

ADDRESS BY
HIS HONOUR MR TOM PAULING AO QC
ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
ON THE OCCASION OF
RECEPTION FOR AUSTRALIA DAY COUNCIL
Government House, Darwin
19 September 2008

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

This week I presided over my first citizenship ceremony under the Australian Citizenship Act 2007. Thirty-nine new citizens made their pledge:

There was a former Russian and a former South Korean, both members of the Australian Defence Forces, about to deploy but they needed to become Australian citizens first.

A chap from Brazil had spent nearly his whole life here. He had attended Larrakeyah Primary School and now had four Australian children of his own. He required a passport to visit his older brother in Brazil and it was far better to become an Australian citizen than to seek a Brazilian passport.

There was a Pom who made it! I didn't establish whether she was one of those who believe POM stands for *Perfection Of Mankind*,

but it was this lady's birthday and her citizenship made the perfect, special, birthday gift.

There were Filipino families and some McGregors no doubt descended from Clan Gregor and the ancient Celts. And one family who had an immediate link with the Northern Territory due to their family name - Knuckey. Richard Randall Knuckey from Cornwall was engaged 140 years ago by Goyder as a surveyor for his expedition to Port Darwin; Knuckey then went on to survey a portion of the Overland Telegraph Line.

The overwhelming highlight of this event was the genuine warmth in the room and the enthusiasm in valuing Australian citizenship. As I told the conferees and their families and friends, Mrs Pauling and I had the pleasure here, a few weeks ago, to lunch with the Lieutenant Governor of South Australia and his wife. His name is Hieu Van Le and hers Lan Van Le.

We relaxed on the Western Verandah, overlooking the waters of Darwin Harbour and the Lieutenant Governor recalled the day thirty-one years ago when they, with forty-nine other Vietnamese refugees, sailed into Darwin Harbour and a man fishing from a tinnie yelled out *G'day mate and welcome to Australia*.

Mr Le has been awarded the Centenary of Federation Medal for service to the advancement of multiculturalism and was a recipient of the 1996 Australia Day Medal for outstanding service to the

Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). What a remarkable couple.

Australia Day celebrations, organised by local governments and hard working volunteers, contribute a great deal to our community. The Day itself holds some splendid personal memories: Such as the Bicentennial celebrations enjoyed from a hotel rooftop in Sydney's King's Cross, watching the tall ship flotilla and magnificent fireworks.

Home in the Northern Territory, the 2008 Australia Day Gala Ball was the first formal ball I attended as Administrator. An excellent evening and who will ever forget the Humpty Doo Light Opera Society?!

As a keen gardener, for me it is our national floral emblem that serves as the ultimate symbol with very special meaning.

The wattle is Australian and represents us all. It is resilient and has great diversity, with nearly one thousand Australian species.

I must admit that the Monty Python team lampooned the wattle back in the 1970s. In the famous Bruce sketch, a group of Australian academics from the philosophy department at the mythical University of Walamaloo, all named Bruce, saluted the wattle as the symbol of Australia and one of them solemnly chanted:

*This here's the wattle,
the emblem of our land,
you can stick it in a bottle,
you can hold it in your hand*

I should probably conclude with a rather more evocative verse written by a gentleman who was born on the Grenfell goldfields in New South Wales in 1867. He was the son of a Norwegian seaman, Niels Larson and became the much loved “Poet of the People”. Henry Lawson wrote:

Though poor and in trouble I wander alone,
With a rebel cockade in my hat;
Though friends may desert me, and kindred disown,
My country will never do that!
You may sing of the Shamrock, the Thistle, and Rose,
Or the three in a bunch if you will;
But I know of a country that gathered all those,
And I love the great land where the Waratah grows,
And the Wattle bough blooms on the hill.

Thank you.