

ADDRESS BY  
HIS HONOUR MR TOM PAULING AO QC  
**ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
**OPENING OF CARERS FORUM**  
**Holiday Inn, The Esplanade**  
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Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to add my welcome to both local and interstate attendees.

I recently presided over the awarding of Churchill Fellowships for Northern Territory recipients, and the extent of the opportunities that can be explored as a result of these Fellowships is most impressive.

Before taking up her current position, Joan Hughes, CEO of Carers Australia, was awarded a Churchill Fellowship. This enabled her to undertake valuable research on ageing parents of people with disabilities in Canada, United States and the United Kingdom.

The former President of your organisation, Louise Gilmore, has not only experienced being a carer herself but has helpfully written the *The Carer's Handbook*. She has lectured at a college of natural therapies and, many moons ago, spent a period of time as a journalist with our own Northern Territory News.

As I was preparing this speech last week I was surrounded by those celebrating their senior status seemingly unafflicted by insurmountable health problems. The participants at the Masters Games in Alice Springs were literally bouncing with joy.

This week it is a privilege to celebrate carers and to learn something of their wellbeing requirements, needs, concerns, trials and the importance of their dedication. I was very moved by the carer in the DVD shown at parliament House who was so affected when asked how he was going.

Life is a balance between all the elements that task our daily lives: scholarship and learning, parenthood and friendships, maturing and aging.

The impact of the negatives and testing times are bolstered by memories of happiness and sharing, support from others and opportunities for personal growth.

Carers need a voice and also a sympathetic ear. They need to be able to vent frustrations to those experienced in the situations that they face and the broader community must be better educated to understand the issues and pressures.

I thank all those who work with the not-for-profit organisation Carers NT, the key Territory-wide service provider that fulfils such

an important role. It is particularly pleasing to see Northern Territory's Young Achievers recognised for their commitment to caring.

On 5<sup>th</sup> April 2008, I witnessed Shyne Brenton winning this year's Award for her inspirational patience and responsible and unselfish example in caring for her Mother.

I am glad to note that Shyne will represent the Northern Territory at the Australian National Young Carers Forum to be held in Canberra next month. That Forum also provides a chance to meet, talk, share, have fun, contribute opinions and guide the organisation in making effective decisions. You will soon hear from Shyne.

May I add a personal emphasis to the theme of your Forum this week: "*because I care*". In my position as the Administrator of the Northern Territory, I extend genuine concern for all whose lives are impacted by the need to give or receive care. As a family man, father and husband, I can appreciate the disruptions and responsibilities and the need for different skills and wise counsel.

Benjamin Franklin, 'founding father of America', once said: *want of care does us more damage than want of knowledge*.

And Pablo Cassals, the greatest 20th-century master of the cello, distinguished composer, conductor, and humanitarian took it further when he said: *I feel the capacity to care is the thing which gives life*

*its deepest significance.* We really must remember these sentiments in this information and material wealth-hungry world.

Such quotes are one thing, but the human capacity to manage in times that sorely try us is another. Therefore, I am reminded of a helpful story from the Japanese film maker Akira Kurosawa, who accompanied his brother Heigo through the ruins of Tokyo after the great Kanto earthquake of 1923.

Turning away from the sight of the dead and dying victims of the quake, Heigo told his younger brother, *“If you shut your eyes to a frightening sight, you end up being frightened. If you look at everything straight on, there is nothing to be afraid of.”*

I hope that the sessions today assist you all in looking at the issues straight on and it is my pleasure to declare this Carers Forum officially open.