

NEWS

Stronach 'all ears' on tour

YOUTH ISSUES

BY JAY-ANNA MOBBS

THE opportunity to have your voice heard in remote locations is considered a rarity, but in the second week of June, the youth of Katherine were visited by the Australian Youth Representative for the United Nations, Lucy Stronach.

Ms Stronach paid a visit to locals under the age of 25 on June 9 and 10 as part of her nationwide Listening Tour which aims to discover the issues most important to young Australians.

The discussions held through the entirety of the tour will directly influence discussions at the United Nations General Assembly and within the Australian

government(s).

"We call it a Listening Tour because it is my job to listen to the concerns and needs that young people in this country want to address and change," Ms Stronach said.

"It's heartbreaking that a lot of these young people feel it's the first time they've ever really been truly listened to by some person with a level of authority.

"I'm not the Prime Minister, I can't click my fingers and make things happen but I do have a platform to have my voice heard."

During her visit, Ms Stronach spoke with people involved in headspace Katherine as well as the newly established Youth Advisory Council.

"What I have primarily

heard is that there's not enough support for mental health within the community," Ms Stronach said.

"Community safety was also brought up quite a bit. They mentioned lockdowns in schools happening constantly but said there has been no proactive addressing of the issues that are causing these lockdowns.

"They also mentioned quite a high prevalence of self harm and suicide rates. Some of the young people were saying they know someone who has died by suicide every single year.

"Education is the key solution to a lot of these issues."

Another topic of discussion brought up was the housing crisis in Katherine, something Ms Stronach said



HEARING VOICE: Australian Youth Representative to the UN Lucy Stronach and Northern Australia Liaison, Dylan Storer meeting with young leaders at the Katherine headspace. Photo: Supplied

has a 'no-brainer' fix.

"They mentioned the housing crisis and that's quite a big concern at the moment," she said.

"With the housing crisis, that's a bit of a no-brainer. There needs to be more in-

frastructure built to support the growing community and to actually incentivise people to stay."

It is hoped the Listening Tour will continue in future years with the 'need' for more discussions to be held,

particularly in remote communities.

"The young people at headspace Katherine were incredibly receptive and vocal about what they needed and so excited to have this conversation, you could see their eyes light up," Ms Stronach said.

"Unfortunately, a lot of the time these opportunities just don't exist in these communities, particularly in remote and rural ones.

"For me, it's really frustrating because these are the voices we need to listen to most, the voices that aren't being heard.

"It'll be the plan to come back and do a large-scale listening tour in these communities who need and deserve it."



SUPPORT: The delivery of white goods to all 75 homes in the Beswick community. Photo: Supplied

Beswick Store delivers generous donation

BY NEWSROOM

THE Beswick Store has approved its largest social development distribution to the community worth \$150,000.

All 75 houses in the local community received a white goods package including fridge/freezer, microwave, electric frypan, rice cooker, kettle, toaster and a choice of a TV or chest freezer.

Beswick community members now also have a 14-seater commuter bus to drive them around the community free of charge.

The ongoing maintenance of the bus and wage of the driver will be paid by Wuduluk Progress Aboriginal Corporation, owners of Beswick Store.

Wugularr Primary School received a \$20,000 cheque to support improved school attendance efforts.

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I got goosebumps seeing all this going out to our community.

Peter Lindsay

"The school is grateful for the money, which we'll spend on extra equipment for our re-engagement program," principal Stephen Hill said.

"We're looking at purchasing our own 4WD vehicle and more pool tables or other equipment to encourage school attendance."

Chairperson of Wuduluk Progress Aboriginal Corporation, Peter Lindsay said he was proud of what the community has achieved.

"Thirteen years ago we didn't have any food on the shelves and the store was in debt," Mr Lindsay said.

"It has been an amazing journey with Outback Stores to get to this point. I got goosebumps seeing all this going out to our community. It was the talk of the town."

Outback Stores started providing retail services to Beswick in 2008, when at first the store was recording losses.

The past 13 years have seen the store rise out of administration and build up its financial position each year to allow this year's distribution.

"The board and I would like to thank the store managers, as well as the community for its support," Mr Lindsay said.

"The community can see that when you buy from the store, this is what you get in return. It's your store, you own it."

Man fined for no face mask at NT airport

CRIME

NORTHERN Territory Police have fined a New South Wales man more than \$5000 for failing to wear a face mask at an airport.

Police were assisting NT Health officials with an incoming flight from Cairns at Gove Airport on June 17 when they noticed a man in the departure lounge who was not wearing a mask.

Face masks must be worn at airports in line with the directions of the Chief Health Officer. Hefty penalties apply for those found in breach of the rules.

Incident Controller, Acting Commander Sachin Sharma said the man had been provided a mask on checking in, but had declined to wear it.

He was issued a second mask by police before being allowed to board his flight.

The 23-year-old man was fined \$5056 for failing to comply with the CHO direction.

"It is the responsibility of the traveller to familiarise themselves and comply with the regulations for travelling," A/Commander Sharma said.

"We will continue to enforce Chief Health Officer's directions with zero tolerance approach."

The penalty for failing to abide by the Chief Health Officer Directions issued under section 56 of the *Public and Environment Health Act 2011* is \$5056 for an individual and \$25,280 for a business.

Meanwhile, police have charged a youth in relation to an aggravated robbery at a Darwin service station on June 18.

Police allege the 16-year-old female was in the company of others who attended the Smith St service station around 9:40pm on Friday night.

It is alleged the teenager threatened the attendant with an edged weapon and demanded cash, before stealing a soft drink and fleeing the location.

General duties officers apprehended the youth as she ran from the scene.

Detectives from Strike Force Trident later charged her with aggravated robbery and serious breach of bail. She was remanded to appear at court on June 21.