

Reception for the Rose of Tralee, Government House – 7 May 2009
SPEECH by His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC
Administrator of the Northern Territory

This is a special year for the Rose of Tralee International Festival, celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the event in Ireland and the silver anniversary of our Northern Territory Pageant. And it is good to see past Roses here with us today. During the past fifty years, three Australian Roses have been crowned International Rose. But all of those nominated and competing in the Irish centres and overseas countries have contributed considerable time and talents.

The first Rose of Tralee in 1959, representing Dublin, was Alice O'Sullivan. Of course there was no television then, but newspapers and radio gave huge coverage. As a result the town of Tralee succeeded, at the end of the drab 1950s, in putting itself colourfully and glamorously on the tourist map. Alice recently noted: *now we see confident women ... light years away from the appallingly shy 1950s girl that I was.*

Last year's winner, from Tipperary, was the epitome of the modern-day Rose. Aoife (EEFA) Kelly is an occupational therapist planning to work with the Secure Livelihoods programme run by VSO in Kenya.

The Rose of Tralee Festival presents excellent opportunities. First and foremost, charity fund raising – this year Carers NT will benefit. And for the winner, their ten-day trip to Ireland will be memorable. As well as the judging process itself which incorporates two nights of television interviews, they get twinned with a pub and allotted an escort - an Irishman whose job description reads: *you need to wear a creaseless tux like you were born into it, have the Bond swagger, the diplomatic touch and an understanding of the timeless tradition of the Rose of Tralee.*

Like all the finalists, our winning Northern Territory contestant will be the one who most successfully demonstrates charisma and personality matched with communication skills and an ability to extend a genuine friendly demeanour. It is an ideal time to display pride in both your heritage and the Territory. I therefore wish the very best to the six 2009 Rose of Tralee contestants.