



FILIPINO-AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, INC.

4 BATTEN ROAD, MARRARA NORTHERN TERRITORY 0812

EMAIL: [faantinc@gmail.com](mailto:faantinc@gmail.com)

PHONE: (+61) 417 619 898



## *President's Report*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

28 MARCH 2021

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to our AGM.

First of all, I would like to acknowledge the Larrakia people, the traditional custodians of this land. I pay my respect to their elders past, present and emerging.

The delay of this AGM is due to the pandemic. Nevertheless, I'm so glad that we've reached quorum today as this is long overdue, so I really thank you all for spending your Sunday with us. I especially would like to acknowledge the presence the committee members present here today.

In August 2020, I was elected President of FAANT and I just want to let you all know that I am grateful for your trust. I am also proud of our committee members comprised of 13 amazing people experts in their own rights.

2020 was indeed a tough year for all of us. The pandemic has affected the organisation immensely and I would like to acknowledge the work that the past committee had done to support the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our international students and those visa-holders ineligible for government support were the most vulnerable during the pandemic. As a response, a group of Filipinos formed the "BayanihaNT Response Team". FAANT gave the team the needed space to operate their donation hub. The small building was converted into sari-sari store dedicated to those greatly affected by the pandemic. The hub stored grocery items including fresh vegetables that were purchased from local vendors as well as other essentials that were given to all Territorians in need. The hub operated every Saturday for 18 weeks and distributed over 3000 grocery packs. Because of this effort, the group was awarded the Neighbourhood Hero Award and was commended by the Administrator of the Northern Territory, Her Honour the Honourable Vicki O'Halloran AO.

We are blessed that we still managed to celebrate our annual Barrio Fiesta despite the COVID-19. The festival was a huge success despite the restrictions in place and again, I can thank my hardworking committee for that. For your information, the reason why the Barrio Fiesta was held in November was because the grant that was awarded to us was delayed due to the pandemic. Rest assured that we are fully aware of the heat that we all experienced, and we do not intend to hold it in the build-up season again.

The Christmas celebration at the end of the year was an opportunity for the us to show our gratitude to our financial members. Thank you to Ms. Darling Cockburn, one of our committee members, for organising the event.



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Towards the end of the last year, I was invited to a webinar with Australia's Prime Minister the Honourable Scott Morrison MP, Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon Alan Tudge MP and the Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs, the Hon. Jason Wood MP along with other multicultural leaders in the country. The highlight of the discussion was the Prime Minister's assurance to support the multicultural community. The hours of the English programs that the migrants can participate in for free are now unlimited so they can enhance their community and economic participation as well as protect themselves from harm. Mr. Tudge encouraged all members of the migrant community to take advantage of the program. The COVID-19 vaccine topic was also discussed. At that time, the Prime Minister assured the Australian public that the vaccine will be made available to all and hope that the quality of vaccine that we receive in Australia is the same vaccine that our loved ones back in our home countries could also receive.

Looking ahead, we put together a calendar of super exciting events in 2021 which will be posted on our website. We have two major events in 2021 – the Philippine Independence Day Celebration and of course the Barrio Fiesta. This year, the Philippine Independence Day will be extra special because it will be merged with the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Philippine-Australian International Relations. The proposed date is Saturday, the 12<sup>th</sup> of June. The celebration will not be the usual formal event that is normally held at a hotel, but it will be held here at the Filipino Community Centre instead. We expect some guests from Canberra to celebrate this very special day with us. We also aim to have a 2-day Barrio Fiesta in August this year.

We will also be trialling a monthly event here at community centre – the Tambayan nights, a night of street food, music and camaraderie just like at home. We have collaborated with local artists and food vendors to ask for their input and it was decided that Saturday night is best for many of them.

Please check our calendar of events on our Facebook page and website to keep yourselves in the loop.

#### Projects

As you can see, we have upgraded our fence. This fence gives the centre a better security. We have also made the Amy Johnson gate wider for the convenience of everyone especially with ingress/egress of contractors during events. The committee is grateful for Mr. Raul Daet for acquiring this grant for us. Thanks also to Sam and team from Trojon Fencing for doing such an amazing job.

We received a grant from Healthy Living NT and Bill Raby Diabetes Fellowship to start a community garden next to the small building. The aim is to plant staple vegetables for the Filipino diet – malunggay, pawpaw, okra, calamansi, etc. Special thanks to Mr. Pio Gillamac for volunteering to help us with the landscape design. We hope to unveil the garden on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June. Eventually, we will have an open day for all especially the Seniors where they



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can harvest the vegetables. This will hopefully ease the stress going to the markets looking for carparks.

#### Special thanks to the following:

- Committee Members – My deepest gratitude goes towards our committee members:
  - Vice President – Mr. R.A. Dumlao
  - Secretary – Ms. Peachy Tugano
  - Treasurer – Ms. Lily Hernandez
  
  - Members:
    - Mr. Andy Elicanal – Sports/Marketing
    - Mr. Abet Tabiolo – Finance support/Youth/Media and Communications
    - Mr. Raul Daet – Maintenance/Infrastructure
    - Ms. Perly Malapitan – Hiring Manager/Membership
    - Ms. Darling Cockburn – Membership/Sports
    - Mr. Philip Stacey – Infrastructure/Maintenance
    - Mr. Edward Pitogo – Maintenance/Membership
    - Mr. Alfred Cagabcab - Maintenance
    - Mr. Neil Sayat – International Students/Media and Communications

Upon the resignation of Ms. Leny Lariosa, we appointed Mr. Neil Sayat as her replacement. Neil is the representative of the International Students and will also be assisting us with media and communications.

- PHLtheBEAT
- Kultura Dance Collective
- Sponsors
  - Migration Corporation of Australia – Ms Margie and Ms Cecilia
  - PayMOTO
  - Forex Cargo
  - Randy Florendo Salon
  - Sapphires Bar and Grill
  - Facebooker Photobooth
  - Fairy Floss
  - USANA
  - Soundtrip
  - Territory Events Hire
  - Sam's Websites
  - Northern Accountants - Kash



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- Lexel Fruit shakes
- La Casa Café
- Kuya James and Skinnyfish Studio/Settle Down RecordsTeam
- Duane Preston
- DJ Emily Rose
- We are Creatives
- Taste of Asia
- FRM Refrigeration
- Take it EC
- Northern Territory Government
- Darwin City Council
- Elwyn – Lawn maintenance volunteer
- All event volunteers – thank you all so much.

I have thought about how I would deliver this message to you guys today and I decided to be honest and straight with all of you and give us all a little bit of a reality check. However, in doing that, no one should be blamed for the situation we are in right now. Instead, we collectively work together to identify our priorities, think of solutions, work together so that we can move progressively forward.

There are many things we can do for the community centre, the buildings, the people. But, after a very long reflection, our primary goal is **to fix things** around the place. If you look around, there are many parts of this facility that are so run down, broken and just exhausted looking, badly needing renovation and fixing. The toilets, the kitchen, the small building, the basketball court and the stage/backstage area. As a matter of fact, upon the dismissal of this AGM, please have a walk around and see for yourself.

We have a venue that can be is suitable for all sorts of events, not just multicultural events. If we are able to repair all that are broken, both in the main hall and the small building, we will have a sought-after event venue that is operational and competitive.

Another goal that we are trying to achieve is also **stabilise the financial status** of the association. Again, there were many factors that brought us to our status right now, but also again, instead of pointing fingers and trying to find someone or something to blame, just help us think of ways on how to extricate ourselves out of the current situation we are in. If you have any fundraiser ideas, let us have a chat. Join our clean-up drive, join our sub-committee, invite people to become financial members, attend our fundraisers. Our aim is to tie a project to a fundraiser so that you can see where the money goes. For example, a compulsory entrance fee of \$2 of a certain event will go towards the purchase of a small sound system so that we won't have to hire and spend money anymore to provide sounds for us especially for small events.

Look, we are all committed to make the Filipino community vibrant and active again. Afterall, we are currently the fastest growing community in the Territory. However, there is



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a catch. We need your support big time. There are 13 of us running the organisation, we obviously need manpower – a lot it. The events and projects that we have are for the benefit of the Filipino Community hall and its people. This is facility isn't ours. We are only the custodians. This is yours. Let us all look after it. I hope you guys can see and feel that the members of the new committee are trying to make a difference here. But please, we need your help.

Thank you and good afternoon.

Emcille Wills

PRESIDENT

Filipino-Australian Association of the Northern Territory, Inc.