

Reception for Corrugated Iron Youth Arts
SPEECH by His Honour Mr Tom Pauling AO QC
Administrator of the Northern Territory
Government House – 30 September 2009

As Joint Patron of Corrugated Iron Youth Arts, I have great pleasure in welcoming you here this evening. I also acknowledge the Larrakia people and their ancestors, traditional owners of the land on which this house stands.

Cate Blanchett, Toni Collette, Hugh Jackman and Geoffrey Rush – Emmy, Tony and Oscar award winners - are all Australians currently connecting with worldwide audiences. Many youngsters eagerly dream of expressing themselves through performance, whether on a traditional stage or as a download on YouTube. But communities must be blessed with flourishing live arts for our young people to have any hope of growing their skills, honing their passions and sharing their talents.

The value of culture in our lives and the importance of a climate that encourages energetic creativity are often taken for granted. But, in fact, it is an organisation like Corrugated Iron Youth Arts that can translate a child's early talent from a flight of fancy to serious recognition.

This year, Corrugated Iron celebrates twenty-five years of providing arts experiences to young people in the Northern Territory. It began as a program of Brown's Mart Community Arts in 1984. Let me put that timeline in perspective: 1984 was the year the first Apple Mac computer was launched, it was three years before Darwin had a purpose-built performing arts centre and it was the year Jimmy Barnes released his debut solo album *Bodyswerve!*

The theme for this silver anniversary year for Corrugated Iron has been "collaboration" and the organisation has been busy with exciting and challenging projects including:-

Origins – a Civic Park event incorporating music, theatre, dance and video projection that was held on Territory Day in collaboration with Darwin City Council, Darwin Symphony Orchestra and Darwin Chorale. It celebrated Charles Darwin's 200th birthday and the launch of *The HMS Beagle Ship Bell Chime*.

Then there was a partnership with Darwin Entertainment Centre with innovative music theatre in which the teenage cast brought music video clips to life. It was entitled *Your Music Sux (But You're OK)!*

Corrugated Iron artists also took to the road, travelling to Timber Creek, Maningrida, Wadeye and Gunbulunya to build skills in digital media, circus and performance with *This Story*.

Pirates was the restaging of a schools' show in collaboration with the Linx Project. It toured Darwin primary schools and held a supported season at Darwin Entertainment Centre during the school holidays.

Afloat was the highlight in August, with a partnership that saw Corrugated Iron support and link artist Eden Thomsen with Arts Access. A show was created for the Darwin Festival featuring a cast of young adults with a disability in a multi arts project that explored memory in performance.

Corrugated Iron continues to offer a variety of points of engagement into the arts for young people, emerging artists and creative professionals through performances & public outcomes; skills development and "come and try" opportunities. In addition, independent funding was secured to continue the Bagot Circus Program, enabling participants to build significantly on their circus skills and take part in community events.

As part of Corrugated Iron's residency at the Red Cross Shak Drop In Centre, a radio ad was created and entered into a national competition to encourage young people to donate blood. Although the Shak's entry did not come first nationally, it received the Judges Award, and then Western Australia requested to use the Shak's version rather than the national winner. This radio ad is now being merged with visual images and will become a community television announcement.

Innovation continues with TEASE, a curated arts program that will feature new works by Darwin's young and emerging performing artists and producers in November at Brown's Mart. Corrugated Iron is certainly an organisation that does not skip a beat, but endeavours to stretch and challenge our young artists, which is, as I mentioned at the start, so vital for the future.

I would like to conclude with words from the keynote presentation made at this year's Australia Council Arts Marketing Summit, when Ben Cameron, Program Director of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation from America, spoke about issues facing the arts community. He said:

We must assert our role in the formation of our collective and individual characters, particularly the character of the young, who are increasingly subjected to "bombardment" of sensation through violent film and video. In the arts, we stand instead for contemplation, deep understanding and digestion of experience, especially in a popular cultural context that often seems to value humiliation over humanity. .. we in the arts gather audiences to look at our fellow human beings with curiosity and generosity. ... You know firsthand that, in giving yourselves to the arts, you honor the past, commemorate the present, shape and change the future in a way that does honor to all and violence to none.

Enjoy your well deserved 25th celebrations this evening.