It’s been a busy start to the Dry Season and now the roads are open I’ve been able to get back out into the electorate. I’ve had the pleasure of handing over some more bikes to schools and attended the Daly River Sports Festival along with the Adelaide River Show and Freds Pass Show.

The markets are back in full swing and I encourage you to take the time to attend a market near you and support our local community. Rhonda and I have enjoyed the Berry Springs, Batchelor and Adelaide River markets and look forward to getting out to the Dundee Beach markets soon.

Gary

Message from Gary

The Budget Bill is the most important piece of legislation to pass through Parliament each year. It authorises Government to spend taxpayers’ money and what it should be spent on.

Scrutinising the Budget Bill through Estimates Committee hearings is a key function of non-Government members.

The Government cut the Budget scrutiny by half and inflicted its own schedule on those responsible for holding them to account. How can this be fair, open or transparent?

Labor’s Budget delivers Territorians record debts and deficit, with the least amount of time for scrutiny

The Government has said the only way for the Territory to grow is to allow private enterprise to invest and by diversifying the economy. I agree with this sentiment but dispute whether the government is fair dinkum in its implementation.

It banned Dan Murphy’s coming to Darwin, a shovel-ready project which would have created jobs in construction and engineering into the future.

New roads will increase the opportunities for tourism, beef and mango exports and, more importantly, connect Territorians.

For too long we have accepted substandard infrastructure in the regions as part and parcel of living out bush. We should not.

There are potential innovations, ideas and businesses waiting to be unlocked when we connect Territorians with each other.

We need infrastructure that leaves the Territory wealthier and more productive after it is built. Unfortunately, the budget just announced is the worst possible budget at this time.

Gary

Hospital Visits

If you find yourself in Hospital and would like a visit please let us know.

Rhonda Higgins is happy to visit patients who would like to see a friendly face.

~END~
MANDORAH JETTY AND BOAT RAMP

I’m pleased to see the results of the study into the Mandorah Jetty and boat ramp have been released following the former government’s commitment to upgrade this important infrastructure project.

The Country Liberals Government commissioned engineers to undertake an assessment of the current condition of the jetty and boat ramp and to provide recommendations for long term options for upgrade or replacement.

A Factsheet has been produced with 5 design options. The recommended preferred option is to build new facilities close to the existing jetty including new ferry pontoon, gangway, rock groyne and new roll on/roll off boat ramps. The land based groyne structure will provide protection from wind and waves to the new facilities.

The existing jetty could be reserved for use as a recreational facility. The current indicative order of cost for this option is $24 million. The study found this option provides the best value for money and will provide new upgraded infrastructure for commercial, commuter and recreational use.

Further engineering works will be conducted to confirm the cost estimates.

A factsheet with all options is available from my office. Please drop in or give us a call.

TERRITORY ALMOST FRECKLE FREE

The Northern Territory government has announced the restrictions on banana growers have been lifted following the four year Banana Freckle eradication program. We have now moved into Phase 4 Assessment of Proof of Freedom which involves lifting the quarantine regulations and final inspections on a number of properties.

There will no longer be a permit required to purchase, grow, move or sell banana plants within the NT but a permit is still required to move banana plants and fruit into and out of the Territory.

We are encouraged to continue to check our banana plants for any signs of banana freckle. Further information is available from my office.

CULLEN BAY FERRY TERMINAL UPDATE

Cullen Bay Ferry Terminal refurbishments have been completed with the terminal now available to ferry passengers again.

A study to develop a long term parking strategy for the Cullen Bay area commenced in February this year and is due to be complete by November this year.

A third project for the Cullen Bay terminal is the dredging of the Cullen Bay channel which will enable vessels up to 2.5m draft access to the facility at all tides.
The official opening of the Wadeye Police Station was held in April and along with the official unveiling of the plaque, a very special community leader was recognised for his commitment to the town of Wadeye. Retiring Aboriginal Liaison Officer Ernest Perdjert received a plaque and letter from the Commissioner of Police followed by a Policing Excellence Medal.

Ernest has worked with the police for many years and is a well respected member of the Wadeye community. It was great to see Ernest recognised in such a special way.

Along with Ernest achievements, Sergeant Scott Rose and Senior Constable First Class Ainsley Phipps also received recognition for their service to the community with the Commissioner presenting them both with Commissioner’s Commendations for their bravery and professionalism during an unrest in the community.

The Dry is here and so are the Markets!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelaide River</td>
<td>Mon, Wed, Sat &amp; Sun</td>
<td>8am-1pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batchelor</td>
<td>Second Sunday of the month</td>
<td>8am-1pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berry Springs</td>
<td>Last Sunday of the month</td>
<td>8am-12pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>Every Saturday</td>
<td>11am-3pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Creek</td>
<td>Every Sunday</td>
<td>9am-1pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rosella Festival

28 July 2017 at the Adelaide River Inn
8.30am to 3pm
ROCKY CREEK BRIDGE UNDERWAY

On a recent visit to Dundee I was pleased to see the Rocky Creek Bridge construction is well underway. Re-gravelling of some roads including Mermaid Circuit I understand has occurred but the sealing of these roads is unfortunately still a long way off.

I will however continue to fight for the Dundee residents for improved road infrastructure.

BIOSECURITY ALERT

White spot disease is a highly contagious viral infection that affects crustaceans. This disease does not pose a threat to human health or food safety but poses a major threat to the Australian aquaculture farms and native crustaceans.

White spot disease has been detected on some prawn farms in southeast Queensland and in some river systems.

This disease has not been detected in the Northern Territory.

The virus has also been found in imported green (uncooked) prawns.

Prawns with white spot disease may have a loose shell with numerous white spots on the inside surface of the shell and a pink to red discoloration.

The support of all Territorians is also needed to prevent the disease from entering the Northern Territory:

• don't use prawns intended for human consumption as bait
• check bait prawns for signs of white spot disease
• never dispose of prawns sold for human consumption or near waterways.

CRIME STATISTICS

Bail Reform legislation passed during the March Sittings was a positive step in the right direction and could have helped in the ever increasing crime wave hitting the Territory. Months have now passed and it is extremely disappointing to hear Government confirm not a single person on bail has been fitted with an electronic monitoring bracelet by police.

Police crime figures show an alarming surge in business crimes:

• March quarter commercial break-ins increased 40% across the Territory on previous year
• Darwin commercial break-ins increased by 141% on the previous year
• Palmerston commercial break-ins increased by 88% on the previous year
• Territory house break-ins are also up 104% on the March quarter.

Government needs to address recidivist offenders and serial bail breakers. Suggestions by a Labor MLA that the drastic increase in crime is a media beat up is shameful.
During the Budget Sittings, I submitted a number of written questions concerning the Daly electorate that have been raised with me. Below are just some of the issues that I have asked of Ministers that relate to the electorate.

**Rural Bus Services**
Public transport in the rural area and across the electorate has been an ongoing issue. I took the opportunity to ask government what their strategic plan was for the rural area and if an economic analysis had been done on the benefits of expanding the service.

I also asked what government's plans were for expanding the rural school bus service as this is an issue that is front and centre, especially in the Berry Springs area.

**Boat Ramps**
Maintenance and responsibility of boat ramps across the Territory is also an ongoing issue. There are just over 30 boat ramps across the Northern Territory that are currently unmaintained and quite a number of those are in the electorate of Daly.

I asked who is currently and who will be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of South Port Boat Ramp. Also if there is any investment in the Adelaide River Boat Ramp to address the safety concerns of anglers?

**Banjo Lines**
Pine Creek is littered with banjo lines, and is but one area in the electorate of Daly affected by banjo lines. I asked what actions Government will take to deal with this issue and when?

Estimated costs to replace the banjo lines in the Darwin rural area are in excess of 40 Million dollars. The previous Country Liberals Government had committed to working to replace the remaining banjo lines.

**Saddle Rail**
Many residents will know I have been fighting long and hard to see upgrades to both Saddle Rail Crossing and Yellow Creek and managed to commit expenditure to both projects in the last Country Liberals Budget.

Unfortunately, the new Government has not committed to upgrading Saddle Rail in the immediate future.

Those who use Port Keats road know full well that upgrading Yellow Creek without Saddle Rail does nothing to address road access during the wet season. I will keep pressure on.

**Gamba Grass**
Another topic that is raised frequently is the control of Gamba Grass.

I asked what Government's gamba grass reduction strategies were and if these programs apply to the Government as a landholder? A question I have had recently raised is who is responsible for handling and dealing with gamba grass on crown land?

**Territory Wildlife Park**
News that government plans to relocate our iconic Territory Wildlife Park to Darwin has shocked and upset many in the electorate, none more so than the business owners who rely heavily on passing traffic. I asked when this planned move will occur and what business case has been done to support this move and what modelling had been done on the impact on the greater Berry Springs community.

**Education and Community Safety**
The role of school-based constables has recently changed which has caused uncertainty and frustration among our school communities.

I asked if schools currently have a specific police constable that they can contact when law enforcement matters occur at a school and how many times police called to schools to address behavioural problems.

Still on education, I also asked if School of the Air is eligible for the Building Better Schools funding like all other schools in the Territory.

If you are interested in the answers to any of these please let my office know.

/GaryHiggins
Hydraulic fracturing

The Northern Territory has rich natural gas reserves that have the potential to drive economic growth, create thousands of jobs and deliver stronger communities, towns and cities right across Northern Australia.

On-shore gas reserves are in isolated parts of the Territory and could deliver hundreds of millions in royalty revenues and in excess of 6,000 jobs.

Here are a few facts for consideration:

Water
The Territory’s on-shore gas is mainly made up of shale deposits that are generally 1.5 to 4km below the surface, well away from aquifers and surface water.

Regulated
For gas companies to access private and pastoral land, Land Access Agreements must be in place. On Aboriginal land, Traditional Owners have the right to veto oil and gas exploration.

No contamination
There have been millions of fracking operations world-wide without a single case of proven water contamination from deep shale fracking.

Safety
Fracking has been occurring safely in the NT for more than 30 years.

Delivers Power
The gas from the Mereenie field, south west of Alice Springs, has a number of ‘fracked’ wells that produce gas that delivers - or has delivered - electricity for homes right across the Territory, including Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Alice Springs and Yulara.

Be prepared this fire season

After a bumper wet, this fire season has already stretched our volunteer fire brigades to their limits.

You can play your part in keeping your property and animals safe by ensuring fire breaks are in place. Make sure you have a fire plan and clear any unwanted rubbish and vegetation.

Ensure you have a plentiful supply of water and any fire fighting equipment you have is ready for use.

Take care when operating machinery and ensure when operating tools to be aware of flammable materials around you.

Our volunteer brigades are always looking for new volunteers, please consider becoming a volunteer, call Bushfires NT for further information on 8976 0098.
Congratulations to Holly Daniels for the closest guess for our Jelly Bean competition that was held at the Adelaide River Show. Holly guessed 310, the closest guess to the actual number of 384!

Most people don’t think twice about Census night, other than it’s a lot of questions to answer, an inconvenience and a waste of our precious family time.

But without Census and other statistics compiled by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, governments would have a hard time trying to work out how much to invest in each state, territory, local government area and smaller communities. Everything from education needs, health services, housing needs, road and utilities infrastructure to the number of vehicles and number of people who share a home helps governments assess the needs of the Australian population.

Private investors also use this information to decide if it is viable to invest in a particular area, i.e. retirement villages, childcare centres etc.

If you are interested in any more detailed information, email or call in to the office or visit www.census.gov.au

Jelly Bean Competition Winner!

Congratulations to Holly Daniels for the closest guess for our Jelly Bean competition that was held at the Adelaide River Show. Holly guessed 310, the closest guess to the actual number of 384!

Population according to 2016 Census
- Litchfield region - 2242
- Dundee region - 462
- Wagait - 463
- Belyuen - 164
- Coomalie region - 1319
- Nauiyu - 378
- Pine Creek - 328
- Wadeye region - 2280

PRODUCT SAFETY RECALL

Polaris quad bikes to be recalled due to asbestos risk

Australian quad bike supplier Polaris has notified the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission of a recall of 12 models in its ‘Youth’ range of quad bikes due to the presence of asbestos in component parts.

The Polaris models currently subject to the recall include the Scrambler 50, Scrambler 90, Predator 50, Predator 90, Outlaw 50, Outlaw 110, Sportsman 90, Sportsman 110, Ace 150, Sawtooth 200 and Phoenix 200 supplied between 2003 and 2017.

Customers with concerns should contact Polaris directly.

For further information visit www.productsafty.gov.au

Nominations are now open for the 2018 Australian of the Year Awards.

The Awards program relies on the public to submit nominations for people deserving of recognition, so have your say on who should be considered for the 2018 Australian of the Year, Senior Australian of the Year, Young Australian of the Year and Australia’s Local Hero.

Be a great Australian and nominate someone for the Australian of the Year Awards
Australianoftheyear.org.au
#BeGreatandNominate

Nominations close 6 August 2017