

Menzies Oration: Why good public policy matters in the NT

1 November 2023

Finding ways to support Territorians to have a better quality of life was the focus of the 2023 Menzies Oration, delivered last night by Deborah Di Natale.

Deborah shared her insights on how public policy dictates every part of our lives from the health of our communities to the future of the climate. She explained how the approach taken to public policy directly impacts the outcomes of Territorians. Deborah's insights were supported by her experience in the justice system and advocacy to strive for better social outcomes for individuals and communities.

Public policy is designed to help drive meaningful change, with governments implementing policy in line with the needs and desires of the community. Good public policy helps to address the challenges faced by residents and requires strong planning and consultation skills as well as public support for successful implementation.

From her experience in the Territory, Deborah shared some key examples of good public policy in action such as the Aboriginal Justice Agreement. She highlighted how this represented one of the most monumental shifts in how justice is delivered in the Northern Territory and the early indicators of success with this approach.

Deborah is well-known in the NT from previous roles as a North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service Principal Lawyer and the Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS) CEO. She was also named as one of the Territory's 100 most powerful women in both 2021 and in 2022.

Now based in Victoria, she continues to drive change as the CEO of Council to Homeless Persons.

The Menzies Oration is an annual public address designed to stimulate robust and challenging discussion about the future of health in the Northern Territory, Australia and Internationally.

As part of the event, Menzies also awards the Companion of Menzies Award and the Menzies Medallion.

Quotes attributable to Menzies 2023 Orator and CEO of Council to Homeless Persons, Deborah Di Natale:

"When we achieve bi-partisan support we can provide solutions to complex social problems that enable people and communities to thrive.

"The Territory has been the leader in a number of fields and it should feel proud of its ambition and early implementation of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement which is working to reduce incarceration rates and engage and support Aboriginal leadership."

Quote attributable to Menzies Director, [Professor Alan Cass AO](#):

"The Menzies Oration is an important annual event to discuss key issues relating to health and wellbeing that are of relevance to northern Australia.

“Deborah Di Natale delivered this year’s address and drew on her wealth of experience in driving better social outcomes for Territorians.”

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Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies is one of Australia’s leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and a leader in global and tropical research into life-threatening illnesses. Menzies continues to translate research into effective partnerships and programs in communities across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

