



NORTHERN TERRITORY
***of* AUSTRALIA**

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Member for Fong Lim

HANSARD EXTRACT

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS, THEATRE,
AWARDS & EVENTS

TUESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2025

This extract is taken from the Official Hansard of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

Labor promised increased caps on property prices for its low-deposit home loan scheme for every state and territory except the Northern Territory.

In the new suburb of Asche a four-bedroom house-and-land package costs \$695,000. Labor's new scheme locks out Territorians. Where were the Members for Solomon and Lingiari standing up for us? If the Member for Solomon was as obsessed with home ownership as he was with Aldi the federal government would match our government's commitment to home ownership by ensuring federal schemes reflect the reality we face in the Territory.

A benefit of more Territorians building and owning their home is an increase in the availability of rentals. When a young couple moves out of a rental property and into their own home it adds to the housing supply and frees up a rental. More housing supply drives down the cost of rents—unlike what the Member for Johnston said today. Extending this scheme supports first homeowners and renters alike.

I will speak about a great local business. Earlier in the year I went to the suburb of Asche for a 'try a trade' day hosted by local Larrakia development group AKJ Services. Owners Jess and Antal have five young children. Speaking to the developers this morning I learned that 137 blocks have been sold in stages 1 to 4, which is fantastic. There are only 35 blocks left in stage 5, with estimations they will be sold by early December.

A lot of people in the Asche development potentially would have taken up the first homebuyers' scheme that we have been supporting. Last October the CLP took real action so that thousands of Territorians, no matter when they live, have the chance to own their home.

Casuarina Park stage 3 has started in Katherine. Twenty-eight people took up the \$10,000 First Home Owner Grant for an established house while only one accessed the \$50,000 First Home Owner Grant. Hopefully, by extending the \$50,000 grant for the next year more people will take it up.

There was a conversation about social and affordable housing and what we were or were not doing in that space. The \$50m Social Housing Accelerator Payment funded by the Australian Government is being delivered by the NT Government.

Eight homes are being built in Katherine: five on Bradshaw Crescent; one on Casuarina Street; and two on Maluka Road. These works engage local contractors, including Greenspace Group Pty Ltd, LA Build Pty Ltd, DICE Australia Pty Ltd and Katherine Constructions, which is a company run by Pat Hill. Pat has put on an extra apprentice to allow for the extra building work and development, which is a great thing for people in our area. It is great for kids who want to go from school into an apprenticeship. My children all went into apprenticeships and got their trade qualifications, and it is a great pathway for them. The other contractors are Blueprint NT Pty Ltd and Centrebuild Pty Ltd.

There are two of those houses being built in the Top End; eight in Big Rivers; three in the Barkly in Tennant Creek; and three in Central Australia.

I wanted to put that on record because I missed the jump this afternoon.

Our first homeowner scheme is great, particularly the \$50,000 grant. We are not just supporting people getting into their own home; we are also supporting those in social housing. We are not a government that applies a one-size-fits-all approach. We are making sure that we look after all people in the community, whether they are on a low income and need social or affordable housing or are moving into their own homes.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): [By leave, the member spoke in French and self-interpreted in English.]

Mr Deputy Speaker, on 6 September I had the privilege to badly speak French and represent the Chief Minister at the 40th anniversary of Alliance Francaise and its inaugural French Festival.

I will speak briefly—sketchily—in French today because the next time we have a mission like this we should probably send the Member for Drysdale, whose daughters speak much better French than I do. However, I am pleased to report that there were no diplomatic incidents on this occasion.

We were blessed with the presence of His Excellency Mr Pierre-Andre Imbert, the Ambassador of France to Australia. It was a wonderful atmosphere with amazing food and beverages—such as duck confit sliders, of which I ate far too many—quality entertainment, beautiful face painting, baguette-based comedy, the Zilwa Band and DJ Mathilde. I must thank Clement and Ingrid Bresson and their delightful young son, Emile, who kept me entertained all night. It was a fantastic event.

French-speaking people have been in the Northern Territory for a long time. Some of them come from places we would not necessarily think of straightaway such as Mauritius, Morocco, Senegal and Quebec in Canada. It was, overall, a stupendous event.

[French spoken.]

Moving from French to Italian, it was likewise a great privilege to represent the Chief Minister at Brown's Mart on 1 October to witness the premiere of Lisa Pellegrino's *We Keep Everything*. This beautiful production shared the Pellegrino family story. Some of you will know Lisa as a former media personality here, and her sister is also something of a chanteuse who is seen all over the place.

Migrant stories are not heard as often as I wish they were when I was growing up here. To have something like that production was a significant contribution not only to art but also to social cohesion.

It was a special evening to be a part of. It was a great crowd of eminent Territorians and patrons of the arts and theatre. I was privileged to be there amongst them all. It takes a lot of courage to put yourself out there and share your story, let alone in a one-person production—a one-woman show—and I was chuffed to be there.

It also takes courage to engage in lifelong learning and professional development. I was pleased to be at the First Circles Leadership Program graduation at the Northern Territory Indigenous Business Network, accompanied by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the minister for Education, the Opposition Leader and the Member for Blain. I am committed to professional development and the process of trying to keep learning throughout your life. It is important that we celebrate these Indigenous leaders. Our Territory needs more leaders. If anyone has not seen the event brochure they should because it is a great little read to find out about people who graduated from the last program and all the things they are involved in.

To Stacey Davis, Veronica Peters, Terrence Wilson, Selma Smiler, Casey Smiler, Simone Baker, Zelda Dhamarrandji, Patricia Puruntatameri, Lateesha Coombes, Kevin Dumoo and Corben Mudjandi, congratulations on graduating that night. It was a wonderful event. A special mention goes to Corben for his killer maroon jacket. That guy knows how to dress; he was best dressed on the night. Thank you to NTIBN for the deadly music, warm hospitality and the delicious buffet, which I destroyed.

The following day we were privileged to celebrate health workers at the NT Mental Health Week Awards held at Parliament House. The Minister for Health; the assistant minister for Health, Mr Deputy Speaker; the Member for Fannie Bay; the new Lord Mayor; and, most importantly, advocates and practitioners for good mental health were there. It was wonderful to collectively recognise our shared commitment to good mental health.

I give a shout-out to Geoff Radford, head of the Mental Health Coalition, for his stewardship and advocacy in this space. Geoff is a constituent of mine in Woolner. From the first time that I met him on my doorstep, he has always been banging down my door to prosecute the case for better mental health, providing data, literature and information. I greatly appreciate his indefatigable commitment to mental health.

It would be remiss of me not to mention my colleagues, the Members for Fannie Bay and Port Darwin, who did the lion's share of the work in organising our Darwin community movie night. Everybody enjoyed watching *Garfield* in the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens and we raised a tidy sum of money for the Starlight Foundation. There was great attendance, great family fun and some footy; I managed to kick a football and not stack it, which was encouraging. The Waratahs people were nice to me about that. I was delighted to be a part of it, so thanks to my colleagues in that regard.

Over the last year my community has very much become Dinah Beach. That is where the good people who I spend my time with increasingly are, particularly on a Wednesday night for chicken wings, as you all know. I was honoured to be there on 5 October to be re-elected the patron of Dinah Beach for another year. We used the opportunity and the rent-a-crowd that we got post AGM to put on—in the spirit of old-time Darwin—a bit of sunset jazz. It was fun to do a gig out there again.

As many of you may recall, Fong Lim has lots of Defence and Defence-adjunct precincts such as Eaton, Coonawarra, Winnellie, Berrimah and Wishart. It is nice to have a connection with Defence. Throughout the year I have been working with the Royal Australian Navy, which has been setting up a band and a new ensemble, and it has been wonderful to gig with them. When they are not in white uniforms they are called the Noteheads. It was the patron and the Noteheads doing sunset jazz which was tonnes of fun. I look forward to doing several more performances with them in the lead-up to Christmas at Dinah Beach and beyond for anybody who wants to hear my best impersonation of Michael Buble.

Speaking of great things at Dinah Beach, it would be remiss not to mention duck laksa. This year I took a photo of duck laksa and put it on social media. It smashed all my engagement records, which is testament to the fact that food is a great binding force for all of us. I encourage all parliamentarians—for those of you who somehow have not already had a laksa—to get out there and get some laksa into you this October. Check out darwinlaksafestival.com.au if you have not already because it has a lot of fascinating information—as well as the league tables—and it is great to learn about all the bits and pieces of the laksa lifestyle. The Territory lifestyle is laksa lifestyle; it is synonymous with laksa, and we all know that.

If you read the site you would note that laksa itself is a lovechild of a dish. It represents fusion and the melting pot; it is an expression of multiculturalism for us. We do a lot of things in here, and I just hope that we can all invest in diversity, multiculturalism and the community here—food and beyond. All the best things are done when you break bread together, I find. I encourage all parliamentarians to snap up a laksa while you still can.

On Friday night I was slightly in the wrong place—in the sense that I happened to miss all my colleagues at the Chief Minister's Awards—but I was somewhere worthwhile. I was at the Palmerston Recreation Centre, where the Darwin Symphony Orchestra has been doing a concert—last year and this year—with a view to bringing music to the people. That is important. There was a great crowd and beautiful music, and the markets were on in the background.

We were lucky that night to have the first conducting performance by the new Artistic Director of the Darwin Symphony Orchestra, Richard Mills AO. For anyone who does not know who he is, he is a big dog. He is a serious heavyweight in Australian music; he was the head of Opera Australia for a period, and it is a real coup for the Northern Territory that he came up here and is conducting the orchestra. It was a great privilege to see him conduct the orchestra, communicate with everyone and teach everybody about what they were doing. There was tonnes to learn.

The orchestra did wonderful bits of Bizet. It was a great program featuring, I might add, Aya Smith who did great solo work. It is extremely rousing to hear the *Superman* theme—John Williams' music—played live for you. If you ever get the opportunity, try to check it out because it is fantastic. As I have said before, the Darwin Symphony Orchestra is not some elitist bourgeois nonsense. Sometimes it plays arty music, but it is a community orchestra and it plays music for the people. I encourage all of you to get out there, grab yourself a laksa and get to the next Darwin Symphony Orchestra concert when you can.

With that, I look forward to Christmas events forthcoming.

Ms BOOTHBY (Brennan): Madam Speaker, on 3 October the Northern Territory lost one of its true tourism pioneers, Werner Sarny. His funeral and celebration of life were today. Many of us who would have liked to be in Katherine for the funeral could not make it due to the Assembly sitting, so I will talk about him this evening.

Werner built a remarkable life here after arriving from Austria in the late 1950s. He made Katherine his home and through hard work, vision and determination helped put the town on the map.

From his early days running tours at Nitmiluk Gorge to building Travel North, the Paraway Motel, Springvale Homestead and the BP service station Werner turned his love for the Territory into a lifetime of contribution. For more than 50 years he welcomed visitors, created jobs and showcased the heart of the Top End. Even after floods and setbacks he never gave up on Katherine.

His dedication to service and community earned him the Tourism Minister's Award for Excellence, the Qantas Award for Outstanding Contribution and in 2000 the Order of Australia.

His daughter Jackie said that he was proud of what he built, grateful to be embraced as a Territorian and deeply committed to his family. That sentiment says it all—Werner Sarny embodied the Territory spirit.

On behalf of the Finocchiaro CLP government I extend condolences to his daughters, Monica, Natalie and Jackie, and to all who knew and loved him. His legacy lives on in the town he helped shape and in the industry that still benefits from his hard work.

On Saturday 18 October I attended the NT Breast Cancer Voice Pink Morning Tea fundraising event. There was a huge crowd at Cazalys Palmerston. I make special mention of Rachel from Cazalys who did a great job gathering everyone and putting on an amazing display of high tea delicacies. The tables were long and so were the trays of food.