JUSTINE DAVIS

INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR JOHNSTON

integrity | action | community

A message from your local representative in NT Parliament

Happy New Year! Can you believe we are almost into the second quarter of the year? The monsoon season, or Dalay as the Larrakia know it, has taken a very long time to arrive, but the year (and parliament) is certainly well under way.

Our office is open 9am – 4pm Monday to Friday, but we know not everyone is available during office hours, so one of the ways I try to make myself available is setting up outside a different set of local shops each Tuesday evening. Then every Sunday–my favourite day of the week–you can find me at the Rapid Creek Markets. It's no secret that I love this market I have been going to every week for 30 years, where I have watched many of the stallholders grow up from tiny children to running the stalls themselves with their own little kids helping out. This truly is a thriving local economy and connecting with people here reminds me why I love my job.

Bagot Park

This month our office had the privilege of hosting a meeting that brought together representatives from the Mindil Aces Soccer Club, Darwin City Councillors, and the dedicated Friends of Bagot Park group. Cynthia, Ed. Peter, Cliff, James and Morgan all talked about their ideas for the future of the park.

This is a true example of grassroots action—these are all people and organisations who play, work, plant trees in, and look after Bagot Park – but this was the first time they met together, and I'm thrilled to report that this discussion was productive and full of exciting ideas.

We believe that by working together we can find ways to create an inclusive environment where people of all generations, cultures, and backgrounds can come together to use these spaces in different ways.

Bagot Park action group meeting

We talked about the Bagot Park Master Plan–with ideas for intergenerational playgrounds, a reflexology garden, and community meeting spaces. New ideas also came up; a Bagot Car Boot Sale, a Bagot Bush Dance, and Bagot Walkers groups. I am so looking forward to working alongside the community, local government and our local sporting club to turn these ideas into reality to ensure Bagot Park becomes a place of connection for all of us.

Members of the Fifteenth Assembly of the Northern Territory Parliament meet for the first sitting of 2025

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Our Seniors Community

Our community is also full of wonderful Seniors and we are so happy to have many of them regularly visit the office – sometimes seeking help, sometimes wanting to help us! Bringing in plants for the office, attending the seniors painting group or other groups that use our community room, or just to have a chat and a cup of tea.

Seniors Morning Teas

After one of those cups of tea with a chance encounter between two seniors who had not met each other yet at our office, we realised that there's an opportunity to do more for our elderly residents. So we have recently launched weekly Seniors Coffee Mornings. These get togethers have already sparked new ideas, such as a writing group computer skills sharing sessions, and so much more. We hope it will be a wonderful space for people to connect, share, and build community, and we're looking forward to seeing it continue to grow.

Weekly morning tea the office - Thursdays at 10!

Last year at our End of Year Seniors Morning Tea one of these amazing people stood up and invited others to join her to set up a **Seniors Advisory Group for Johnston** – to guide our work in the electorate, and to connect seniors, many of whom experience isolation but have so much to offer. We are so excited to have this group of seniors working with us – if you're interested in being involved let us know.

It was great my old friend Rob Wesley–Smith, known to many of us as Wes, to our office. Wes came to show me his 2 books – one about Timor Leste, and one about the early history of Mt Bundy Station. Wes came to the NT in 1960's as an agricultural scientist and while growing rice and working with buffaloes he soon became involved the Free East Timor movement. The work he has done with our Timorese neighbours cannot be overestimated. Wes is a recipient of a Human Rights award and continues to be a staunch supporter of justice for all. He is an amazing history keeper which these two books attest to – come and check them out in our office! Thanks Wes for all you have done and continue to do.

Young Peoples' Voices

We are here for our whole community, and part of my vision for this electorate is making sure that the entire community has a voice on what matters to them. We know young people can tell us about the issues that are affecting them and what their ideas are for addressing them. This is how we build community, make change, and do politics differently, so we are working towards creating a Young People's Advisory Group for our electorate.

In addition to supporting ongoing community initiatives, I've been excited to launch of a new speech-writing competition for students in our electorate. Young people from across Johnston have been invited to write speeches for me to read out in parliament, a fantastic opportunity to bring the voices of our youth to our political decision makers.

Winning speeches will be documented in Hansard (official parliament records) and can be watched live in Parliament on the day, or via the video livestream.

Guidelines

- Maximum 5 minutes in length (750 words or less)
- Choose a topic that is important to you, or answer one of the following questions:
  - What I want my community to look like in 10 years' time
  - What I would do if I was Chief Minister
  - What I want our government to know

Due Dates

(the Friday before each parliament sitting)

~~14 February~~	25 July
14 March	29 August
9 May	10 October
6 June	21 November

Submit with your name, age, and anything else you would like to share about yourself to electorate.johnston@nt.gov.au

Community Gardens and School Initiatives

Our electorate has four amazing community gardens; the Jingili Water Gardens and Lakeside Drive Community Gardens, and two amazing school-based gardens at Alawa school farm and Jingili PS. We have been talking about how we can support similar school garden projects at Millner and Moil schools.

These gardens can provide students with the opportunity to learn about sustainability, food security, and the importance of working together to care for the environment. I love getting my hands dirty in community gardens and I look forward to supporting this these projects to grow in the coming months.

Community Helping Community: *Lawn Mowing Initiative*

We're always looking for ways to support and connect people in our community. One of the fallouts from the corrections crisis is that Corrections Community Services are no longer able to provide their garden maintenance service. Seniors and those not able to look after their gardens are struggling through the wet season to manage fast growing lawns and gardens which become unsafe quickly.

We know many of you used this great service and rehabilitation program where low security prisoners could learn landscaping skills, engage with the community, and help community members with something simple but meaningful.

In response to this gap the corrections crisis has created, we are starting a **community mutual aid gardening program** – linking up people who want to help others with people who need help across our electorate. Beginning with a community lawn-mowing program, this hopes to be a simple but effective way to build connections across generations and provide assistance where it's needed.

Do you have an hour spare every now and then to help out a neighbour?

Contact the office today to get involved!

What's Happening in Parliament

In our first sitting of the year, the CLP pushed through a number of bills, including their Corrections Bill 'on urgency'. This means they voted to change the rules of parliament so that there was no time for consultation or understanding the implications of this law. The Bill (which passed) means that untrained people can now work in our prisons. We know that our prisons and watchhouses are in crisis, with extreme overcrowding and allegations of lack of access to showers, medical treatment and outside light. Putting untrained staff in a highly volatile environment will not make any of us safer. The Minister has not consulted with our hard-working prison officers – so almost 100 of them came to parliament when this Bill came up in Parliament. Still the Minister did not speak to them.

Corrections Officers protesting at Parliament House

The Government also passed the bill on removing the Minimum Unit Price for alcohol. This means that cheap alcohol, which does the most harm to people, will be even cheaper. There is overwhelming evidence that a minimum floor price works. This is another piece of law that will harm our community.

Before Parliament started on Tuesday morning the CLP announced that they were defunding the Environment centre in Darwin and the Arid Lands Environment Centre in Alice Springs, using remarkably violent language like 'weaponizing' and 'warfare' for these two organisations which have existed for decades standing up for the environment on behalf of all of us.

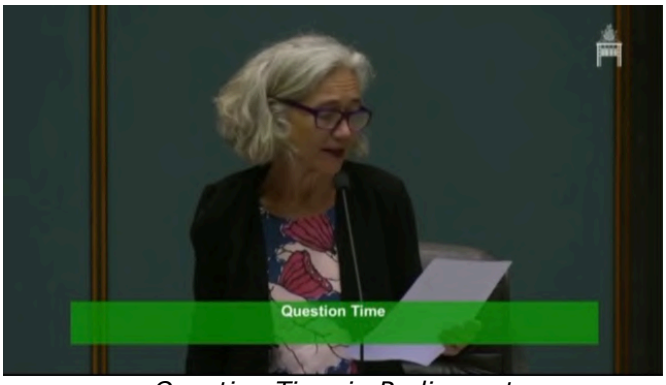
Ironically on the same morning they announced they would be bringing in a lobbyist register – which should be great news…. however unlike the motion proposed by the Member for Nightcliff, this will be the weakest lobbyist register in the country. It does not require most lobbyists to register, does not require open ministerial diaries, only has a 6 month cooling off period for ministers to take jobs in industry, and there is not enforceable ministerial code of conduct.

Laws introduced to Parliament in February

The Government 'gave notice' of the following Bills to be debated and voted on in March:

- A Bill to establish a "Territory Coordinator", an unelected bureaucrat, with the power to override the parliament, government departments, and 32 laws in order to fast track approvals for major Gas projects and other destructive industries.
- A Bill to increase police and parole officer's powers to enter premises and do drug and alcohol tests
- A Bill to remove the "debt ceiling" in the NT and allow the government to borrow more money without accountability. Perhaps it should be called *removing* transparency bill?
- A Bill to allow truancy officers to monitor and enforce children's attendance at school by issuing $370 fines to parents.
- A bill to amend the defamation legislation to bring the NT in line with the rest of Australia
- A Bill to remove the 3rd party merits review process from the Petroleum, Planning, and Water Laws, significantly hindering transparency and accountability in the application of these laws.

In Parliament, I also gave notice of two motions – a motion to develop an NT wide Alcohol Action Plan, so we can properly address this issue which cause 2-3 times more deaths a year than the rest of Australia, and costs the Territory at least 1.4 billion per year. I also gave notice for a motion calling for an inquiry to recover the $60 million stolen form NT taxpayers through the Indigenous Employment Provisional Sum Scheme.



Question Time in Parliament

On Thursday 13th February it was the 17th anniversary of the Apology to the Stolen Generations and we had a 'matter of public importance' in the parliament, where all members could speak to this. I urge you to look at Hansard to see the level of disrespect given to the Aboriginal members in the chamber by some of the Members of the Government.

What happens in Parliament matters – the ways we speak and the laws we pass. When we use harmful language in our debates, when we pass laws which we know will impact disproportionately on First nations people, these decisions matter—they cause real harm. These choices matter, and they have real, lasting consequences for the people we are meant to represent. I will continue to work with others both inside and outside Parliament for respect and justice for all people.

Parliament 2025 Sitting Dates

~~11-13 February~~
18-20, 25-27 March
13-15, 20-22 May
29-31 July
2-4 September
14-16, 21-23 October
25-27 November

Justine in Johnston

One of the ways I try to make myself available outside parliament and office hours is by setting up at Rapid Creek Markets every Sunday morning, and outside a different set of local shops each Tuesday from 5-6pm. Dates through to June 2025 are as follows:

Alawa
8 April
6 May

Jingili
4 March
15 April
27 May

Moil
11 March
22 April
3 June

Millner
1 April
6 May

Parliamentary Training

MLA committee members had a training session with Rex Wild KC on asking questions and how run and participate in committees. Thanks to all involved to bring it together - this is apparently the first training the members of Parliament have had for many years, but there could be more to come! What would you like to see your local representatives trained in? Let me know!

Want to read the next newsletter online?
Scan here to sign up to the mailing list and receive this information electronically

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Cards for a Cause

Towards the end of the year, we created some greeting cards and postcards with artwork from local artists in the electorate. While we initially got them printed for use in the office, they have been extremely popular among constituents with many requests to purchase them. In response, we have created the Cards for a Cause initiative, where cards are available for purchase for a donation to a local charitable cause.

We suggest a payment of $5 each or 5 for $20, but welcome any support for these cards to showcase our fantastic local artists. This month we are raising money to support the **Alawa Tool Library**.

Do you have a charitable cause in our community that we could raise funds for through these cards? Get in touch with the office to discuss more details.

Great to meet with the East Timor Consular (left) and with Uncle Eric Fejo when he dropped in

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

POSITIONS OPEN

Are you committed to applying your policy, research and writing skills to achieving positive change?

Volunteer internships in the Johnston Electorate Office can be offered from 1 to 4 weeks, and may be based in Darwin or completed remotely as appropriate for the allocated project. Full time or part time arrangements will be considered.

Internships will commence from late January and are available throughout 2025.

For more information contact
ELECTORATE.JOHNSTON@NT.GOV.AU

Bombing of Darwin Anniversary

At the Ceremony with Dr Richard Fejo wearing his Father's medals

On Wednesday 19 February I attended the Commemorative Service of the 83rd Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin hosted by the City of Darwin hosted at the Darwin Cenotaph. The attack took a heavy toll on the city, claiming more than 230 lives, injuring over 400 people and causing widespread destruction to ships, buildings and infrastructure.

Is there an issue in our community that you would like to see more action on? Scan here to share What Matters To You

Back to School

I hope everyone has had a great start to the school year so far, and I wish you all a year of great experiences, learning, fun and growth. And thank you to all our amazing educators doing the most important job there is - caring for all of our children.

Congratulations and good luck to all the teachers who have started the school year off! Together with some volunteers we baked and delivered morning tea to each school in the electorate.

Cakes for our wonderful school teachers in the electorate

It has been great to attend the First Assemblies of the year as term 1 began. It was so beautiful to see uncle Joe Raymond lead the smoking cermony at Millner Primary School with his son Joe Junior, along with his grandchildren who are students there. In Uncle Joe's words - may all children be safe and strong in their school year ahead.

Millner Primary School smoking ceremony (left), and Moil Primary School Assembly (right)

Millner Primary School AGM

Elsewhere in the Community

It has been a busy start to the year, with lots more in the calendar to come. It's been great to attend many of the New Year celebrations hosted by different community groups, and get involved in some of Darwin's best wet season events!

Tet Festival (Vietnamese New Year) Celebrations with the VCA NT Chapter

The annual Cane Toad Bust in Jingili Water Gardens, hosted by our friends at Darwin City Council

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What's On in Johnston

There is always lots going on at the office and out in the community.

Regular Events at the Electorate Office
Seniors Painting Group - Tuesdays 9.30-11am
Grow Group - Tuesdays 1.30-4pm
Seniors Coffee Catch Up - Thursdays 10-12pm

Our Community Room is located at the Johnston Electorate Office and is freely available for booking for community members. The room has a boardroom-style set up capacity of 10px complete with kitchenette and WiFi. Contact the office for more information or to check availability.

Coming up in April, we also have the annual

This will be a wonderful event for everyone, involving many of our local community groups and of course an egg hunt through the gardens. More details coming soon!

What's on Around Town

Check out the Darwin City Council Website for information on free and ticketed events coming up

Off The Leash is another great place to find out about events, arts and culture here in the NT

NT Tourism is a great place to find out about special events coming up in Darwin from sports to music and everything in between

I love being able to say hello to the groups who use our Community Room - and popping in to the Rapid Creek Landcare Group meeting is always a treat! This amazing group of people care for beautiful Gurambai (Rapid Creek) and it's catchment areas that runs through our suburbs.

Rapid Creek Landcare Group Meeting

New members welcome! I can guarantee good company, a wealth of knowledge and plenty of opportunities to get stuck into very satisfying and therapeutic weeding!

Meeting with Leeane and Nathan from AHANT (left) and Annie from Shelter (right)

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