NORTHERN TERRITORY
of AUSTRALIA

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Member for Fong Lim

HANSARD EXTRACT

DARWIN MUSICAL THEATRE INC, SEABREEZE, BEACH CHOIR, CHORALE, DSO

WEDNESDAY 6 MAY 2026

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PARLIAMENT HOUSE, DARWIN NT 0800

The results being achieved with this platform are exceptional, with 92% of Year 5 and 100% of Year 6 students meeting or exceeding literacy benchmarks, and 86% of EAL/D learners achieving at or above-expected writing levels. Student surveys show that 92.1% stayed on task, and 85.5% found it easy to use. Keeping 92.1% of your students on task is no mean feat. They are to be commended for the work they have done.

This is not the first time Larrakeyah has been noticed, with the school's achievements spanning national and international recognition. This is worth a recap of what they have done: in 2025, winner of Best Use of Technology; in 2022, Best STEM Program at the Australian Education Awards; Primary School of the Year (Government) Excellence Awardee in 2025; named among Australia's top 34 schools; a top three World's Best School Prizes finalist, Healthy Lives in 2022; and the only NT Government school accredited as a Cambridge International School.

The top 50 will be narrowed down to 10 category winners, who will each be awarded $50,000. Of those, one extraordinary school will receive the Global Schools Prize and $500,000 to scale its impact. Finalists and winners will be announced at the Education World Forum to be held in from London 17 to 20 May this year. We will all be sending all the best vibes for Larrakeyah Primary to be successful.

If that was not enough, Larrakeyah has also been named the top-ranked public primary school in News Corp's prestigious list in the Northern Territory. The school boasts an average Year 5 NAPLAN score of 512, with 36% of its students in the top socio-educational quarter, which is an extraordinary achievement. The principal, Fathma Mauger, credited the school's success to blending academic excellence with a continuous focus on wellbeing.

I can attest to the fact that as a school they have such a well-rounded approach to their students and are invested in the outcomes of their students' education as well as their personal wellbeing. I am so excited and proud to be connected with this extraordinary school and all the educators who work there.

Well done, Larrakeyah Primary School, and fingers crossed for the awards that are announced in a couple of weeks.

Dr RAHMAN (Fong Lim): Madam Speaker, I frequently speak about our arts sector, not just for the intrinsic value of the arts but also in relation to the return on investment for arts. I rarely speak about things before they have happened, so I thought I would do a bit of that today to entice some of you to come along to things that are coming up soon. I think they are worth checking out if you have time.

The hope is that amongst our heavy schedules we can also find time to contribute to supporting our hyperactive arts sector, not just because it is cool and different, but also because it pays off well for us. In May budget week, that is not a terrible thing to be investing in.

What is worth foreshadowing, first and foremost, is over this weekend on Friday, Saturday and Sunday the Nightcliff Seabreeze Festival is on. Although I am not the Member for Nightcliff and the government does not hold that seat, I think all the people in Nightcliff should know how invested the government is in the Seabreeze Festival. It is a wonderful celebration of arts, community, theatre and food in one of the most beautiful and picturesque parts of the Territory.

For all of you who are around in the two-week sittings and who might not be around all the time for events like this, it is a great event to pop into. I look forward to seeing the Member for Nightcliff at the festival, which I am sure he will be frequenting.

I will make my presence known on Friday, if not Saturday and Sunday, at 6 pm, to drop in with the Darwin Beach Choir, which as I pointed out last time is a choir for the musical and tone-deaf alike. They are a great mob to have a sing-song with. Genuinely, that is how they bill themselves. It is so much fun to hang out with them. Thalia Hewitt, a wonderful speech pathologist who works in our healthcare system, teaches everyone the song, then you all do it together. There is no judgement, and it makes you feel warm and fuzzy at the end of it. Whether you can carry a tune or not, I encourage you to do it. I will be there Friday at 6 pm for anyone who wants to have a sing-song next to me.

The Minister for Arts wears a lot of hats, as we all know, and nobody could begrudge him, given the number of events he goes to, for missing the odd one here or there. This Saturday he is already booked, so I have the opportunity to sub for him on a few different things and to represent the Minister for Arts.

At 1 pm on Saturday, the Darwin Chorale will be doing their Best of British Pop concert in the AANT Centre. If you do not want to sing along but want to genuinely be uplifted, that is a great opportunity. It is a concert of hits, legends and anthems. If you would like to hear some Adele or Beatles tunes, it is fun.

On a serious note, the chorale is everywhere, and we take them for granted. I do not know how many speeches we have heard tonight about the value, merit and the importance of Anzac Day. What would you do on Anzac Day if they were not there to sing the National Anthem for you in the morning? Or for the many other ceremonies that we go to—all those people in the blue shirts are the backdrops to all the events, particularly the ones in Darwin. I know the same is true of other parts of the Territory, but in Darwin where there are an awful lot of these events, there is only one choir that sings the National Anthem for you at these events, including at our formal occasions in the House.

If you have the opportunity at 1 pm on Saturday, take a moment to check out the chorale doing the kind of thing they love to do when they are not singing the National Anthem. I think they would appreciate it.

I have given a ton of speeches about the Darwin Symphony Orchestra, I will not say anything more other than they are putting on another spectacular concert this Saturday night. It is called Island Signal, Island Song. It has some local stuff and some high-brow stuff. The important thing is they are not just about classical music; they are a binding force for us in terms of social cohesion, keeping our healthcare workforce happy and giving them something to do. If those guys disappeared, we would all be cactus, so do your best to make it to a DSO concert sometime. I think they would love to see more people from the Assembly at one of their concerts.

Might I also recommend, if you cannot get to the one this Saturday, then 27 June—when I know we do not have other things on—is the big outdoor one at the Amphitheatre. It is a fun one, when they do all the movie and pop stuff, and there are 5,000 people there. It is a great atmosphere. Bring your picnic rugs, have some drinks and a nibble, bring your family and enjoy yourselves. I am giving you plenty of notice about that one. Its value transcends generating classical music.

What I would like to do tonight, more than anything else, is point out an organisation I have not mentioned before and which I do not think many of us are even aware of. It is the Darwin Musical Theatre group. I went on Friday to watch the opening night of their production of *Chicago*, and seriously, it was smoking hot. It was amazing. That production is running until this Saturday, and it is a top-notch show.

Here is the thing: it is running for nine days at Browns Mart, and it is a big-ticket show. They sold out their run of shows, then they added extra shows and sold out again, and they are not even inviting any of us. There are no dignitaries on the list; they are sailing under the radar. This is indicative of the kind of thing that generates activity.

I turned up just as a punter because a few people said, ‘You need a social life; come and watch this show with us.’ I turned up, and it was spectacularly good. I do not know that you can get a ticket, quite frankly, but if you can for Friday or Saturday night, go along. It is fantastic.

Here is the thing about the return on investment stuff—and I have said plenty about economics again, so I will not bang on again: these guys do not get a dollar from us. They have no grants, subsidies or official representation; they are basically volunteers. We are always talking about how much we care about our volunteers. For volunteers, this was top-notch stuff, and the quality of the production was significant. I do not often call out individual names in these speeches, but I want to call out some of these guys because they were amazing:

Production team, Yolande Davidge and Seven Mills; costume designer, Kylie Lefebvre; props master, Eleanor Blackford; sets, Zanzibar Collective; photography, Harley Mason; marketing, Holly O’Donnell; and stage management, Lily Daniel.

Well done. It was a top-notch show to put on. I have played in a pit orchestra version of *Chicago* before, and it is devilishly hard. I was almost roped into this one, and I said, ‘I ain’t getting involved; that will be a nightmare to be part of.’ They did a phenomenal job on what is a top-tier score.

Dom Serov was on piano and conducting; Jenny Young on clarinet; Caleb Markle on saxophones; Graeme Hen on trombone; Andrew Stechmann on bass; Carolyn McNair on Violin; and Anthony Sherwood on percussion.

I might add, doing all of that 'wup-wup-wah' stuff at the beginning, which everyone loves and knows from *Chicago …*

Mr Kerle: How is Hansard meant to transcribe that?

Dr RAHMAN: Good luck, Hansard, with that one; that is a fair point.

Robin Kidney was doing that work on trumpet. Do you know when we last saw Robin Kidney? It was playing the *Last Post* when we were all up at six in the morning at the Anzac Day ceremony. Support our arts crew who cover lots of bases. He did a phenomenal job in that show as well.

Across the board the levels of talent were just phenomenal. Georgia Olsen, Josephine Marchant, Harley Mason, Holly O'Donnell, Pip O'Shea and Caleb Schatz who did all the lead role stuff were amazing. Everyone was just in awe of the high quality of the production. Likewise, the female ensemble—who sometimes do not get their plaudits, but I reckon are the backbone of that show—included Nikki Glennon, Maddison Kemp, Stefanie Ream, Gracia Razafimamonjy, Tully Gelfling and Samantha Lewis who were just fantastic. Finally, you cannot have a *Chicago* production without a bunch of guys in the male cast, who were phenomenal. To Cristhian Jara, Eloy Mason, Patrik Ralph and Jon Zhou, well done. It takes such a lot of commitment to put on a show like that. These guys are making money for the Territory, making art and creating growth.

That area would just be dead, that whole zone. For nine days in a row there would be nothing happening in Browns Mart, no-one buying drinks and no-one necessarily going to eat in the CBD after watching those shows. We must get behind our arts sector, not just for the intrinsic value of arts but because it pays off. We were all talking this week about how to make money; this is the way to make money.

The shows were all sold out. If you can get yourself a ticket on Friday or Saturday, by all means do so because, seriously, it would be worth your while. It is a great night out. Even if you cannot, I encourage you all to support the Darwin Musical Theatre crew. They will be doing shows during the Darwin Festival and the Darwin Fringe Festival. I think they will be a real fixture in our landscape if we can find a way to get behind them. Maybe that does not mean giving them big chunks of money or grants or whatnot to start with; maybe it just means showing up.

Take a chance on something different. Check out the Darwin Musical Theatre and, if you have a chance this weekend, the chorale, the Darwin Symphony Orchestra and the Seabreeze Festival.

Ms UIBO (Arnhem): Madam Speaker, I will raise the Member for Fong Lim and talk about the Never Never Festival, which will be in the great electorate of Arnhem. It will be hosted at Mataranka and will coincide with the annual Mataranka Rodeo—however you want to pronounce it. I am the product of watching American movies from way back. The Mataranka Rodeo is happening this Saturday evening. It is exciting because there is a huge community collective in organising the rodeo this year. In past years there have been some of the various commercial rodeo services that travel around and do the circuit. This was all new to me until I became the local member 10 years ago.

Hats off to the Member for Fong Lim who will attending the Seabreeze Festival in the great electorate of Nightcliff, now with our local member Ed Smelt. I will proudly be down in Mataranka supporting the electorate that I am humbled and privileged to represent.

For the record, in case I can entice anyone—like my friend the Member for Drysdale and his family to come down and spend time in the fantastic electorate of Arnhem—these are the events for the Never Never Festival. I acknowledge the Member for Katherine is a first-time sponsor. It is great that she is using some of her sponsorship from the Katherine electorate. In the Arnhem electorate we will say yes to anybody's money as long as we have a good community festival. It is fantastic to see the CLP government finally supporting some good things in the Arnhem electorate. We would love it if more projects could be budgeted for, of course, but I will take the sponsorship from the Member for Katherine. Thank you for your support of a great community event over the weekend.

For those of you brave enough to travel down the potholed Stuart Highway to the community and township of Mataranka, it is a beautiful close-knit community connected to the wonderful Never Never region. Thankfully, a huge amount of work from Parks and Wildlife and some cleanup has occurred because that area was affected by the recent flooding. The Mataranka thermal pools are now open. It is a little cloudy, but that is okay. It is great and safe to swim, which is awesome. I believe Bitter Springs, if it has not already opened, is due to open soon.