

Launch of the 2009 Australian Open Garden Scheme,
Northern Territory Division
SPEECH by His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC
Administrator of the Northern Territory
Government House – 2 March 2009

Welcome to Government House. I acknowledge the Larrakia people and their ancestors, traditional owners of the land on which this house stands.

I recently received a colourful newsletter from the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney, Mr Nobuhito Hobo, who previously visited me here. As you know, Japanese gardens are exquisitely designed and valued for their beauty, especially at this time of year in the cherry blossom season.

One of the gardens featured in this newsletter was named *Kairakuen*, which, translated, means *a garden to enjoy with many people*. The Japanese believe that a good garden should include six classical attributes: spaciousness and seclusion, artifice and antiquity, waterways and panoramas. Many of these attributes are included in this year's wonderful gardens. Amongst this season's options visitors can enjoy, once again, the peace and tranquillity of Sandra Noonan's home by McMinns Lagoon or visit a Millner garden called "Treetops" for the first time.

Before moving to the Northern Territory, Oliver Lonergan was a feng shui consultant in Byron Bay. Over the past four years Oliver and his wife Audrielle have created a garden experience at "Treetops" using ancient Feng Shui principles. These recognise and express man's connection to, and knowledge of, the earth and its energies. Far from being highfalutin or fancy, this is a garden for small children where they can play in a creative space and enjoy a sense of wonder.

The contributor of the informative column in the Sun newspaper, entitled *Let's Garden*, has practised what she has preached for many years. Jenny Ward and her husband Mike will open their garden again at Berry Springs and will no doubt get another fantastic response.

Jenny is Founder and President of the Rose Society of the Northern Territory. But whilst the famed roses will no doubt attract many gardeners fascinated that they grow in this tropical climate, there will be a great deal more to see. The garden has doubled in size from four to eight acres, so visitors should be prepared to stay awhile and enjoy the range of “garden rooms”, including Mike’s “edible garden” area.

There is a wonderful word “eschew” that comes from an old French word “eschever” meaning to avoid or flee from. If racing is not your game, then I would recommend this as an option over the frantic Darwin Cup weekend. As Darwin fills to the brim, the Lingalunga Festival, combined with the Open Garden Scheme, provides a tempting alternative in the tranquil setting of Batchelor where four gardens - *Batchelor Pad*, *The Wicked Gardener*, *Swordfish* and *Rum Jungle Bungalows* will all be showcased.

I extend my sincere congratulations to Sue Dibbs, for all her hard work. I am certain that the range of Open Gardens has added a great deal to Territorians’ enthusiasm for their own backyards. I thank the garden owners for their enormous efforts to ensure the public appreciate the opportunity to visit. I know from the four occasions when Tessa and I have opened our own garden at Philip Street, Fannie Bay, including the very first opening for the Scheme, that it has proved a very rewarding experience. In addition, of course, charities also benefit.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that, ten days ago, the Board of Directors of The Australian Open Garden Scheme committed \$100,000 to help those affected by the devastating Victorian bushfires. Community Grants, totalling \$50,000, will go towards restoring and renewing public spaces and gardens. The other \$50,000 will establish a permanent National Gardens Renewal Fund to assist gardens which have participated in the Open Garden Scheme, following damage caused by natural disasters. I congratulate the organisation on such a significant community initiative.

In conclusion, I wonder whether it may be that in future years our Open Gardens will include a landscaped roof on top of a city office. Jacana House, currently being completed in Wood Street, is one of our first 5 Star, Green Star, Australian Building Greenhouse Rated office blocks. It will have a fully vegetated roof and recycled grey water irrigation. As the gardens flourish, the offices below will remain cooler with reduced energy demand and there will be the added bonus of an attractive vista of lawns and vegetation on the 11th floor!
The way of the future

I hereby officially launch the 2009 Northern Territory Open Garden Season.