

ADDRESS BY  
HIS HONOUR MR TOM PAULING QC  
**ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
**WELCOME RECEPTION FOR THE  
LAND REGISTRARS AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS  
CONFERENCE**

Government House, Darwin

3 June 2008

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As Administrator of the Northern Territory it gives me great pleasure to welcome delegates to the Land Registrars and Development Officers Conference.

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

We have delegates here today from other Commonwealth countries, such as Singapore, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

A special welcome to our overseas visitors.

I trust you enjoy your stay in the Territory's capital and will have some time to visit local attractions.

I know you will enjoy the renowned dry season Mindil markets this Thursday evening and the abundance of authentic Asian cuisine on offer.

Our countries belong to the Commonwealth of Nations. Under this banner, we have made the commitment to cooperate within a framework of core values and goals.

One of the goals is good governance.

Good governance has the characteristics of participation, transparency, consensus, equity, efficiency and accountability.

This is the common thread that links you together as professionals in your fields of expertise. And these characteristics underpin the aims of the Land Registrars and Development Officers Conference.

Land Registrars and Development Officers from around Australia and the world will converge on The Esplanade tomorrow to begin a three-day feast of information sharing on the issues affecting land title registrations today and in the future and electronic document lodgement and e-conveyancing.

In the Territory, the statutory requirement for registering land titles and life events, such as births, marriages and deaths, is overseen by the Office of the Registrar-General, which sits in the Department of Justice.

With the assistance of the Territory's Registrar-General Mr Peter Shoyer I have some fitting anecdotes that will interest you as the keepers and preservers of land titles and other legal documents and historical information.

The oldest Title Certificate held by the Territory's Registrar-General's office is for a grant of a block of two *roods* at the end of Cavenagh Street overlooking what are now the Stokes Hill and Fort Hill wharves.

For those of you not familiar with the expression *rood* it was a land measurement of Anglo-Saxon origin and was in greatest use in the South East of Scotland.

I am sure Mr Andy Smith, Director of Registration – Registers of Scotland, and a presenter at the conference would fare much better in pronouncing *rood*.

The grant – registered on 28 July **1871** – was made to a James Murdoch Napier; an engineer from 68 York Road, Lambeth in England.

The first thirty grants in the register held by the NT Registrar-General's office were registered on that same day. I would be interested to find out the significance, if any, of this correlation.

Coincidentally, the first stage of Government House was completed the same year – in 1871 and was then known as The Residency.

The site chosen for the Residency overlooked Fort Hill (since removed), from a hill on the west north-west edge of the town of Palmerston. As 'Darwin' was then named.

It has always remained an official residence; however the occupants were not always known as 'The Administrator'. Up to 1911, they were known as Government Residents.

That changed following the surrender of the Northern Territory by South Australia to the Commonwealth in 1907 and the acceptance of that surrender by the Commonwealth effective from 1 January 1911. Thereafter the Commonwealth appointed Administrators.

I am the nineteenth Administrator to have the pleasure of residing at the Territory's oldest European-style house.

1871 was obviously a historical year for registering land titles and life events in the Territory.

The *first* marriage recorded in the Territory also took place in November 1871. The second Government Resident's maid – Annie Crear married the harbourmaster William Cook.

These glimpses serve to highlight the vital work of registrar-generals in capturing historical events.

I wish all delegates a most enjoyable and enlightening conference, and officially welcome you to the Annual Land Registrar and Development Officers National Conference.

Please enjoy the hospitality and ambience of Government House.

I now present Mr Peter Shoyer, Registrar-General of the Northern Territory.