

Afternoon Tea for Carers NT Senior Caregivers  
SPEECH by His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC  
Administrator of the Northern Territory  
Government House – 25 August 2009

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Our city is coming to the end of another highly successful Darwin Festival. Sixteen days of everything from visual art to vaudeville. Why should I make mention of that this afternoon, when most of you would find it highly complicated to arrange time off to attend a festival gig?

It is because the word “FESTIVAL” can also be an acronym that carers may recognise as describing signs that are no stranger to their situation. I summarise from an article on the website for Carers UK:

- F Feeling down
- E Energy lacking
- S Sleep is disturbed
- T Thinking – difficulty with concentration
- I Interest - loss of interest and loss of
- V Value of one’s self esteem
- A Aches and pains
- L Life - not wanting to continue living this way

Whilst I recognise that looking after someone day in, day out, is often a very lonely and wearying experience, I would like to offer my own acronym – “TOP END”. Please remember it as a bit of a mantra, as an aid on the tough days.

- T Top priority – knowing that you are not alone
- O Others care
- P People will offer support
  
- E Exercise and eat well
- N Needs – yes, you have them too
- D Devotion is good, not just for the person you care for but for your own good and wellbeing too.

Back to reports from the United Kingdom. One of Gordon Brown’s last acts as Chancellor of the Exchequer, before becoming Prime Minister, was to host a reception at Downing Street to celebrate Carers' Week. There he described carers as: *a remarkable group in society; a lifeline for millions of people who rely on their compassion and dedication* – my sentiments entirely and I thank you all.