NORTHERN TERRITORY
of AUSTRALIA

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Member for Fong Lim

HANSARD EXTRACT

SUE AHMAT & WARREN BURY

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Even the Darwin Entertainment Centre counted her as a dedicated member in the mid-2000s. In 2001 her decades of service earned her the Northern Territory Government Women's Achievement Award—a proud moment that captured her quiet power.

If you wanted to see Sandie's eyes light up—you can still picture that spark—you had to watch her swim. A proud Darwin Stinger, she dove into masters swimming with the same joy and ferocity she brought to everything. Her teammates' heartfelt Facebook tribute after her passing captures it perfectly: 'Sandie was the heart of the pool deck, sharing laughs, tips and unwavering support'.

Her medal haul was remarkable: gold in the 50-metre backstroke and 50-metre breaststroke in the 2019 Singapore masters debut; three bronzes and relay golds at the 2023 Great Barrier Reef Masters Games in Cairns; top age group honours in the 2021 Masters Swimming National Swim Series for 200-metre breaststroke; strong results across the 2022 Australian Masters Games in Perth; and she even sponsored the 200-metre breaststroke at the 2024 Masters Swimming National Championships in Darwin.

Capping it all, at the 2025 World Aquatics Championships in Singapore, Sandie won two heats, hit top 10 in two events and claimed gold in the women's freestyle relay, revelling in the call room buzz, global camaraderie and her Stingers' backing, as the *NT News* reported.

In Fannie Bay Sandie was not just a resident; she was family—the kind who shows up, rolls up her sleeves and leaves you better for it. As a mother and now as the Member for Fannie Bay, I can see echoes of her in the families I meet daily. They are resilient, community-first Territorians fighting for safer streets, stronger kids and brighter futures.

Sandie's life challenges us to do more, care deeper, compete harder and connect wider. To Milton, Sandie's extended family and friends, the Stingers, the Salvation Army, her colleagues and everyone whom she uplifted, from the bottom of my heart and on behalf of all Fannie Bay constituents, please accept my deepest condolences. You are in my thoughts, and you know that my door at Parap Village is always open.

Let us honour Sandie by living her values. Sandra Robyn Hyde—a competitor, carer and Territorian through and through. We will miss her dearly, but her light endures.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, one of the bittersweet aspects of being a constituency MP is having the opportunity to share in the passing of community members. Tonight I also pay tribute to a great Territorian whose funeral I attended in January alongside colleagues: Susan Bridget Kelleher. She was a deeply respected constituent of mine from the Narrows whose life was marked by service, faith, kindness and unwavering commitment to community.

Sue Ahmat was born on 26 June 1951 in Cooma, New South Wales to Christopher Kelleher and Elizabeth Kelleher. She was the second eldest of 10 children raised in a large Catholic family with strong values of faith, responsibility and care for others instilled from an early age.

In 1969 she began her military service when she joined the Royal Australian Navy as a radio operator. In 1972 she was posted to Darwin, which would become her lifelong home. Although adapting to the Territory climate was not without its challenges, Sue embraced life in the Top End and fully committed herself to the community she would come to love.

After seven years of naval service, Sue continued her career of service with Telecom, now Telstra, where she worked across a number of roles, including as an operator, trainer, supervisor and manager. She was known for her professionalism and leadership. She built lasting relationships with all her colleagues throughout her career.

Many people came to know her from 2001 onwards when she commenced the next chapter of her service with the Darwin Magistrates Court where over nearly 15 years she was a fixture holding a number of positions before becoming a manager. Her work within the justice system reflected her strong sense of integrity, compassion and dedication to supporting others.

Sue's commitment to the NT extended well beyond her professional life. Alongside her husband, Frank 'Doodles' Ahmat—recently awarded an OAM—she played a vital role in supporting local sporting clubs, including the Darwin Brothers Rugby League Football Club and the Darwin Buffaloes Football Club.

Whilst Frank is the one who was often seen in leadership roles by many of us, Sue was a quiet driving force behind the scenes for an awful lot of this activity, organising, supporting families new to Darwin and ensuring that young players felt welcome, supported and cared for.

Family was at the heart of Sue's life. If you were at her memorial at St Mary's Cathedral that was evident by the abundance and preponderance of family across many generations. She was a devoted wife, a loving mother to three children and a proud grandmother to five grandchildren, each of whom, no doubt, also held a special place in her heart.

Sue was known for her generosity, hospitality and ability to make people feel included and valued, expressed often through her love of cooking and her warm, welcoming home. Many people referred to their fond memories of spending time in that home which, again, is an iconic spot in the Narrows.

In the last years Sue faced significant health challenges, including multiple cancer diagnoses. Throughout her long and courageous journey she displayed strength, grace and gratitude. Those who cared for her at the Alan Walker Cancer Care Centre—who also attended the memorial service in large numbers—spoke of not only her resilience but also her kindness as a person who knew staff by name, asked after their families and expressed genuine appreciation for their care.

Even in her final days, Sue remained a thoughtful, sharp and deeply thankful person. She met everyone with great warmth and dignity, leaving a lasting impression on everyone who was fortunate to know her.

The life of Susan Kelleher, later Sue Ahmat, was one of service to her country, profession, community and, most of all, her family. Her contribution to the NT, though often quiet and behind the scenes, was significant and enduring. That is why I wanted to pay tribute to her.

I extend my deepest sympathies to Sue's family and loved ones. I hope they will find comfort in the knowledge that her life made a lasting difference and that the legacy of her kindness, service and community spirit will not be forgotten.

Vale, Sue Ahmat.

It would be remiss not to mention that on the same day I attended that funeral I also attended the funeral of Warren Bury, one of the Northern Territory's great educators. It is something of a disservice not to speak in detail forensically of his many achievements. He was not a constituent of mine, but he was in fact my first school principal and the foundational school principal at Sanderson High School between 1985 and 1992.

There are so many things that could be said for Warren Bury, but part of why I wanted to mention him was that he was a true innovator in education. He was hand-picked for that job at Sanderson High School, and I was the beneficiary of his innovation in that time. It was a school that performed out of its socks and was looked to by other schools not just locally but internationally for its vanguard approach to education.

I am delighted that our government is making strides to make sure middle schools go back to being meaningful comprehensive schools in this coming year. Likewise, I am delighted that we are, after many years, paying attention to fundamentals in education with a view to improving literacy, numeracy and attendance.

From time to time, we also should have a mind to innovation in education, because there was a great time in the Northern Territory when our public school system was the envy of the rest of the country in many regards. It was pound for pound proportionally better funded and punched above its weight relative to our interstate counterparts. People here got phenomenal educations for next to nothing in the past, and that came down to the hard graft, thinking and commitment of people like Warren Bury.

While I could have gone through his litany of achievements educationally, after his time at Sanderson High School he served in positions of higher stature and prominence here and in the United Kingdom throughout the greater London public school system. I wanted to draw attention to him specifically because innovation in education is something that we will need going forward if we want to see better educational outcomes and if we want more kids in senior secondary school finishing in the top 20 students at the end of the year again.

It is great that we have great private educational options in the Northern Territory now, but if we want great ones in public education we will need more Warren Burys going forward. When I say innovation, there are specific things I am talking about. Sanderson High School had a vertical timetable, which in the past essentially mirrored providing students with the kind of options and opportunity that people often only get in

elite private schools or later in university curriculum. It meant that people in Years 8, 9 and 10 were all in classes together, meeting each other at their skill levels and focusing on components of education that were most important to them. It meant that people could specialise within a system and an ecosystem that supported them to cut across grades, cut across people and, essentially, not be put in a box.

There was also the advent at that school of pastoral care groups creating permanent home rooms for people to move through the educational system so that people always had mentors, systems, buddies and peers throughout their educational life. To this day, I am friends with people who were in my pastoral care group and the teacher who looked after our group, who I still have dinner with once in a while. It was a great system.

Even within the school system Warren Bury had the novel idea to make all teachers use some of their dedicated time not as an optional extra but as a compulsion to participate in something called consultancy. Essentially people across all areas and faculties would be forced to use one of their lines to meet their peers, break bread and learn what was happening in the maths, PE or English departments rather than operating in tribal silos. It was a phenomenal time at that school, and it was an era of great educational innovation.

To Warren Bury's partner, Jennifer; his daughters, Sharyn, Melissa and Rachel; his sons-in-law, Andrew, Darren and Simon; and grandchildren, Jasmine, Jack, Summer and Chloe, I offer my sincere condolences. Warren Bury lived a life of great service and purpose, and it was indeed a privilege to share in his celebration of life and to know of his many achievements.

Vale, Warren Bury.

Mr CHARLS (Sanderson): Madam Speaker, I will speak about the wonderful events in the electorate of Sanderson. The Member for Karama and I once again had the pleasure of hosting the Sanderson and Karama Seniors Christmas Party on 19 December 2025, with about 170 seniors joining us for a truly wonderful celebration.

We were delighted that the Chief Minister joined us on the day. Those in attendance thoroughly enjoyed her company as she took the time to visit every table at the Darwin Golf Club. I sincerely thank Jared France and his team for once again hosting this popular and much-loved community event. Special thanks must also go to newly anointed Medal of the Order of Australia recipient, Mr Dan Tellam OAM, and Mr Jason Peterson, who brought great joy to the room as Santa and his dutiful elf.

The gifts were lovingly prepared by Sanderson electorate interns Molly and Chiara, whose efforts were greatly appreciated. Guests were entertained by Peter, Paul & Jacko, with special guest performances by Bert Wickramanayake and Neighbourhood Watch's own Ally Slack.

I acknowledge Dan Tellam OAM, fondly known as 'Tank'. Since being the Member for Sanderson, I have had the privilege of getting to know Tank, a proud veteran who served our country with honour and pride. His service did not end when he took off the uniform; he continues to give selflessly through tireless volunteering and a strong commitment to supporting veterans and community events across the Northern Territory.

Tank is a familiar and welcome face at my electorate office, always seeking opportunities to serve others. Our conversations are always meaningful, and it is clear that the wellbeing of veterans is always front of mind. Congratulations, Tank, on being conferred the Medal of the Order of Australia, and thank you for your service, dedication and continued contribution to our community.

I extend my congratulations to all Northern Territory recipients recognised in the Australia Day Honours. In the Sanderson electorate, we have hit the ground running in 2026, doorknocking, planning events and consulting with local schools, community organisations and businesses to ensure a strong year ahead.

I am also pleased to announce the completion of important road safety upgrades delivered by the Department of Logistics and Infrastructure along Amy Johnson Avenue at the Boulter Road intersection. This project was jointly funded by the Australian and Northern Territory Governments and included the extension of the left-hand lane, drainage works, line marking, street lighting and landscaping. These upgrades will significantly improve safety and traffic flow for local residents and road users. I thank Minister Yan for prioritising and delivering this project.

I look forward to working alongside Ministers Yan and Edgington and their departments to further improve conditions along Boulter Road. This stretch of road remains hazardous, particularly during the Wet Season, with ongoing flooding and excessive potholes. Many pedestrians access community services in the area,