

NORTHERN TERRITORY
***of* AUSTRALIA**

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Member for Fong Lim

HANSARD EXTRACT

BUSINESSES OF FONG LIM

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I am not sure where that information has come from; I am not saying that is not what the Member for Daly was told, but I want to clarify. The Daly River mob will be getting their payments, as I announced in parliament today, and they will be processed tomorrow. The opportunity to progress transfer to the new site over the weekend will be done in consultation with those people; they are much better accommodations. There has been miscommunication and misunderstanding, which is not unrealistic in this evolving situation compounded by preparations for the evacuation of Numbulwar. We need to move a lot of people, and there are a lot of moving parts. We have a lot of people trying hard to keep everyone as focused, calm and looked after as possible.

The Daly River mob will be getting their payments processed tomorrow, as indicated earlier. Palumpa mob had theirs processed today. The progression of moving people into a much better environment, a much more private and comfortable environment, will commence over the weekend.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, I will talk about some of the wonderful businesses in Fong Lim, which are the real engines of sustainable growth in the Northern Territory. As many of you will have noticed, over the last many months I have spent time every day in businesses in Winnellie, Tipperary, Stuart Park and Woolner. I draw attention to some of the great businesses I have been to recently. They and their work are worth reflecting on, particularly as we move forward towards May and the budget and thinking about economic affairs.

I recently took a tip from the Treasurer and headed to Promotor Trailers in Winnellie, because I do not know anything about run-off season, but the people there sure do, and the Treasurer sure does as well. Michael and Alex Lo were good to show me around their operation, which is an amazing family business that has been around since 1968. It almost entirely runs on word of mouth; they basically do no publicising. They have an enormous facility where you can get your trailer serviced. That genuinely has a material impact on the Territory lifestyle. We talk about restoring the Territory lifestyle, so where will you go when your trailer is buggered if not to Promotor Trailers? Thank you to the guys at Promotor Trailers for showing me around and talking to me about the importance of the run-off and casting a lure at this time of year.

Just around the corner is Pauls Service Centre. Anthony McCourt showed me around; what a great local business. It has changed hands over time. Paul of Pauls Service Centre is no longer there; it has passed to Anthony and co. It is always busy. No matter when you go, there are queues out the door and cars everywhere. The team does quality service and quality work. They are not entirely an independent operation—they work in partnership with Repco these days—but they have a fantastic work ethic and great customer service. That is what it takes to be a small business that survives in perpetuity. They also have this fantastic, beautiful vintage car in-house, which everybody should take a look at. It has been a fixer-upper project of theirs for a long time. They cannot take it out often because when they do, basically everybody swarms it.

On 13 February I had the opportunity to pop by Besser cafe to celebrate its 10th birthday. Can you believe Besser cafe has been in Winnellie for 10 years? The truth is that the burgers really are better at Besser. They are genuinely great. I look forward to taking one for the team when the Chief Minister and I head out there in a couple of weeks' time for Coffee with a Cop. It tends to be the case that when I end up at Besser alongside the Chief Minister, I am the one in charge of eating the burgers. I look forward to doing that again. Jokes aside, it is a gem of a cafe. It is a wonderful place that is always busy. It is not just a hub for people in the Winnellie area; people come from all around to eat at Besser cafe. It is a great spot that I encourage you all to check out.

On this side of town, closer to where I am on a regular basis, in Tipperary Waters—part of Stuart Park, which is also part of my patch—many of you know that I spend a good deal of time in my alternative office at the Dinah Beach yacht club, partaking in the chicken wings and music.

Recently I had the opportunity to bring the Dinah Beach committee members to my office for something significant—the signing of a memorandum of cooperation for the Darwin to Banda yacht race. Some of you will remember the old Darwin to Ambon yacht race. It has not happened for a number of years because economic conditions have not been great. These guys have worked hard to coordinate with the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism, the Maluku Provincial Government and Australian Sailing to put on an event that will raise money for the Territory. It will raise our profile; it is great for Indonesia and great for us.

The race is in August, and I would love to participate. We have a break in parliamentary sittings when I could do it, but, sadly, I am a terrible sailor, so they will not have me on the boat to do anything other than be ship's cook. It is possible that I may yet be in charge of making sandwiches on one of the racing ships. Jokes aside, the economic multiplier effect of good businesses and organisations generates wealth and sustainable

economic growth. Rather than just chasing big white whales, the small fish actually feed the people. Good on you, Dinah Beach, for doing the work you do.

Speaking of things that are good to eat and small fish: Stuart Park, Yogi's Way. That guy has been putting in a shift for a long time in Stuart Park. Long before I was championing the Westralia Street shops, he was championing the Westralia Street shops, ensuring there is growth in that area and amenity so that people are attracted to the area. We have worked hard together over time not to just spruik his food and his restaurant, but also to make sure that the whole area has been cleaned up significantly.

I am excited that soon—it will happen in April, so I am announcing it prematurely—a brand-new Kurdish-Turkish kebab shop will open offering Turkish food and kebabs on the corner. It is bad for my waistline as it is directly across from my office. That is clearly where I will be holding most of my meetings now; it is even closer than Dinah Beach. Good on Bhairab Yogi for the work he does to promote growth and small business.

A much larger business much closer to my premises is the Buff Club. The Buff Club might look to a lot of you like a fixture that is unchanging and never really does much, with rusted-on barnacles at the bar. I tell you what: that place is also working hard to improve and grow. I met with Manager Jordan Jenkins the other day and with Natalie Reynolds again. They have ambitious plans to grow. They have been saving money for a long time. Watch this space because pretty soon the Buff Club will not be a one-storey building anymore. You know why they are interested in doing that? Because the Buff Club wants to expand on the best bit of residential and commercial real estate with the highest return on investment in the Northern Territory.

I have said it once, and I will say it a hundred times in this House until I am blue in the face: the Stuart Park high street redevelopment is our best bet for sustainable economic growth. That is why they are also jumping on the bandwagon. They anticipate putting on one storey, if not two—these things are all subject to a special AGM amongst other things, of course. The discussions have been openly had with their membership for a time, so I am comfortable talking about it today. I will support the Buff Club to make sure they can keep trading, doing their business and being supported by us and make sure they help with the reinvigoration of the Stuart Park area because that strip has the best prospects for gentrification, growth and creating blood flow through the CBD to grow Darwin city.

Another fixture on that strip, albeit a new one, is GYG. Many of us are familiar with it on the way home from these sittings. Trevor Hawker came in to see me again the other day because he has concerns, like all business owners and franchisees have had, about traffic management. He wants to see improved traffic flow and redevelopment of the Stuart Park high street, just like every other retailer, landowner, business owner and stakeholder up and down that strip. In that strip there is a KFC, Maccas, GYG, cafes, the Buff Club, Sexyland and God knows what else. It is a one-stop shop to shop to your heart's content. I am imploring you all to think seriously about how important it is for us to redevelop that area.

There are other areas that are not as prominent but are just as important. One of them is Woolner. The other day I had the opportunity to visit Ollie Howe and Cheata Ouch at Angkor Takeaway, which I think is the only standalone Cambodian restaurant in all of Darwin. They have a tiny hole-in-the-wall location and loyal clientele. They have been there for only three years, but they are growing. They are evidence that a small business can become a medium-sized business. When I was there the other day to talk with them, they were happy to share that things are going so well they are about to expand and open up a bricks-and-mortar restaurant to feed people beyond just their little cafe. Good on those guys for the work they do.

On the opposite side of the road in Woolner you have the other extreme. You have Asian-United Food Service (AUFS), the Lay franchise—Nelson Lay's emporium as it were. Every now and then a small business becomes a medium-sized business and then becomes an iconic big business that is super important to the Northern Territory, and that is what AUFS is. It is a pillar of the restaurant and catering community. Do you know how many other restaurants and catering businesses it supports in the Northern Territory? More than 500 catering and food operations get their food from that place. It was started by Nelson's brother Kivi Lay in 1976. They have about 120 employees now. They have 10,000 dry, chilled and frozen pallets inside that place. They are an integral part of our supply chain.

There is beautiful calligraphy inside, which evidences in Chinese calligraphy how Nelson's grandfather, father and himself are all part of that business. I asked Nelson when I was there to tell me what it says, and he said, 'This one contains my birthdate'. It is pertinent and serendipitous to point it out, because 20 March happens to be Nelson Lay's birthday. Tomorrow, to Nelson Lay, the head of the AUFS set-up, I say happy birthday.

To all the businesses of Fong Lim, you are the real engines of sustainable growth in the Territory. I salute you and will continue to support you.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, I acknowledge the work of outgoing Chief Parliamentary Counsel, Andrew Jones. I agree wholeheartedly that WA's gain is the Northern Territory's loss. All the best to Mr Jones. I had the privilege and honour of seeing his work in the former Assembly in my work as the Attorney-General, leading a lot of legislative reform for the Northern Territory and seeing the work he has led with his team. I wish him all the best and look forward to seeing who will replace him.

I learned a lot even in opposition, particularly about private member's Bills, which I had not needed to engage with until my role as the Opposition Leader. All the best, Mr Jones. Good luck in Western Australia. My Labor team and I thank you for your work here in the Territory.

I speak tonight because I am still being shut out by the Chief Minister. I have asked direct questions wanting important answers, but continually—I do not know what it is—for some reason the questions that directly relate to my electorate and the important work that I have to do as a local member to provide that information to my constituents are being blocked. I have asked since last week for a direct briefing from the Chief Minister's office. There is still no reply many days later. I understand that everyone is busy, but usually you get some type of acknowledgement to say, 'Thanks, we got your request and will ensure we get onto that'.

I know everyone is busy, but I have a range of diverse questions and important concerns to raise for my electorate, first and foremost, and on behalf of people in and around Katherine. They are not questions I want to put on the public record tonight, because I believe they should be answered directly by the government.

Noting the Member for Katherine is the local member, the CLP should respond to that as a team. I have been denied that opportunity to date, but I can assure the people of Arnhem—who have raised those questions with me in a time of need, stress and anxiety—that I will continue to do my job. That is what I was elected to do. I will not be turned off doing my job; I will not be dismissed when attempting to find answers on behalf of my constituents, particularly those who have raised concerns in Katherine. Although it is not my electorate, it is my home town.

I will ensure their concerns are raised to the government. If the government chooses not to answer, I am sorry; I cannot control the government's lack of care or its negligence just because I am the person raising the concern. It has become evident that there is a personal issue between the Chief Minister and me.

I still stand here to be constructive, Chief Minister. I wrote messages to you saying I would be happy to support and add value where I can, but you cannot find it in your heart to swallow your pride, arrogance or whatever it is that is blocking you. If it is your hate or dismissal of me, I do not care; I just want direct answers so that I can give them to my constituents.

Tonight I will be sending it to the Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister and every minister who has a responsibility related to the requests that have been raised with me. I will be sending the name, topic and phone number of every issue that has been raised. It will be up to the government to contact those people individually. I will provide the correspondence directly to those individuals to show that I have raised those issues. It will be sitting with the government tonight. By hook or by crook, my responsibility will be fulfilled by raising those issues with the government. I cannot promise my constituents that they will get an answer at all, let alone a timely answer because I still do not get answers from the Chief Minister and her office.

It is important to raise this because when we were going through the global pandemic and the COVID crisis, I know for a fact that my former colleague spoke directly to Lia Finocchiaro as the former Opposition Leader and the Member for Katherine, Jo Hersey, to provide real-time updates when everyone was feeling anxious and worried about what was happening across the NT.

My former colleagues, when in the roles that they held, communicated direct updates to the opposition at the time. The former Member for Drysdale, Eva Lawler, offered to have the Member for Barkly travel with her on the government plane to his electorate which was facing a severe incident with fires. There was a non-political reach-out to say, 'This is your electorate, these are the people you represent and this is the emergency that they are going through. We will join together in a bipartisan manner to support the people of your electorate.'

I know that because the former Health minister Natasha Fyles would ring the Member for Katherine directly. She told me, 'Yes I have'. I said, 'What else is happening in Katherine, because I am a Katherine resident?'