not continue in the direction that they have started moving in. They will start to settle back into the comfort zone. Believe me, if they do not get support right across the board, they cannot be expected to carry out their duties in full. It is human nature not to do so.

I support that statement by the Chief Minister. I congratulate him on the trip that he made and I congratulate the member for Nhulunbuy for his attitude after his travels. I also say to the opposition, do not just tick this off with a few words. Act accordingly if you are committed to this. Do not be mealy-mouthed, uttering a few platitudes in here, and then get stuck into the **police** when they carry out their very difficult duties and something goes wrong, or someone comes to complain to you. Be fair dinkum about it and we might end up with a community that is safe for all of us, and especially for our children.

I support the statement.

Mr TOYNE (Stuart): Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not know whether the previous speaker had finished or whether his battery just ran out.

As we have already stated, there is a lot of suspicious similarity between the document we put out 2 weeks ago and the statement the Chief Minister has trotted out today. I have no regrets about that. In opposition, it is pretty good when the government picks up some of our initiatives and turns them into public action. We have a lot of faith in what we put into our document. It came out of a lot of direct consultation with the communities including the survey that I did down in Alice Springs, which matched what Alice Springs households were telling us some 12 months or so ago.

Although one can see initiatives throughout the statement that accord with those that we have been putting forward, I can find no positive view of the future of Territory society in it. What I see in the Chief Minister's statement is a community that is becoming increasingly reliant on policing and imprisonment to maintain a lifestyle. That worries me a lot. These initiatives are providing a measure of the neglect and the inequities that exist in the Territory community.

One can easily walk from Cullen Bay, where people live in considerable opulence, across the tip of the point to Mindil Beach, where others are literally living under trees. I do not resent the accumulation of wealth. The Cullen Bay people probably worked hard for it. The point I am making is that, less than 1 km apart in this community, we have the very rich and the very poor, and the economic gulf is widening.

The cost of applying law and order measures such as these to marginalised groups, whether they are people from broken families in urban centres who may well be non-Aboriginal or from families in Aboriginal communities either in remote or in urban areas, is growing all the time. That escalation is the price of the neglect that has gone on for years. The neglect I am talking about is in allowing population centres to exist, or small areas within our big urban areas to exist, where people really do not have the same expectation that they will get a job, where they do not have the same expectation that their children will get a good education – or the conviction that it is important for them to get a good education – where a lifetime of good health is not a given, and where the actual lifespan may be

far shorter than what I hope we can all look forward to in here.

That kind of situation can come out of a number of factors. One is that nothing is being made available to them. I have spent 20 years in communities where getting a job is a rarity for the bulk of community members, where any schooling beyond primary level is a rarity, where good health for the bulk of the community is a rarity, and where the environment is not capable of sustaining key elements of the lifestyle that is taken for granted in the cities. I believe these deprivations are more than likely to lead to antisocial behaviour.

I am not saying that we all have to take on a great guilt complex. What I am saying is that these are budgetary decisions. These are decisions about priorities, and they can be undecided and reordered. It does not help, on top of that fiscal neglect, to have the black-beating that we see in the Territory and the types of statements that we hear from the Deputy Chief Minister about 'unwashed ferals'. These people are people. Essentially, the important point is that there are antecedent factors that made them behave like this.

They are going to be in our community for the foreseeable future, as long as we leave things unchanged, and they are going to increase in **numbers**, exacerbating the difficulties they are creating for the rest of Territory citizens. And at the moment, instead of building for a future for our people into the next 20, 30 or 50 years through strong health and educational initiatives and strong employment initiatives, we are pouring increasing resources into simply defending our present.

It really gets down to a fundamental question of where we are heading. Are we going to be Territorians proud, independent and free – the whole lot of us? Or are we going to continue on as the most imprisoned and **policed** community in the nation? Lifestyles all come at a cost, but the ultimate goal of a stable and a healthy community is that we all share in the benefits of the community. If we have a marginalised and impoverished section of our community and it is growing, it will become more and more difficult to defend the interests of the majority.

Unless the root causes of antisocial behaviour are addressed, the cycle will not be broken. Nothing will improve. All we can look forward to is further increases in our health expenditure, further increases in our law and order expenditure, and further increases in our social welfare expenditure. That is not a future I want for the Territory. The warning signs are there – they have been there for a long time. We must start addressing the root causes as well as adopting the initiatives that both of these statements outline.

In addressing the root causes of unemployment, we should at least be looking very actively at getting our young people into jobs as soon as they leave the school system, so that they are not added onto the pile of people who are abusing substances and behaving antisocially. We must try to do much more about the marginalisation of people in our community. I do not include only Aboriginal people in that – I include all youth. Many young non-Aboriginal people turn out to be just as alienated from the bulk of society as Aboriginal Territorians. What they are looking for, often in vain, is some sense of vision of our total community and what their place is in it, and also what good the community is achieving together.

We are talking here about broad and substantial programs. We are not talking about band-aid measures of substance rehabilitation or interventions on a very small scale, a night patrol here and a night patrol there, putting the funding in and taking it off something else to suit some political expedient. This has to do with the fundamental image that we have of the future of our community. Unless we take a major stand on this, all we can look forward to is more and more of the debates that we have in here on this issue with monotonous regularity.

The measures that are outlined in the Chief Minister's statement are not zero tolerance policing. If they were, we would oppose them. For my electorate, zero tolerance policing would mean the same as mandatory sentencing – more youngsters hanging themselves in custody, and more parents taken away from the families and therefore not able to continue with their parenting responsibility, often through causes that are not related to that particular community. It leads to more of the mothers and the grandparents visiting their kinfolk in jail and spending an inordinate amount of family resources on maintaining those contacts when they should be applying those resources directly to the rearing of their kids. It means a greater distrust by remote and marginal groups for the wider society. They simply cannot see their own future as secure within the broader society. If that is the way we are heading, then zero tolerance policing will make an additional contribution to those trends. I am dead against it, and I have said that on previous occasions.

However, I do not think that this statement means zero tolerance policing. The first problem with zero tolerance policing is, what is it? In a school in Chicago, it is to do with removing hand guns from the kids so that, when they come into the classroom, they do not shoot each other or the teacher. That is called 'zero tolerance policing'. In other places, it is total application of laws within a locality. I cannot see anything in the Chief Minister's statement that says that what he thinks has been going on even remotely resembles that. He said at various stages through his statement that it is a 'back to basics' initiative. I will acknowledge and accept that with no problem at all. The initiative of the Tennant Creek **police** in starting up patrols down the main street of Tennant Creek resulted in, I understand, a 40% reduction in street crime there.

It is those local **police** who should be commended and congratulated for the results they achieved through that initiative. It is not the Chief Minister's initiative. He has presented us with furphies today, telling us the government set up trials a long time back. That is not my understanding of it, having talked to the **police** in that area. They are very proud of the initiative they took. Essentially, what they have done is to go back to traditional **police** work, walking up and down the street in areas where problems are likely and making sure the **police** presence is there and that it is able to respond if required.

The other term the Chief Minister pops into the discussion is 'hot spot policing'. Again, I have no problem with the types of activities he talked about, if he stays away from the political slogans and simply talks about patrolling areas known to be troublesome and keeping a visible, constant **police** presence there in order to have some effect on the security of that location. That is exactly how I read the kinds of initiatives he is talking about for Darwin and Alice Springs. When one takes out the only substantial initiatives that he reports on, in terms of the **police** being asked to do something new, there is no zero tolerance policing in his statement. I am very pleased with that, and I certainly thank him for that, because I believe that it is entirely the wrong direction.

As our **police** strength builds up, and with the professionalism of our **police**, there is no reason why inroads cannot be made on these social problems, if **police** simply do their jobs in the traditional and conventional way in which **police** have always worked in the Territory. It just needs the support of local initiatives being taken by the **police** themselves, and for the **police** to trust their professional discretion and their professional motivations, and to attack this problem with some vigour.

The glowing picture that was painted of zero tolerance policing overseas was certainly not borne out by my colleague, the member for Nhulunbuy. One of the aspects that he reported was a displacement of the problems from one public place to another, rather than their eradication. From my conversations with him, it seems there was quite clear improvement in crimes in central New York, but a major build-up of crime in the fringe suburbs around the centre. To me, that says it is a picture of

displacing the problem from one place to another. I do not think that does any good to anyone, because it has just become someone else's problem.

The other point that is mentioned in many of the Internet addresses I have visited on this topic is the high number of complaints of **police** discrimination that occur when **police** of one racial background enforce zero tolerance policing on people of another racial background. I think the case in point was the Hispanic and Afro-American populations of New York whose complaints against **police** increased enormously. To be fair, many of those complaints proved to be unfounded or vacuous. However, to be equally fair, there were some horrific stories of excesses of **police** in those situations. I do not believe that the circumstances in which **police** reach the extremes that they obviously have reached on occasions in New York would occur in the Territory. We are a much smaller population and we are, frankly, much more civilised in terms of knowing each other and having a tradition of at least trying to get along with each other in the one spot.

The figures used by the Chief Minister in his statement are, as usual, rubbery. I refer to the assumptions he is drawing from the 2 graphs that were presented. Where is the proof of cause and effect? If that change in the crime pattern is real, and I will accept on face value that they are the figures that came from the **police**, there are a number of factors that could explain that change. It may have nothing whatever to do with **police** action, let alone the **police** action under the banner the Chief Minister is trying to promote today.

I believe some serious research needs to be done in the Territory. I understand there is an academic study in progress on mandatory sentencing at least. We might at last see some figures and some analysis of the cause and effect of this measure that we can actually trust. I certainly do not trust this guy over here to use figures honestly or fairly. His performance in presenting the results of mandatory sentencing was nothing short of astounding to a scientist. One does not use statistics that way, and one has no right to use statistics the way he was using them.

The Chief Minister should not insult **police** by taking their initiatives into a dishonest political agenda. If he is sure they are doing a good job, we can all applaud them. I certainly have on many occasions since I took over responsibilities for the portfolio area. I have travelled around the Territory and I have met a large number of **police** officers. I have seen the professionalism and the energy they put into their work. I know for a fact that **police**, in general, do not want to be tarred with this particular brush. They wanted to be able to apply the same discretionary powers as any other profession has the right to do. The situations they go into, including the Jabiru protest, are extremely complex and difficult to handle. That is what they are trained for. If I was trained over a period of time, the way **police** officers are, and I had some politician or other person telling me how to do my job, I would be entitled to ask what was the point of all my training. I would be asking why, on one hand, I am told I am a trained professional in my area of work and, on the other hand, I am not given the discretion to use my own judgment.

The fact of the matter is that, in most of the places where the **police** go, none of us are beside them – as the Chief Minister knows. There are many very difficult situations the **police** become involved in. This sort of talk would have very little meaning to a **police** officer in the middle of a fracas where, not only does he or she have to exercise judgment, but must use it very quickly, and come up with a solution quick-smart.

Our **police** are well-trained. They are professional. If government members really want them to make inroads into this problem, they should show some faith in the judgment of **police** officers and support their initiatives. The government should not try to make global pronouncements from in here. There are not too many people in this Chamber who display antisocial behaviour, except on occasions when

they go to the rugby.

The other point I want to make, in closing, is that maybe if members of this House came to know a few of these people by name and by origin, it might look a bit different. I have come into this problem knowing many of the people who become bound up in these activities in Alice Springs. I know where they have come from and I know what it is doing to their families. I know the things that went wrong in their lives as they tried to find self-esteem and some economic support. I happen to think that the vast majority of them are decent people who have never had a decent break in life. I cannot bring myself to just treat them as some sort of grey, anonymous mass who we either lock up in jail or banish from our communities. They are Territorians, just the same as you and I, and we need to do much better than simply put them in the slammer.

I commend the attachment of a whole raft of other approaches to this sort of law and order initiative. This law and order initiative accords fairly closely with ours. We support most aspects of this statement, but we would not support them unless they are balanced against other attempts to build up the economic and social support of the people we are talking about.

Dr LIM (Greatorrex): Mr Deputy Speaker, I support the Chief Minister's statement and his moves to reclaim our streets to allow the average law-abiding Territorian to live his or her life in comfort and security, knowing that the level of antisocial behaviour in our community is well under control. I commend the Chief Minister for this initiative.

For a long time now, I have observed with concern the deterioration of community standards and the increasing level of antisocial behaviour in our community, and I have felt somewhat helpless to fight the increasing tide. Some may speak highly of the power of one. In this instance, it seems that the power of one is not sufficient to make any difference. In feeling helpless, there is also a sense of dread that we, the citizens, seem unable to do anything. How often do we look the other way when a petty antisocial act is carried out so that we ourselves do not become involved? How often do we look the other way for fear that we may be personally harmed as a result of our intervention?

I disagree that the community is desensitised to the antisocial behaviour around us. We see, and we turn away, not wanting to be involved. Tourists and visitors, on the other hand, see and complain. They are offended by what they see, and they are vocal about it. However, they do not have to do anything about it. I suggest that my feeling of helplessness is very much a reflection of the majority of us in the community.

How does one start to stem the tide? Today, the community is given a start. Today, the Chief Minister delivers a system across government to deal with our antisocial behaviour. Today, I see the start of reclaiming our streets.

With the open enforcement of our current law and order legislation, the **police** will come under a fair amount of pressure from the bleeding-heart civil libertarians and the antisocial element at whom the initiative is directed. The community must show its open support for this action. No more do we as members of the community stand aside in silence, not willing to be involved.

What does antisocial behaviour mean? To me, it means more than drinking in the Todd River within 2 km of a licensed alcohol outlet, or committing a misdemeanour. To me, it means breaking any law that we have passed for orderly living. By that, I mean zero tolerance policing should include matters like truancy, litter, traffic infringement, discipline at home and at school, parental awareness of the whereabouts of their children and what the children are up to.

Zero tolerance policing is not applicable to our **police** force only. In my mind, zero tolerance policing is about each and every one of us having a higher standard of social responsibility for the community within which we live. In other words, we **police** ourselves in our minds to lift our personal standards. The more we have a high expectation of ourselves to be socially responsible, the more likely it will influence those around us to follow suit. We must have a greater expectation of members of our families. We must expect better standards of behaviour from our children. Discipline will then return to our homes, within which we can influence our children to be good citizens.

In schools, we must expect higher standards of discipline among staff and students, while not stifling the natural exuberance of youth. Their energy must be tempered with social responsibility. Students must learn that their right to behave as they wish also comes with responsibility. Students must have discipline in the classroom and the schoolyard. Never can we tolerate schoolyard bullying. From here we allow the seeds of greater antisocial behaviour when the child grows up. If he can get away with bullying at school, there is no reason why he cannot get away with bullying in the community. Isn't stealing, robbing or picking on someone less able to defend himself or herself a form of bullying?

Truancy, which I mentioned earlier, must be seriously addressed. How often have we bemoaned the fact that many a house-break is carried out by school truants? Parents must be made accountable for their children's absence from school. The absence of any student from school should initiate a query from the school to the parent, perhaps followed up by a face-to-face interview between the parent, student and teacher. Parents should have greater awareness of the whereabouts of their children. We have seen the many juveniles and even sub-teen children running wild in the streets at ungodly hours of the night. The parents must be made to be responsible for their children. For too long these types of parents have abdicated their responsibility for their offspring. It is time we made them responsible, even going so far as to make them financially responsible, for the wrongdoings of their children.

The Chief Minister revealed some statistics about Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. He cited a reduction of complaint-generated activity of some 50% in Tennant and a decrease in antisocial behaviour of 11% in the greater Alice Springs area. I am pleased that this happy state has come about, and I look forward to a continued decrease in antisocial behaviour activity.

It is high time that a commitment to the 2 km law is reaffirmed. In Alice Springs and, I am sure, in every other major centre in the Territory, the apparent lack of enforcement of the 2 km law has been a frequent criticism. Criticism has also been directed at the **police** for enforcing the law against tourists unknowingly drinking in the Todd River. Many a time, the apparent lack of enforcement is not from lack of trying by the **police**. In fact, many a drinker in the Todd River has become rather cunning. They bury the alcohol supply in the river sand. What remains visible may be just a can of beer in the drinker's hand. The alcoholic drink is frequently transferred into a soft drink bottle and the colour disguised by the addition of other liquids. At the approach of the **police**, the alcoholic drink may be confiscated and tipped out, but no sooner is the **police** officer's back turned than another can of drink reappears from out of the sand.

As the streets are reclaimed, there will be increasing pride in the neighbourhood. Look at the Power and Water Authority awards for the best-decorated house or street during the Christmas season. It brings about a pride in the neighbourhood. We have friendly competition to outdo each other to win the award. At the same time, we start to value each other's effort and consequently share a concern for each other. Isn't that what Neighbourhood Watch is all about - neighbours sharing in a common goal of keeping a watchful eye on the neighbourhood? We all share in the responsibility of looking after our community.

Litter has been a great concern for many of us, and especially tourists who travel to the Territory by

road. Frequently, we read letters in newspapers about litter along the sides of our roads, consisting mainly of green cans, Coolibah casks and plastic bags. What do we do about it? Do we contribute to the problem by throwing green cans from our car windows too?

We should all apply zero tolerance towards anyone throwing litter anywhere. When walking down the street, we should gently remind anyone we see throwing rubbish on the ground to retrieve that rubbish. Every **police** officer should remind people gently to do likewise. When the public see what the **police** are doing, they will be confident that they can do it also. In a mutually supportive way, we can all begin to adopt a more responsible attitude towards litter.

It was interesting to read Austin Asche's observations about Singapore. His comments are worth repeating. He said:

The cleanliness and safety of the streets of Singapore may be partly because minor offences, such as dropping rubbish, are usually dealt with immediately and by heavy fines, but equally because the people approve and wish it that way.

In conclusion, I see zero tolerance policing as not only the responsibility of government but also that of every citizen in the Territory. Each and every one of us has to adopt zero tolerance policing within ourselves, our families, our immediate circle of friends, our wider circle of friends and, ultimately, our wider community. It is like a little ripple created by a stone thrown into a pond. The ripple extends all the way to the very edge, affecting the whole surface of the pond. In a similar way, I see that zero tolerance policing starts with me, and from me the effect extends across the community within which I live.

I strongly support the Chief Minister on this extensive statement, which will see the Northern Territory community becoming one based on law and order, and the envy of every other in the country.

Mr ELFERINK (MacDonnell): Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise today to support the Chief Minister's statement in relation to zero tolerance policing. I would like to add a few comments to the debate.

Mr Stirling: As a **police** officer for 15 years?

Mr ELFERINK: I was indeed a **police** officer for 15 years.

Governments are faced with conundrums, from time to time, that make the business of government quite difficult. One of the conundrums that this government faces at the moment is the 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' situation that arises out of social control in terms of dealing with crimes, criminals, and what to do about them. Antisocial behaviour is something we have heard about extensively today, as is criminal behaviour. Every time the issue of crime raises its head, the government has to take hold of this double-edged sword. If it attacks crime strongly, it runs the risk of impinging on people's civil liberties. That is quite possibly one of the consequences of zero tolerance policing. Certainly, the approach in the American models would suggest that people's liberties are impinged upon. Governments have to decide whether or not to bite the bullet and take the hard decisions on the way they protect members of their society.

The people who I would like to see protected in the society in which I live are the people who come into these galleries on a daily basis and concern themselves with the issues of how to live and how to make a living. The people I would like to protect are the people who walk down the streets, after finishing work, on their way to a pub for a quiet beer before catching a taxi home. The people I would

like to protect are those people who live in homes and who try to make their way in this difficult world as best as they possibly may. Those are the people I would like to protect - the rich and the poor who live honest and decent lives.

As a member of this government, I have to make a decision about how it will respond, and I am glad to say that this government has taken the tough decision and has been courageous enough to adopt policies which are designed to protect those individuals whom I have described from other individuals who would infringe or impinge upon the liberty of the honest and the decent. I am glad to be part of such a government. I think this government sits high on a pedestal in terms of its courage and commitment to the people who pay taxes to support it.

I want to discuss a few issues that I noted over my 15 years as a **policeman** and what I saw, both on the streets of Darwin as a patrol officer and as a patrol officer on the streets of Alice Springs, as well as in other centres from time to time when I had a relief duty. What I saw was a society in which certain behaviours were tolerated.

If we look at the 'broken windows' theory and how it is applied in zero tolerance policing, the approach of allowing certain things to pass as tolerable sends signals to other people to say that it is okay for certain behaviours to occur here, and those behaviours then flow on to other behaviours, and they go up the scale. For example, gang member 'X' makes his tag with a bit of spray paint on a wall. That is a signal to other people who have similar inclinations that it is okay for gangs to operate in those sorts of areas. If the person with the spray can who sprayed paint on the wall is dealt with harshly on the spot, it is much less likely that he will return to spray on that wall again because he will see it as a hot area. He will move away from that area and it will be less likely then that someone else will see that as a signal to engage in his own behaviour in that area. Put very simply, that is the 'broken windows' policy.

I have always believed that that should be the approach of a **police** officer or a **police** department. They should be trying to address these situations before they get out of hand. Certainly, if we protect the liberty of the person who is spraying paint on the wall in the first place, and we engage in excessive discretion and allow that person to go with nothing more than a chiding, that tag will remain on the wall and he will come back at a later time because he will feel that the sanction on what he is doing is not really very serious, and that behaviour will continue.

One way of dealing with these issues is with foot patrols. I have always been a strong advocate of a visible **police** presence, either on bicycles or on foot patrol. I have engaged in more patrols than I care to remember. I do not know how many boots I have worn out on foot patrols. One anecdote that I would like to share with members was a very small operation that was run in Darwin some years ago in relation to foot patrols. Another **police** officer and I went out in the town and we started to target very simple offences. The guy who scored a dope deal and was enjoying a joint on the corner of the street was targeted by us. He was arrested. The fellow who was taking a leak against a fire hydrant in the middle of the street was arrested. A fellow who was standing outside of the pub, swearing and being generally disorderly, was arrested for using objectionable words and for disorderly behaviour. In the course of 2 days, we arrested about 20 individuals.

How horrible! How could the **police** state inflict itself upon poor souls like that? The fact was that the word got around town that 2 plain-clothes **police** officers were walking around town, locking people up. For the next 3 weeks, there was barely anything to do in town because, every time 2 blokes were together, potential bad guys decided that they might be the 2 **police** officers. That was the effect our efforts had. They made the streets a safer place to be.

Sure, there was a crackdown to start off with, but the follow-on, which was immediately apparent, was a situation where the streets were considerably safer for other people. At the time, we noticed that more serious offences, like those committed by those drunken fools who stagger down Mitchell Street, Smith Street or Cavenagh Street, kicking windows, did not happen. That was because we picked them up when they were still swearing outside of the pub, before they began to travel down the road 10 minutes later, kicking in windows. I can say that a **police** officer finds few things more irritating at 6 am than having to follow up on 15 broken windows because some drunken fool thought it was terrific fun to kick them in.

Zero tolerance, as a strategy by the government, is a whole-of-government approach. As a **police** officer, I tried to do the job that I was paid to do, and I would try very hard to achieve the very best results I could. What I hated as a **police** officer was plea bargaining. I hated reluctant supervisors who were not prepared to go the extra yard because it was too much trouble. I hated this Assembly watering down certain pieces of legislation that I used on a daily basis. One of the reasons why I came in here was to speak against the watering-down of certain pieces of legislation.

A classical example of that is a law that has been referred to repeatedly during this debate, and that is the 2 km law. An offence was created of drinking within 2 km of licensed premises. It is no longer an offence to do so. People forget that the only sanction for drinking within 2 km of licensed premises is having your liquor tipped out. That message is not consistent with the philosophy of zero tolerance.

Something else strikes me, as a former **police** officer. I hope that zero tolerance will create an environment of vigilance. I have another anecdote, suggesting that such vigilance could go so far as to save lives.

One day when I was off duty I was riding my motorcycle along Larapinta Drive. A 13-year-old boy was on his way home from school. A rather unspeakable chap leapt out of some bushes and started tongue-kissing the boy at the roadside. The boy told me he did not know the man, so I turned my motorcycle around and followed the villain in the piece. I grabbed him, took him to the side of the road and hailed a taxi. The driver radioed his base and the base phoned the **police** station, and this gentleman was taken into custody.

I found out later, anecdotally, that he had been allowed to throw pornographic material and a can of vaseline in his possession into the rubbish bin in the watchhouse, so it was not listed among his property. The thing was, I wanted to charge him with sexual assault, but I had no corroborative evidence. The charge went down to indecent assault.

The fellow served a certain amount of time and when he came out of jail he murdered a lady by the name of Rosemary McIntyre. The memory of the assault on the boy still sticks in my craw because, if the emphasis had been more on vigilance, if a **police** culture of vigilance had been allowed to grow, it is possible that the corroborative evidence that was thrown in the rubbish bin may have been enough to sustain the more serious charge, and what followed may never have occurred.

Members may say that is merely 20/20 hindsight, but the point is that you do get 20/20 hindsight with zero tolerance policing, simply because you can see it reflected in the drop of crime rates – especially the drop in murder rates – in the United States. Because they were arresting people for minor offences on the streets, within 10 years the annual murder rate fell from 2000 to 700 murders last year. There is a clear message in that. It does work. And it still rests quite heavily on my conscience that if the extra yards had been taken, Rosemary McIntyre might be alive today.

Problem-oriented policing is something else that the Chief Minister referred to. The expression refers

to the **police** and the community getting together and working as a unified body to achieve a safer area – very much like Neighbourhood Watch in some respects. In fact, Neighbourhood Watch would be part of a problem-oriented policing approach.

The Kirkholt project in England springs to mind. Kirkholt was a community of flats similar to those we see in *The Bill*, a major housing development. The residents decided to take control of their own lives, with the assistance of **police**. A whole-of-community approach was applied in Kirkholt and the result was so impressive that members of parliament looked into the project and could not speak highly enough of it. I support any approach that brings in and assists and adopts a concept where the whole of the community is involved.

In government, I think it is important for me to assist by sending an absolutely clear message to **police** that they have my support. I want the guys out there on the streets to do the very best they can. I recall the first time I put the uniform on and stood in front of the mirror, as **police** officers almost invariably do when they get their uniform. I wore that uniform with pride for every day of 15 years. It is not with even a little sentimentality that I look back on that job, a job that I loved very much. I wanted to do the very best I could do for the community, and I believe that about most **police** officers who pull that uniform on.

As an ex-officer, I am pleased to hear the Chief Minister refer to a review of **police** powers by a committee headed by the Minister for **Police**. I wish the committee every success in giving **police** officers sensible powers which, I hope, will be sufficient for them to do their job.

I turn now to some of the comments made by the opposition in relation to this statement. I am more than a little confused as to whether they support this policy or not. I understood the Leader of the Opposition to say that the idea was supported. Indeed, the member for Wanguri, I believe, also supported the idea. But I was puzzled when the member for Nhulunbuy ...

Mr Stirling: You should open your ears a little or clean them out.

Mr ELFERINK: ... was quite critical of the principle of zero tolerance policing. Then the member for Stuart stood up and said he would not agree with zero tolerance policing but he agrees with this document because it is not about zero tolerance policing. Look at the cover! The title is: *Reclaiming The Streets – Zero Tolerance Policing and the Northern Territory*. If I don't open my ears, these guys don't open their eyes.

Mr Stirling: You can't always judge a book by its cover. Read his statement.

Mr ELFERINK: It is very good to hear from the Power of One.

I hear comments from time to time about how people who commit these offences are the victims of some sort of unfortunate life. They often are, I do not doubt that at all. In my own experience, many of these people have been the victims of unfortunate lives. But the assumption follows that people who are not offenders have had a fortunate life. That does not automatically flow at all.

I hear the member for Stuart talk about how dreadful the socioeconomic problems are of so many of the people who commit these offences. The member for Nhulunbuy made similar observations. As I said recently, many of the people to whom those members were referring have the answer to many of their problems actually lying under their feet. When I made that comment, the member for Arnhem made the observation that these people did not want to develop themselves any further than they had

because they felt like millionaires in the socioeconomic environment in which they live. I find this very curious, because it is inconsistent with what the member for Nhulunbuy and the member for Stuart were saying. You are either socioeconomically disadvantaged or you are not.

I have been trying to take a message to many of these people – obviously Aboriginal people – who live on large tracts of land. It is their land. I do not dispute that. But I argue that maybe their land should do for them what it always did before the arrival of Europeans – provide them with a living. Why not? There are many political reasons, reasons for which these people blame us, for this not occurring. There are ideological reasons that could easily reflect in the representation that they get from their own leaders and land managers. Until such time as those issues are addressed, the lot of Aboriginal people will not improve.

The observation was made that among many Aboriginal people poverty and crime are directly related. I agree with that. The problem is that the government cannot spend its way out of other people's poverty. We provide schools, we provide houses, we provide sewerage systems, we provide power, we provide an income, we provide for every aspect of so many people's lives. But are they any wealthier? Are they any wiser? No, they are not.

The one word I do not hear from the other side of the House is 'responsibility'. Responsibility is the essence of the zero tolerance approach. People are being made to be responsible for their own lives and responsible for their own actions. I can only support a government that promotes the concept that personal responsibility, and responsibility in general, are the final answers to so many of the social problems we have, not simply a charitable state and system of government.

Mr BURKE (Health, Family and Children's Services): Mr Deputy Speaker, while I support the Chief Minister's statement in general, I have to admit that I was looking for some further direction to some of the strategies that have been announced. I am hopeful that some of those directions will come through in the departmental reviews that were mentioned.

I hope also that he will consider my point when I say that I do not particularly like the term 'reclaim our streets', especially when it is combined with some of the comments that I have heard in the Chamber this afternoon. The member for Grotter says we must no longer tolerate this deterioration in community standards and increasing antisocial behaviour. I came to the Northern Territory, having lived in a number of countries in the world, and certainly in many cities of Australia. Notwithstanding the fact that we have problems in the Northern Territory, when I consider my standard of living and my personal safety, I consider the Northern Territory to be probably one of the safest places I have ever lived in. We need to be mindful of that all the time.

In terms of increasing antisocial behaviour and deterioration of community standards, I have this to say. I live in Palmerston, and in Palmerston and in other parts of Darwin one can see, on any night, teenagers and females in their early 20s going for walks after dark. They are quite safe as they move around. I think we have to see that in perspective. I see Palmerston developing from a low socioeconomic base to become one of the finest communities in Australia at the moment. It is a community that is developing its own heart, its own direction, and its own ideals in relation to how it sees itself being in the future.

When we use the term 'antisocial behaviour', I think we have to be careful not to use it only in relation to those visible aspects that are easiest to relate. We must really think about the wider use of the term. Is it 'antisocial behaviour' when drunk and dysfunctional families are in the Todd River with children who are being neglected? Or is it more antisocial to walk past and condemn them rather than doing our best to nurture those children for the future? When we talk about zero tolerance policing, it

is more than just **police** action. Any strategy must address the underlying causes of the widest terms of antisocial behaviour.

The important point that the Chief Minister made in relation to Austin Asche's comments involved the role that customary law has to play. I would like to address the last point first. The Northern Territory presents unique problems. One of them is the high percentage of Aboriginal people in our population. That in itself presents us with particular challenges. The way we deal with those challenges is the way that I believe we will deal properly and responsibly with antisocial behaviour in the future.

I am sure those who were at the Statehood Convention earlier this year would agree that some of the most moving speeches were those made by Aboriginal delegates. They were not moving just in terms of the emotion with which they were delivered, but also in their ability to move the opinions of delegates. Many of those statements were made in relation to customary law. One of the most telling arguments was that the recognition of customary law would go a long way toward addressing the lawless attitude of some young Aborigines. I quote the words of Wali Wunungmurra:

For law and order to exist, we need the whole system of law which we know and live by. That is not to say that a lot of young people are not playing the 2 systems of laws off against each other. They are doing this because there is no recognition of our law by the Australian legal system. This is creating lawless young people. They are not acting out of our law, they are acting out of no-man's law. Please do not look at these lawless people and think this is the Aboriginal law. It is not. Until our law is recognised in a real legal way, then this playing off of the 2 is going to continue.

In the report by Austin Asche on zero tolerance policing that was tabled by the Chief Minister today, he said:

Some communities are a vivid example of the 'broken window' syndrome. Yet I have little doubt that most would want the situation improved, and as proof of that, one notes a desire, sometimes carried into effect, to expel disruptive members. I make a suggestion in line with the resolution of the recent Statehood Convention in Darwin that Aboriginal customary law should be regarded as a source of law. Perhaps, therefore, some form of community law keepers could be given power to enforce certain customary laws and to that end, some form of zero tolerance policing would be permitted.

I certainly endorse both of those comments, as I do the need to complement zero tolerance policing with what is being termed 'problem-oriented policing'. I suggest that we are already going down this path to some extent with operations such as the night patrols. Much of their work is to move in to deal with people, sometimes to take them home before they commit an offence, or to take them to appropriate detention facilities.

When I was Attorney-General, in many of the discussions I had with Aboriginal communities, much of their thinking and many of their concerns generally related to this theory of broken windows. One concern that was expressed to me on numerous occasions was what they saw as a fault with the Western legal system, and what they saw as the extreme tolerance that was given to offenders. An offence was committed, everyone knew who did it, but because of our adversarial system, it took many weeks or months – in fact, years sometimes – before an offender was dealt with. Simply put, in the eyes of the community, he or she seemed to have escaped the law and was free to continue to break the law. It certainly was expressed to me that they wanted a system that would not tolerate an attitude of disregard for the law.

I hope that, if we look at zero tolerance, we look again at what I see as the inadequacy of the adversarial system in Aboriginal communities. In conjunction with the development of customary law, I

would like to see more of an inquisitorial process of justice delivery. The community should be able to see justice being delivered in a way that they can appreciate that justice has been done. Minor infringements should be dealt with early so that they in themselves do not lead to major offences. It does not involve corporal punishment, it certainly involves ...

Mr BAILEY: A point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker! It is my understanding that, under standing order 258 this statement should have been tabled before the minister began speaking.

Mr COULTER: It is a bit late for that now, but I will do my best, Mr Deputy Speaker, to ensure that those statements are circulated.

Mr BAILEY: The standing order says that, before a member starts speaking, the statement should be circulated to people's tables.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point of order is noted.

Mr STONE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I understood that the statement had been circulated. The member for Wanguri is only about 5 hours too late, isn't he? Why does everyone else have it?

Mr BAILEY: No one else has it. While a copy was provided to the opposition for opposition members to pre-read and brief, I am just saying that standing orders require it to be tabled in the Assembly prior to starting the speech.

Mr STONE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I table a copy of the ministerial statement.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point of order is noted. We will continue with the minister's comments.

Mr BURKE: To continue, Mr Deputy Speaker, I hope that we do look at the way justice is dispensed on Aboriginal communities with a view to getting a far more timely delivery of justice. We certainly have to find a balance in the system between the right of the victims and the rights of the offender. As other speakers have said, we have to find a balance between the rigorous enforcement of the law and what could only be termed as harassment. We have to find a balance between the practices that some people prefer to live without and what could be termed simply offensive behaviour. We have to remember that what we are not tolerating is criminally antisocial behaviour.

As the Chief Minister points out, this is not a strategy that is limited only to **police** action. It requires both government and community support to put in place strategies to address the underlying causes, to provide rehabilitation to the offenders, and to ensure that, once caught, offenders do not continue to thumb their noses at society in general.

We should not overlook, as the Deputy Chief Minister pointed out, some of the excellent work that has been done in this area. In my own area of responsibility, that includes the alcohol and other drugs program in my department. The National Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia has, for the fourth year in succession, given the government the thumbs-up for expenditure in this area. For those members who are unaware, I offer a quote from the CEO of that council, David Crosby, who spoke on yesterday's *Morning* program. He said that, in terms of expenditure, the Northern Territory is about 6 times the nearest state or territory and close to 20 times the average. In another part of the Council's study, 220 experts ranked our performance first in 8 of the 10 areas that were examined.

That is essentially what I want to concentrate on. I want to concentrate solely on that conduct with

regard to customary law and I was heartened by the fact that the Chief Minister said that he is reviewing a range of interdepartmental activity. I am sure that, on completion of that review, we will see further development of this strategy. I support the Chief Minister's statement.

Mr DUNHAM (Drysdale): Mr Deputy Speaker, I am particularly interested in this program and I will continue to watch it with interest. I think that it is important that society should draw lines in the sand, and it is important that society should decide what is tolerable and intolerable behaviour in its citizens. It is a moveable feast, however. What is tolerated in some communities is not tolerated in others, and what is considered appropriate varies over time. It is quite obvious to members that actions that were not tolerated a mere decade or 2 ago, such as failing to stand up when *God Save The Queen* was played at the cinema or wearing a bikini on the beach, are merely matters of amusement now. Likewise, I think we have to look at some issues in our society in terms of its contemporary nature and decide whether they are obnoxious actions which really intrude into the lives of others or whether they are simply matters that some people like and others do not.

I am quite happy to go on the record saying that I am a very tolerant man and I believe that I live in a tolerant society. I think the things that society accepts in the Northern Territory are good. It tolerates a vast array of human action and interaction without a great deal of interference from the government, and I would like to see that situation continue.

In saying that, however, I am quite sure that there is a need to draw a line. For instance, there is a policy in the health environment called harm minimisation. This policy says that certain actions by delinquent individuals are inevitable and we should be looking merely to minimise the damage to the individual rather than actually forcing people to desist from that particularly behaviour. This is quite evident in the use of drugs. I believe that, in many cases, it is a fairly foolhardy policy.

If we look at issues of community desensitisation, I think we have also to be wary of community over-sensitisation, and we have to be wary of the community being sensitive to issues that are possibly beyond what the strategies would support.

I welcome the statement. I want to stay close to the review period, and the definitional aspects of this. If, in the Northern Territory context, we look at instances of zero tolerance policing such as dry areas on communities, I do not think it is a particularly good policy in that area. As the Chief Minister pointed out in his statement on page 26:

Antisocial behaviour falls into an elusive category, not always captured by traditional enforcement methods, and requires targeted programs aimed at deterrence, displacement and apprehension.

I think we have an extremely good record on the deterrence aspect, and I think we have to be very careful about the displacement aspect as has been shown in the experiences that have been brought back from the study group that went to America. Displacement is a very real issue with zero tolerance. I believe that has been the case in dry areas, where communities have said that there will be absolutely no alcohol in their particular community. That has resulted in some displacement of some individuals to the major centres because they have been unable to give up the grog or are not willing to do so. The Northern Territory's Living With Alcohol program is a marked success because it stands to say that communities, and in fact individuals, can live with alcohol as opposed to living without it.

I am optimistic, but am willing to learn more about this particular policy. I would like to see more definitional work. I am hopeful that the elements that have been described in the policy will occur naturally in any event. Most of them appear to be good **police** work. Most of what has been described here, in terms of the work that has been done in the pilot areas, appears to have followed fairly sane

approaches to antisocial behaviour that is occurring on the streets.

I think that we should take a very holistic attitude to it. It would be crazy to see this as a **police** program. Previous speakers have spoken about this. I emphasise also that a variety of agencies have a role in vigilance and in regulatory work. They include several of the arms of government, including the university, the hospital, parks and wildlife rangers and others.

I think it would be a retrograde step for the government to see the efforts in reducing antisocial behaviour as being merely a **police** effort. I think community elders and others can play a great role and we have to be very careful about our efforts merely turning misdemeanours into crimes, and having a punitive regime for them. I think we have to be very active in our deterrence efforts. They were catalogued in the Chief Minister's statement, and I think that they have been catalogued before in this House on other occasions when we have talked about alcohol programs and other programs.

I look forward to speaking further on this matter and the trial's progress, and I look forward to hearing from the Chief Minister in a year's time on the results of this particular program.

Ms MARTIN (Fannie Bay): Madam Speaker, I will be brief this afternoon because debate on the Chief Minister's statement has been extensive. However, I wish to say that, after witnessing the Chief Minister strutting his stuff after he returned from the United States and his visits to Los Angeles and New York, and having heard his aggressive and uncompromising statements, I found it quite extraordinary to listen to this ministerial statement and to try to work out what he was actually saying.

In terms of coherence, it is quite an amazing statement. The front pages refer to zero tolerance policing, yet the entire statement is dedicated to trying to find other ways to describe what the Chief Minister calls zero tolerance policing on the front of the document.

What are we talking about? Are we talking about ideas or concepts like community policing, which have been around for a long time? Are we talking about another description that the Chief Minister gives, problem-oriented policing? Are we talking about back-to-basics policing?

Throughout the statement, every time the Chief Minister talks about what he will call this new approach, he calls it something different. The statement twists and turns and it ends with saying zero tolerance policing. There is an implication in that! They are weasel words! The only thing that I can think, because inconsistencies are apparent throughout the statement, is that we need to know what we are dealing with here. What term will we apply to taking a decent, humane and long-term approach to a problem that has been with us for a long time?

It seems to me that Hon Shane Stone, member for Port Darwin, headed off to the United States saying that he intended to get tough, and to find a solution. He said that he would follow what **police** in New York were doing or what **police** in Los Angeles were doing. I believe he was impressed with what he saw. He thought it looked and sounded good. He thought it sounded tough, and there is nothing that your average Country Liberal Party politician likes better than sounding really tough.

He went to the United States. He sounded tough the whole way through. We saw video footage of him strutting his stuff and looking tough in the streets of various American cities, and he returned to Darwin all pumped up. He had zero tolerance policing under his belt and he intended to push it hard.

Since he came back, we have heard him claim that the opposition is soft on crime, and the opposition cannot tackle the really hard issues. When, after much thought and years of collective experience had

been put by the opposition into the alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour action plan, we heard the Chief Minister say that it was a load of rubbish and typical of the Labor Party. He said that it will not solve anything and that he will stick with his zero tolerance policing.

What have we found in this statement this afternoon? We have found that he has lifted a majority of the Labor Party's policy on this, which is a measured and outcome-focused policy, and he has done it without a moment of apology. What we have, to everybody's surprise – at least on this side of the House – is in many senses a most useable document. If one takes the rubbish out relating to zero tolerance policing and looks at the substance of this document, it is to a large extent outcome-focused. It is sensible. It uses the resources we have with the best technology, and it is to be hoped that it will produce some solutions to a problem that has not occurred overnight. The problem has been occurring in the Territory for many years and has, very sadly, become worse.

I am just trying to work out what has happened to the machismo of zero tolerance policing and how it has turned into what I would say is a very reasonable document. The Chief Minister has not fully adopted Labor's proposals. He has not taken them forward into really constructive solutions for the long term, but he has made a pretty good start, and I congratulate him on that. It is certainly the kind of policy that this side of the House can work with and will work with.

The member for Katherine's statement that it is typical of the Labor Party to be soft on crime and always taking the easy option is totally unsupportable.

We have not exactly been in power for 23 years. We can work with a document like this, and I think the community can work with it. Various members of the government who have spoken about this document do recognise that the 100% punitive approach to the problem of alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour on our streets will never work. There are circumstances where that kind of approach is needed but, for a long-term solution, any right-minded person – any decent Territorian – will realise a holistic and an integrated approach is required.

The Labor Party is not ashamed of the time and the effort we put into our document. We are confident it is a document that, if implemented, can go a long way towards solving the problems we have. We recognised from the outset that the problems on New York streets or Los Angeles streets were not the problems on our streets. We have all seen enough television programs – *Dirty Harry*, or whatever – showing the level of crime that cities like New York and Los Angeles are tackling. The **numbers** of people totally outnumber the population of Darwin by many millions. The drug problems, the different cultural problems on the streets of those cities, do not apply here. They would never apply here. It is not possible to just pick up the United States experience and bring it here and expect this to solve this problem.

It is a vast relief to know that some sense has prevailed. I suspect the **police** had a very serious word to our Chief Minister, and I do hope that other members of the Country Liberal Party parliamentary wing had a very serious discussion with the Chief Minister. We have certainly seen much more sense from this document than we ever expected to see. There was some strutting and posturing in the statement, giving us the message that the government can recriminalise drunkenness, and that the government is tough. However, the fundamentals here are workable. If, as a community, we see them put in place and support them, they can work. I give credit to the Chief Minister. He has surprised us all. He has left some of the testosterone back in the office, and he has come down here and presented a reasonable document.

I would like some of that sense directed towards the electorate of Fannie Bay, because it is one of the difficult areas. Even the Chief Minister said in this statement that it was not appropriate to take an *ad*

hoc approach to the problems we see in our streets. He said: 'For example, a blitz in the Port Darwin electorate simply exacerbates the problem in Fannie Bay. Similar attention in Fannie Bay simply shifts the problem to areas like the Water Gardens in Jingili'. It was not long ago that the Chief Minister stood proudly in this House and said that he had eliminated his problem on the streets. He had shifted it to Fannie Bay. Ha, ha! It is good to see that the Chief Minister is finally taking a broader approach to this problem and that he is not acting in the same opportunistic way in which we have seen him act before. Mind you, these words and whether this policy will actually be implemented and given the full support of the Country Liberal Party are 2 very different things.

I will return to the electorate of Fannie Bay in relation to hot spot policing. There are many hot spots in Fannie Bay. It does not need in-depth research to find out where they are. I think that, given 30 seconds, most of the citizens of Fannie Bay could list the hot spots of Fannie Bay. One of the big ones is the Housing Commission complex of Kurringal. We have had this discussion in here before. We have even had the Chief Minister tell me that my ideas about how to tackle the hot spot of Kurringal are good.

However, can we take it any further than that? Will we see the implementation of some of those ideas? No. We have the Minister for Housing, who simply turns the other way when confronted with figures that really cannot be ignored: 581 **police** visits over 1 year at one housing complex in one suburb in Darwin. There is a serious problem. That is 1.5 visits per day. We are talking about the better use of **police** resources. We are talking about an integrated approach to tackling problems. Yet, I still have the Minister for Housing saying there is nothing we can do about it and I, as member for Fannie Bay, should not talk to people interstate about what we can do about these problems. The Minister for Housing derides me for talking to other housing commission departments interstate, and yet the Chief Minister runs off to America and tries to import a totally ridiculous system.

I ask the Minister for Housing: how many statistics does he need to persuade him that there needs to be further action taken at one of the hot spots? We are introducing hot spot policing. Here is a situation where it can be tackled. I challenge the Minister for Housing to stop posturing about this and to do something. How many more visits by **police** will it take, before he actually decides he has responsibility and can do something? How much more destruction will occur to the lives of people who live in the Kurringal housing complex? Is he prepared to sit by and turn a blind eye to it? I know that he will not come down and visit the place in case it proves to him that action needs to be taken.

I say to him that there are obvious solutions to what is happening at Kurringal. One of those is to put a full-time dedicated tenancy officer into the Kurringal complex. That will go a long way towards solving some of the initial problems there. Anyone who lives at Kurringal would say there are identifiable difficult nights at Kurringal. If adequate security were put in place on those nights, problems could be tackled before they developed and demanded a **police** visit. It is not so difficult. There are 2 measures that would help. When we talk about an integrated approach to problems with antisocial behaviour and alcohol abuse, let us see the Housing Commission, led by the Minister for Housing, taking a responsible role. The minister cannot pretend that it is a **police** problem. It is not. It is his problem, and he must take some action to deal with it.

Let us make sure that each relevant department plays its part and that we do not squander resources. The bottom line is that we want to use the dollars well. If we can use them well at a place like Kurringal and go some way towards solving the problems of the people who live there, by having the Minister for Housing take a sensible attitude and spend dollars wisely, then I will say we are a long way along the road towards tackling the antisocial behaviour problems we have in Darwin. It is one small aspect, but it is a tangible one that the Minister for Housing can do something about.

Considering what has been said so far, I think this statement has been generally welcomed. There has been, from this side of the House, a recognition that what we put together and the kind of approach that we said would work has been – much to our surprise – fairly much adopted by the Chief Minister in his statement. I congratulate him for that.

I wait to hear whether the member for Victoria River will take up the challenge to apply the policies that are in this statement to areas under his jurisdiction such as the Kurringal housing complex.

Mr BAILEY (Wanguri): Mr Deputy Speaker, obviously the response by the member for Victoria River on this issue is as gutless in this House as it is outside. He is not prepared to go out ...

Mr Baldwin interjecting.

Mr BAILEY: This is an issue of significance within his portfolio area. He has had numerous invitations to visit one of the largest, if not the largest, single Housing Commission complex in the Northern Territory, to talk to the people who live there. It is not as if they asked him once and he had some conflicting appointment. He has been asked repeatedly. Every time, his response is to send someone from his department. The minister, the member for Victoria River, does not want to confront the people to whom he is responsible, the people living in the accommodation for which he is responsible, over the real concerns that they have.

I think it is appalling. Ministers in the Northern Territory supposedly make themselves so freely available to the public. This one just cannot. His reason, I suspect, is that he had no defence to the criticisms of his administration raised by my colleague the member for Fannie Bay.

Today we have the much-awaited plan for zero tolerance policing, delivered by the Chief Minister. As usual, he has already had his headline. He has run around the country talking about what he may do, like Chicken Little and the sky falling down. But when it comes to reality, what we see is quite different from what was originally proposed. But I found it quite interesting.

I think it was yesterday that the *NT News* ran an article on the costs of ATSIC commissioners travelling overseas. I think the figure was \$160 000, spent by a number of ATSIC commissioners on a number of trips. Some of them were getting over \$200 per night in TA while they were staying in London. I thought about it and did a quick assessment of the cost of Shane Stone and his entourage going to the US and then on to Europe. I would be surprised if it came in under \$150 000 just for that one trip. My guesstimate is that closer to \$200 000 was spent on that single trip.

My colleague the member for Stuart would probably say: 'If he had spent half an hour on the Internet, he might have found out a lot of the same sort of information'. That is not to say that you do not gain something by going overseas and doing some research, but I really have to question the benefit to the people of the Northern Territory from the huge cost that was associated with that trip.

Money is property. Maybe stealing \$160 000 to \$200 000 from the people of the Northern Territory to produce this statement is a property offence. Perhaps it is the Chief Minister who should be doing some time in jail.

Less flippantly, what could the **police** or Correctional Services have done, what could parole officers or social workers or whoever have done, with an extra \$160 000 to \$200 000 to deal with some of the crime on the streets? A couple of **police** cars, 4 positions for a year? Maybe we could have employed officers to go around and try to get truant kids back to school. It would have paid for another 3 or 4

prison officers. It could have bought sporting equipment for a number of communities. It could have done many things.

Instead it was \$200 000-worth of publicity for the Chief Minister. And what does he do? After getting his headline, he largely announces what the Labor Party put forward as an action plan to deal with alcohol abuse and antisocial behaviour. That is really what it is all about, this garbage about going to the US to look at zero tolerance policing.

I am flicking through the documents that have been tabled. They include a report by Andy Bruyn in his role as chairman of directors of Crime Stoppers NT Pty Ltd. He quite clearly addresses the sorts of issues we are looking at. I mean, let us look at one of the great successes. In Los Angeles, the **Police** Department and District Attorney won injunctive relief against 18 gang members. This was seen as one of the great results of zero tolerance policing.

Wander around Darwin. Do we have colour gangs blowing each other away in drive-by shootings? What garbage! We had the Minister for Health, Family and Children's Services get up and say that the Northern Territory is one of the safest places around. In some areas there are levels of disruption and inappropriate, antisocial behaviour. But to compare that with gangster muggings, the inability to walk safely on the streets in places like Los Angeles and New York, and to suggest that we should be introducing those sort of policing strategies in the Northern Territory is ludicrous.

The next step will be to respond to a spate of break and enters by erecting tank traps in front of buildings, because the Chief Minister has visited some foreign place where American embassies were being broken into or bombed or something. He will study the precautions and measures taken in that situation and decide to introduce them in the Northern Territory. However, it is ludicrous to suggest that approach. Everyone who made this trip says that there is no similarity, other than the need to involve the community and to try to have an overall strategy of dealing with antisocial behaviour.

I think it is important that this parliament is not only aware of the statement made by the Chief Minister in relation to his stealing of Territory Labor's policy but that the parliament should have the opportunity to read Labor's policy document. Therefore, Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to table a copy of it.

Leave granted.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, if members listened to what was said by the Minister for Health, Family and Children's Services, they will be aware that he did what he has done on a number of occasions. I really do not know how he copes with Cabinet meetings when what appears to be a reasoned, sensible and objective debate on issues like crime and dealing with people who have problems is introduced. We saw what happened last week over the issue of petrol sniffing. He got up and talked about the holistic approach to dealing with people who have problems, and the need to look at their situation in their community and to look at their overall health, including their mental health and their physical health, whether or not they have any family support systems, and the need, with people who are alcoholics or drug-affected or whatever, to have rehabilitation procedures in place. However, he also, while presenting those sensible arguments, said that people trying to cope with those difficulties have simply to be locked up automatically, no matter what they may have done or how small the crime may be.

It is important that decisions are made about what caused them to offend. We fully support that. It is in our policy, and that is why we included it. The trouble areas need to be identified and resolved before they become worse, but we should not propose ridiculous draconian measures that will cost society, not only in terms of the dollars involved with incarcerating people and implementing decisions for

extra policing, often to little purpose, but also create the kind of long-term problems that will lead our society to rue the day when some of these decisions were made.

Many of the people involved in the sort of crime that the Chief Minister is talking about - in particular I refer to the sort of alienated youth that are found in urban areas and in some of the remote communities, rather than the more unfortunate psychologically and alcohol-deranged people who often end up as our itinerant long-grassers - both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, have histories of psychological and psychiatric problems. Many are schizophrenic. Either they have been for some time or the effects of their alcohol and other drug abuse has contributed to that state. However, if you look at kids who are being abused in their own families, whether physically or sexually, and where the hassles apply and they end up leaving home, much of their antisocial behaviour is related to the alienation they feel from society and the lack of support they believe they receive from the standard authority figures of their parents and other close family members. They are the very people that, as a society, we should be trying to show that, while there are rules and regulations, we also care about them and actually have a future to offer them.

What sort of message will be given to these people, who are already alienated from their own family unit, if they find that, in their very difficult situation of trying to survive on the streets, in a very difficult environment, they can be placed in jail for weeks, months or even a year for very minor offences? Instead of being able to offer support or rehabilitation, or trying to create a caring environment for some of these people, that is what is offered to them. What assessment are they likely to make of this society? For people who have been rejected by their family, or abused by their family and people in the area, we are setting in place systematic, regimented, government-imposed abuse as well.

What is the difference between a parent beating the crap out of their child for a minor misdemeanour and the authorities putting someone in jail for 3 or 12 months for a similar minor misdemeanour? Is that not child abuse as well? Is that not a form of abuse when the sorts of things that I am sure members did or their friends did when they were 16 or 17 were no worse than that - whether it was pinching an apple on the way to school or whatever? I would be very surprised if many members opposite could stand up, put their hand on their heart and say honestly that they never broke a law when they were younger. Indeed, I suspect that a few would find it difficult to put their hand on their heart and say that they have not broken the law in recent times, in a number of ways ...

Mr Baldwin: On your own side as well.

Mr BAILEY: On all sides. I am quite happy to accept that.

It is fascinating that, when they are quite happy to say that they believe it is necessary to enforce laws and put laws in place to protect the community, this is the government that, for its own political agenda, withdrew the compulsory use of push-bike helmets just prior to an election, after agreeing to a national policy. It did that because a local pressure group wanted to object to the requirement to wear a push-bike helmet. Since then, a number of deaths and serious injuries have occurred in the Northern Territory to bike riders who had not been wearing a helmet. All of those cyclists were breaking the law when riding without a helmet but, by withdrawing the compulsory requirement to wear a bike helmet and the minimal enforcement of that law, the government has left a message. A visit to any high school will give an idea of the number of kids who arrive at schools now without bike helmets.

That shows the government has allowed a change in attitude because of its short-sighted political agenda. If it really cared about the people of the Northern Territory, and did not want simply to lock them up for petty crime, it would not be happy to risk our children dying on the roads because it hopes

to gain a few extra votes at an election. It is not enforced. The government and members opposite have not tried to change the policy. They know that making the wearing of pushbike helmets compulsory is a safety issue for adults and for children. The message is that children must wear helmets. However, at 18 people can start to ride around without a helmet. What sort of a message is sent? The message is that adults do not have to do things safely. Let us have a law that says that people under 18 have to wear seatbelts but that, when people turn 18, they do not have to wear seat belts. We are trying to tell our kids that it is okay not to do things safely because we are a bit older! If the Chief Minister were concerned about trying to do something to help Territorians, we would not have that sort of hypocrisy.

The Chief Minister has gained the publicity he wanted from zero tolerance policing, and he is quite happy largely to accept the recommendations that Territory Labor put forward in its policy. That policy is good policing and taking the politics out of policing. This Chief Minister has been all too interested in using the **police** for his own political agenda. He needs to provide the resources necessary for the **police** to carry out their duties. The **police** need to be encouraged to enforce the existing laws. As we see today, there is no real need for any significant change to the current legislation. We simply need a government that is committed to enforcing the existing legislation.

Motion agreed to.