

Reception for Rotary Police Officer of the Year
SPEECH by His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC
Administrator of the Northern Territory
Government House – 17 September 2009

Ladies and gentlemen - I acknowledge the Larrakia people and their ancestors, traditional owners of the land on which this house stands. 104 years ago, an attorney called Paul Harris established the first Rotary Club in Chicago. Raised in a rural village in Vermont, New England, Harris envisioned a club that would kindle the fellowship and friendly spirit he had known in his youth. So he and three friends - Silvester Schiele, a coal dealer, Hiram Shorey, a merchant tailor, and Gustavus Loehr, a mining engineer, discussed the idea. Soon after enlisting a fifth member, printer Harry Ruggles, the group was formally established as the Rotary Club of Chicago.

The name derived from the early practice of rotating meetings amongst the members' offices and a century later there are more than 32,500 Rotary Clubs worldwide, many of whom also run annual police recognition awards. As the President of Rotary at Little Rock Arkansas noted at their award ceremony: *Rotary is dedicated to community service ... The motto is 'Service Above Self'...and these individuals live up to this standard each and every day right here in our own community.*

In parallel with the growth of Rotary, the established police force in Australia was developing. Although the first Governor of South Australia, Sir John Hindmarsh, lamented: *"It is true that I can institute a police force, but whom am I to make a policeman? Those of sufficiently respectable character are able to earn much higher wages than I dare offer, and I am restricted in the salary to a police magistrate to £100 a year. Where shall I get a gentleman fit to do such a duty who will give up his time for so small a sum?"* The need for a strong service ethic and emphasis was already evident.

In 1913, telephones were introduced into country police stations. In 1915, the first police patrol car was brought into use in New South Wales and the first two policewomen were appointed. In the Northern Territory, in 1955, there were eighty police officers in all - the total now exceeds twelve hundred and fifty.

It may be difficult to remember in the general bonhomie of gatherings like these that none of us are immune from the need for good policing. Very suddenly, and sometimes tragically, there can be a personal crisis that requires the attention of members of the Northern Territory Police Force. This may not be a call for heroism or high risk tactics but if, in accomplishing their tasks the officers extend a high degree of humanity and professional care then some of the anguish of the moment can be alleviated.

During my term in office, it has been a great pleasure to meet representatives of our police force the length and breadth of the Territory. This time last month, in the company of Commissioner White, I visited with police at Port Keats, Timber Creek, Yarralin, Katherine and Borroloola. At the final stop, I awarded the Administrator's Medal for Aboriginal Community Police Officer of the Year to Senior ACPO Noel Dixon, who was celebrating twenty years since he first joined the Northern Territory Police Force as a Police Aide. Similarly, today's award is Rotary's recognition of the very best in policing. Senior Constable Anthony Clarke has worked with the Northern Territory Police Force for almost ten years, returning to community policing at Pirlangimpi on Melville Island last year. I would like to introduce Mr John Palamountain, President of the Rotary Club of Darwin, to talk further about the 2009 Police Officer of the Year...