

Restoring Parliamentary Accountability

Parliamentary Accountability

The Northern Territory deserves an open and accountable Government and a Parliamentary system that puts the interests of our unique community first.

Territorians want a Government where the elected representatives make decisions and are accountable for those decisions.

Over the past eight years, Labor has denigrated democracy by:

- Gagging scrutiny of Government legislation;
- Manipulating Parliament for the Government's own political purposes; and
- Wasting time through filibustering with Ministerial Reports

One only needs to look at the scandal surrounding SIHIP to see Labor's politicisation of government processes and lack of accountability. Instead of fronting Parliament to answer crucial questions on how it is spending \$670 million of Commonwealth money, the Chief Minister adjourned the Assembly and walked away from scrutiny.

The clear objective of the Country Liberals is to restore integrity, accountability and transparency into decision making. In Government we will:

- **Improve the function of Parliament; and**
- **Reform Question Time and Estimates.**

The Country Liberals value our democracy and have already submitted many of these recommendations to the Standing Orders Committee which were rejected by the Labor Government.

The Country Liberals will give Territorians the open and accountable Government they deserve.

We will give them a Government that is run by elected representatives in the best interests of the community.

A Parliament for All

Parliament is the House of the people. It is the place where significant debate should take place and decisions that affect the daily lives of all Territorians are made.

Question Time and the Estimates process play a crucial role in the function of democracy. They ensure Government is accountable for its actions.

Over the past eight years the Territory Labor Government has moved to shut down Parliament as a place of debate and review. Members have been gagged when they attack Government, while Ministers have been given free rein.

The Country Liberals believe that the integrity of Parliament must be restored. More can be done to ensure rigorous and robust debate. More can be done to be more inclusive of the community, ensuring the wider views of Territorians are heard.

To improve the accountability of Parliament, the Country Liberals will:

- Limit the length of questions to 1 minute and answers to 3 minutes;



- Introduce a system of supplementary questions limited at 30 seconds and answers at 60 seconds;
- Ensure the Opposition asks a minimum of 8 questions during Question Time – not including Supplementary Questions;
- Strengthen the Parliamentary Standing Orders to ensure ministers provide relevant, concise and informative answers;
- Reschedule Question Time to 11am daily;
- Increase the time allocated for the Estimates process from 4 days to at least 7 days over 2 weeks; and
- Allow direct questioning of public servants with ministers present.

To improve the function of Parliament, the Country Liberals will:

- Investigate the appointment of an independent non-MLA as Speaker;
- Introduce a 3 hour General Business session for Members each Thursday during Assembly sittings;
- Remove Ministerial Reports;
- Re-instate the 10 minute adjournment speech for Members;
- Introduce additional regular sittings and remove the limitations on sittings to ensure important business can be dealt with urgently;
- Revise existing rules that relate to the broadcast of Parliament to ensure Territorians can view all Parliamentary debate; and
- Reform the Parliamentary Committee system and increase community involvement.