



**NORTHERN TERRITORY**  
***of* AUSTRALIA**

---

Dr TANZIL RAHMAN MLA

*Member for Fong Lim*

---

**HANSARD EXTRACT**

**MCKINNON INSTITUTE**

TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2025

---

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

got to Wurrumiyanga there was a community barbecue, and everyone was upbeat and ready to go back to their homes. A couple of houses still need to be reconnected to power.

I thank Jangala Coombes, my cousin-brother, for donating his time and his efforts and community members Austin Wonaeamirri, Brenton Toy, Deanne Rioli and all the Rioli family. Coming over from Milikapiti to Garden Point, most of the roads are still inaccessible, but the community and the police are working in conjunction with the land council and the shire to sort it out. I reckon that within a couple of days they should be able to reach Garden Point. It is a team effort, and I am proud of them. Instead of waiting for external services to come in they are chipping in and using all their equipment—chainsaws, axes and trailers—to get things done and get access to these communities. Well done, guys.

**Mr BURGOYNE (Braitling):** Madam Speaker, the wonderful Alice Springs Christmas Show was held on Saturday afternoon.

I give a huge thank you to the committee and event staff for putting on an incredible event that was enjoyed by many in our community. To Nicky, Racheal, Andrew, Craig and the entire Alice Springs Show committee, thank you for your efforts.

In the evening there were many stall holders and volunteers. I acknowledge them for their work, especially considering the hot 39-degree afternoon. Well done to:

- Angelique Glasson, who sold tickets all afternoon for the Christmas stocking competition
- Shane Thompson, whose baked goods and Christmas puddings are always in high demand
- Naomi Hunter, who not only sold her incredible clay earrings but also supported the fundraising efforts of Ross Park Primary School which sold wrapping paper and cookbooks
- Amy Sabadin, whose desert flowers added colour and vibrance to everyone who bought them
- Megan Deans, who helped throughout the evening, running around and ensuring everyone was where they needed to be
- the CBBA (Centralian Beef Breeders Association), which had a stall on the evening.

Rural shows, no matter what time of year and which form they take, need community support to survive. It made my day to see so many stall holders put in the effort to be there.

The Member for Namatjira and I, with assistance from the Namatjira office, handed out 500 Zooper Doopers to children and parents alike who were looking for some cold relief.

I thank the event organisers for all their work in ensuring that this much-loved event continues to take place.

I will touch briefly on Movember. I am once again growing a mo to raise awareness for men's health. This year it hits home for my family and I more than ever.

Only two weeks ago we lost my Uncle Greg to brain cancer after a short fight. Uncle Greg, like many men, did not want to make a fuss and did not seek medical attention when early signs that something was wrong occurred. Uncle Greg was a key carer for his mum, my grandmother, who has been suffering from dementia for some years. Through putting everyone else first Uncle Greg ignored his own illness, and it cost him his life.

This year, although a bit of facial hair may not change the world, I am once again glad that I can do my bit to start a conversation and raise funds for men's health so that others can seek help when the early signs that something may be wrong occur. We all need to look out for and support one another with our health.

I thank Minister Cahill, who made a generous contribution to my Movember journey this year. If you are keen to donate to anyone taking part in Movember, go online and search their name on the Movember website, view the incredible moustaches men across Australia are growing to raise funds and awareness for men's health and support this important initiative if you can.

**Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim):** Madam Speaker, the McKinnon Institute is Australia's only nonpartisan organisation dedicated to strengthening the performance of our governments and parliaments.

It is best known for the McKinnon Prize, which has been awarded for a number of years. It is notable that the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory was nominated this year in the state and territory category of Leader of the Year, something that received little attention and is worthy of recognition. It is not an insignificant achievement in my opinion.

The other thing the McKinnon Institute is known for is professional development and its Advanced Political Leadership course which seeks to equip politicians with the skill sets and mindsets they need to better serve Australian communities by addressing the big challenges that Australia faces.

Over the last six months I am pleased and proud to report—in fact, it was my great privilege—that I was the beneficiary of a professional development opportunity under the auspices of the McKinnon Institute. It involved learning from a wide range of experts. It was a phenomenal opportunity to be able to learn from practitioners in politics, the media and industry—people at the top of their game. Equally, and more importantly in some ways, there was the opportunity to connect with colleagues from across Australia.

I will share a little about my most recent experience with the McKinnon Institute. On 5 and 6 November I spent time in Canberra in the Australian Parliament, meeting with federal colleagues from across the aisle. It was an invaluable opportunity. All of us in this place are afforded the opportunity to spend some of our electorate allowance on professional development. It is great to see how other parliaments function and to learn how we might better function.

I am grateful to the Member for Nicholls for being kind enough to host me on my stay and to his staff, Mark Skilbeck and Morgan Dyer, for taking such good care of me and helping me to arrange all the logistics and the meetings that I had.

It was an opportunity to do things for the benefit of the Northern Territory in many ways, because connection matters. It was a chance to learn about process, build bridges with others and plant seeds for the future.

I am also grateful to the Members for Parramatta, Cook, Lyons, Fairfax, Flinders and Swan, amongst many others, and the staff of all the aforementioned for helping me to make progress in Canberra.

It was a great opportunity to meet with economists from across the aisle. We face great economic challenges in the Northern Territory, as we all know. To be able to speak with the likes of Steve Hamilton and Jonathon Deans was important.

For those of you who have not done it in person, it is a lot of fun and a learning experience to witness a Question Time in federal parliament. It was extra special to watch our Member for Solomon being mercilessly roasted, quite frankly, by the Member for Cook. It made for entertaining viewing from the gallery, but it raised a serious point about the quality of our federal representation. The Northern Territory has profound economic and social challenges. The likelihood of us resolving any of those things is negligible to zero unless we can not only work with the federal parliament but also have people in the federal parliament who are working for us. Connection matters.

I am grateful for the opportunity that the McKinnon Institute afforded me to spend time looking at the Victorian, New South Wales and federal parliaments. Being in spaces like that means you get to meet mayors and other industry players.

In the short space of time I was there, I met with the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, whose work is important in the Northern Territory in relation to boarding school students and the challenges they face.

Australian Pathology had things on in the federal parliament at the time. It was Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. I am pleased to say that I finally had a PSA test done. At least that is not a problem I have to worry about. The Pharmacy Guild had its annual parliamentary dinner, and I am grateful to Keely Quinn for the opportunity to participate in that.

Canberra, however, was the precursor to the main event I attended on 7 November called Future-Ready Government in the Opera House. That McKinnon scholars' day focused primarily on what artificial intelligence means for future-ready governance and our democracy at this moment.

We are all aware that there are challenges in this space. It is a fast-moving area. Indeed, even today in federal parliament there were Bills introduced relating to artificial intelligence regulation and moving forward constructively.

It was fascinating to learn about the new frontiers of AI from Ashley Llorens, Corporate VP of Microsoft Research; AI in Australian industry from Lee Hickin, the new Executive Director of the Australian National AI Centre; and AI regulatory frameworks from Felix Kartte from the European Commission. Perhaps no-one was more instructive than Professor Anthea Roberts at ANU and the CEO of Dragonfly Thinking, who has made the profound shift from being a gold-star legal scholar to an AI trailblazer. Her new focus is on how people in technology together can help navigate complex challenges, including Australia's slow productivity growth.

Why does this matter to us? It matters because the Northern Territory has complex challenges. Structural economic reform, productivity reform and public sector reform will all need to be addressed in the coming years, and we need tools to do that. Technology drives GDP growth and the pace of change is accelerating. If you think about the printing press, electrification, assembly lines, synthetic fertilisers, the internet and AI, you see that it is an exponential curve of growth.

In a 2025 global study on trust attitudes in the use of AI, Australia is the most worried jurisdiction and the least excited. We are risk-averse and worried about job losses and have little homegrown success and low AI literacy. What we have in Australia are either non-critical users just generating cat memes or critical non-users, people who are putting their heads in the sand.

I confess to being in the latter category despite my previous academic work in this space, so over the forthcoming period I will try to remedy this by diving in the deep end to improve my AI literacy, ideas and output towards augmentation because the goal is to augment, not just automate, processes. I look forward to reporting back to the Assembly on that.

I am already beginning to learn and appreciate that LLMs are not stochastic systems nor vending machines; they do not deliver the same results over and over again. If you start to understand context windows, temperature setting, path dependence, prompt engineering, token prediction, epistemic hygiene and agentic systems, you realise that this is the vernacular of productivity reform going into the next century and that these are things we will all have to know about. We have to move away from jobs-apocalypse thinking towards using agentic systems as thought partners.

Why does this matter? It matters because smart teams have a diversity of cognitive thinkers. They allow for multi-lens analysis of challenges, which is what we will need to do.

It is possible there is an AI investment bubble forming that may burst, but equally it is probable that AI and LLM technologies are here to stay, to say nothing of more advanced machine-learning applications. On that basis it is prudent for all of us to lean into rather than out of these systems. It will form part of our education, infrastructure and problem-solving. If we want to do more with less we will have to learn how to employ these new technologies in not just Canberra and the APS space but also the Northern Territory public service.

I am grateful to the McKinnon Institute for the opportunity this year to learn and build bridges, particularly the McKinnon team and Professor Rod Glover, the outgoing CEO, and Professor Anne Tiernan. I encourage all parliamentarians in this room—as they are encouraged elsewhere—to explore the McKinnon Institute and all the resources it offers to improve systems and to help us help ourselves. There is not a lot of professional development for parliamentarians. Almost everybody who participates or engages with the McKinnon tools and processes ends up coming away saying that it was a great opportunity and helped them be a better politician, parliamentarian and problem-solver.

In summary, in a polarised world and uncertain times nothing gives me more hope for Australian democracy than the emergence of the McKinnon Institute and its impact on public policy across the country. I am grateful for its support throughout the course of the year. I look forward to continuing my association with the institute in coming years.

**Ms UIBO (Arnhem):** Madam Speaker, I place on the record my congratulations to the 2026 Australians of the Year for the Northern Territory which was announced on 3 November.

Congratulations to the 2026 Australian of the Year for the Northern Territory, Dr Felix Ho ASM from Darwin; the 2026 Senior Australian of the Year for the Northern Territory, Jenny Duggan from Katherine; the 2026 Young Australian of the Year for the Northern Territory, Jaiden Dickenson from Tennant Creek; and the 2026 Local Hero for the Northern Territory, Ron Green BM, ESM from Katherine.

The four Northern Territory recipients will join those from other states and territories for the national awards to be announced on 25 January 2026. I wish them all the best for their trip to Canberra. I will share the bios