

POOLE, HARRIS STEP UP

**NORTHERN
TERRITORY
News**

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By NIVEN CAMPBELL

The Chief Minister, Mr Steve Hatton, expanded his ministry this morning and promoted two backbenchers.

He appointed Mr Tom Harris Education Minister and Mr Eric Poole Tourism Minister.

Mr Hatton sacked Mr Harris in April, last year, for publicly criticising Indonesia as a "virtual dictatorship dominated by its armed forces".

Today's appointments follow the sudden resignation yesterday of Mr Ray Hanrahan as deputy chief minister and education and tourism minister.

Mr Hatton announced last night that the Treasurer, Mr Barry Coulter, had been appointed Deputy Chief Minister.

Mr Coulter will continue as Mines and Energy Minister.

Mr Harris also has been appointed Minister assisting the Chief Minister on constitutional development (statehood).

Mr Poole also will be responsible for racing, gaming and liquor and will help Mr Hatton on central Australian affairs.

The new ministers were sworn in early this afternoon.

Mr Harris said after his appointment that he had given no undertaking to Mr Hatton not to make public statements on international matters.

"I will continue to speak my mind, but I will use the Cabinet to air my views," he said.

Mr Hatton said Mr Harris and Mr Poole brought "hands-on" experience to their portfolios.

"Mr Harris previously served with distinction as Education Minister and Mr Poole was the pioneering Tourist Commission chairman who set the scene for the tourism boom," Mr Hatton said.

"Mr Poole was appointed chairman in 1979 and held the position until he entered Parliament as the member for the Alice

Springs seat of Araluen in 1986."

Mr Poole said he was pleased to be heading tourism and was looking forward to the future.

He said he had been given a brief from Mr Hatton to concentrate on the development

side of tourism and getting projects such as Kings Canyon up and running.

Mr Hatton said the expanded nine-member Cabinet would allow all ministers to devote more time to their portfolios.

The Opposition

Leader, Mr Terry Smith, said today the Territory did not need more ministers.

"It needs more Government action," he said.

Mr Smith said the Territory Government had more ministers than backbenchers.

"That is a ludicrous situation," he said.

He said Mr Hatton's claim that a bigger Cabinet was required was a joke.

"It is the only way he can keep the factions and his own job secure," he said.

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Eric Poole, Steve Hatton, Barry Coulter and Tom Harris at today's press conference. Picture: PETER BENNETT

Hatton expands Cabinet to nine

Family first

The former deputy chief minister, Mr Ray Hanrahan, said today he quit Cabinet yesterday to spend more time with his family.

He said his work had allowed him to spend only four or five nights a month with his family.

This had been going on since 1984 and was not satisfactory to anyone, he said.

"I have a son, Shea, 3, and a daughter, Aislinn, 4, who effectively have not seen me in that time," he said.

"The Easter weekend in Alice

— Hanrahan

Springs helped me make the decision. I had a terrific time door-knocking flood victims, meeting old friends and attending local activities."

Mr Hanrahan said yesterday he resigned for many reasons, one of them personal, and would clarify the situation later.

Mr Hanrahan said today he would devote the next two years to his family.

"By then the kids will be going to school and I would look for-

ward to re-entering Cabinet at that time."

He said he had decided to keep his decision to himself.

"I felt that if I were to take my colleagues into my confidence they would try to talk me out of it. There was a real danger they may have won and I would not have felt good about that."

He said he tried to reach Mr Hatton in Canberra and Sydney, but kept missing him.

"But I knew he would understand because we had discussed my situation several times in the past," he said.

EDITORIAL, April 6, 1988

Undignified departure

MR Ray Hanrahan resigned all his commissions yesterday without bothering to tell the Chief Minister, Mr Steve Hatton, his ministerial colleagues, the parliamentary wing or his party branch.

Apart from some vague references to "personal reasons" he did not explain why he resigned so suddenly.

To make the whole thing even stranger, Mr Hanrahan was Acting Chief Minister at the time.

This is extraordinary behavior at the best of times. But these are not the best of times. They are the worst of times.

The economy is in a trough, the Federal Grants Commission has recommended drastic cuts to Territory finances, the Cabinet is considering next year's Budget and the NT Government needs all the unity and cohesiveness it can muster in the lead-up to the May Premiers' Conference.

Mr Hanrahan said yesterday that, just this time, he chose to be a little selfish.

His claims to selfishness are fully justified. Territorians have paid his ministerial salary after putting him in a position of trust. Only last month he went on a first-class world tour — all expenses paid. He has enjoyed the considerable fruits of office for years.

The least he could do is to show some candor and explain to the people who elected him why he has seen fit to resign at this time.

His behavior would be questionable had he been an employee in private business. That he was in position of public trust and holding the highest Territory office at the time makes it even less tolerable.

But Mr Hanrahan's resignation, followed by the immediate election of the Treasurer, Mr Barry Coulter, as the Deputy Chief Minister, has given Mr Hatton a wonderful opportunity to look closely at his Cabinet.

Mr Coulter should prove a capable deputy and, like Mr Hatton, deserves the support of his parliamentary colleagues.

Fresh

Today's promotion of Mr Tom Harris to Education Minister and Mr Eric Poole to tourism gives Cabinet a fresh look, even though the former has been there before.

Perhaps some with the necessary talent were passed over this time. They will have to be patient because the new faces must be given an opportunity to perform.

Now is the time to show Territorians the Government is strong and decisive.

And although confusion still surrounds the cause of yesterday's events, one thing is clear. Unless the NT Government pulls up its collective socks our future will be grim.

If Mr Hanrahan's undignified resignation brings a reminder to Mr Hatton and his colleagues that the people are looking for a firm and pragmatic Government, it at least will have served a purpose. Otherwise we can only despair.

Headline Hanrahan Bush boy quits

By NIVEN CAMPBELL

RAYMOND Allan Hanrahan, 37 years of age, has attracted headlines since he joined politics in 1981 as an alderman on the Alice Springs Council.

In 1983 he was elected to the Territory seat of Flynn in the Alice Springs area, his birthplace. The month was December. Twelve months later he was appointed secretary to the Cabinet.

Nine months after that, in 1985, he was appointed Minister for Health and Youth, Sport, Recreation and Ethnic Affairs.

In the first half of the following year he was appointed Minister for Business Technology and Communications; Minister for Tourism with responsibility for the Northern Territory Development Commission, the Work Health Authority, the Territory Insurance Office and the Trade Development Zone Authority.

In March 1987 he was appointed Deputy Chief Minister; Minister for Lands and Housing; Minister for Conservation; and Minister for Tourism.

Later last year, in December, he was appointed Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism.

He is married and has three children.

Throughout his political career he was never far from the headlines.

By 1986 the Boy from the Bush, as a headline dubbed him the previous year, attracted the headline, "Tourism Minister bites back at Bob", followed by an introduction that said "Bob Collins is not Tourism Minister Ray Hanrahan's favorite person at

the moment". The Opposition Leader had taken a bite out of the Tourist Commission on a radio talkback show the previous week, for "failing to cash in on the release of Paul Hogan's film *Crocodile Dundee*".

Mr Hanrahan snapped back at the ALP boss telling him promotion coinciding with the film's venues would ensure up to 15 million Americans would see Territory tourism material.

Then came "Job scheme cover-up: Minister" when Mr Hanrahan as Business Technology and Communications Minister accused the Federal Government of misleading Territorians over advertised 12-month Public Service traineeships for 16-to-18-year-olds.

Mr Hanrahan pointed out it was impossible to fill the positions until an industrial agreement was finalised.

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ON his appointment in March, 1987, to Deputy Chief Minister, the article was headed: "Hanrahan gets the nod for deputy".

In the position of Acting Chief Minister, Mr Hanrahan refused to disclose how much taxpayers' money was spent to acquire the Milingimbi Aboriginal artefacts collection.

In June the controversial bed tax was introduced and Mr Hanrahan found himself fending off an angry accommodation industry — "Hoteliers to fight bed tax" — but Mr Hanrahan fought back warning operators he would scrap some tourism subsidies if they refused to collect the "tourism marketing duty tax" (bed tax) when it was introduced.

This was followed by Top End tourist operators protest-



Mr Hanrahan looks dejected as he walks into a press conference after he had resigned yesterday morning.

ing at the Legislative Assembly against the tax. By early July as the Tourism Minister, Mr Hanrahan, announced the bed tax had been amended. Instead of the \$2-a-night tax, the Government had decided on a 2.5 per cent bed tax from August 1.

Confidential documents obtained by the NT News showed the Tourism Minister as the Territory Government's No.1 seed when it came to reimbursed credit card expenditure.

In the 1986-87 financial year Mr Hanrahan made more than \$16 000 American Express entertainment claims, nearly \$5000 more than the Chief Minister, Mr Steve Hatton.

Last October he stirred the pot of race relations while in the position of Acting Chief Minister. He ditched the NT Government's "softly-softly" approach on land rights.

He lashed out at the "failed policies of appeasement". He went on to say: "All bets are off".

The statements were seen as certain to cause a rift between Mr Hanrahan and the Chief Minister, but the next day Mr Hatton came out supporting Mr Hanrahan's get-tough policy.

Still attracting the head-

lines, Mr Hanrahan was under further attack in the same month.

This time it was from the Licensed Restaurant Association which hit out at the Acting Chief Minister for his refusal to regulate the industry.

Then came his rejection, still in October, of a call to relinquish his ministerial duties while a proposal for a hotel-motel and caravan park near Pine Creek was being considered by the Government.

It had been learned that an uncle of Mr Hanrahan was behind the proposal.

In December a spill for the Deputy Chief Minister's position was looming following a dramatic reshuffle of Cabinet positions.

In a lightning move the Chief Minister, Mr Steve Hatton, took the Conservation and Lands and Housing portfolios from Mr Hanrahan and gave them to the Attorney-General, Mr Daryl Manzie.

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IN February this year the headlines read "NT Minister must go — teachers".

They were angry about remarks about teachers during an ABC interview.

Two days later Mr Hanrahan said he would not apologise. He brushed aside calls for his sacking.

"I stand by my remark. I have no intention of apologising to the Teachers Federation," he said.

In March, Mr Hanrahan went overseas on a four-week world tour to promote the Territory as a tourist destination.

While in London he said that once again the Territory received "tremendous interest" at a travel exhibition there.

In Canada he announced an international marketing coup for the Territory.

The NT was to feature in a 30-minute television program devoted to world holidays.

"We will be the first Australian region to feature entirely on this important Canadian television program," Mr Hanrahan said.

He also reported a success story in US interest in the Territory as a tour destination.

Yesterday, Mr Hanrahan resigned for family reasons from his three portfolios: Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism.

He will retain his seat as the MLA for Flynn.

Stringer's view ...

