The year that was 2016 did not exactly portray the Territory in the best light. Most interstate headlines about the NT were dominated by misbehaving ministers and apparent human rights abuses. If it wasn’t for Jessica Mauboy and Matt Wright keeping our spirits up, we don’t know what we would do. In the hopes this year will be a more positive one, here’s our pick of the Territorians expected to make their mark in 2017. By HAYLEY SORESEN

## The ones to watch

### COLIN LILLIE
Musician Colin Lillie may have a Scottish accent, but he now lives in Alice Springs, so we’ll claim him as a Territorian. He had a stellar 2016, beating out big names including Tkay Maidza, Alex Lahey, Leanne Tennant, Harts and Gang of Youths to win the AU Review Australian Artist of the Year award. He was also named the NT’s “Live voice of the year” at the National Live Music Awards. His album Glass Houses, released in September, has earned rave reviews.

### TABATHA SAVILLE
The popularity and standard of women’s cricket in Australia has exploded and Alice Springs teenager Tabatha Saville is on her way to becoming one of the game’s brightest stars. Signed by the Adelaide Strikers for this season, she made her Women’s Big Bash League debut against the Sydney Sixers on Tuesday. She scored two half-centuries opening the batting for South Australia in the Under-18 Female National Championships in January last year. Tabatha has been at the top of her game for years, making her A-grade debut against the men when she was just 13.

### YIRRMAL
The grandson of Yothu Yindi’s Dr Yunupingu, son of the band’s Witiyana Marika and a relative of Gurrumul, rising star Yirrmal has some serious musical chops. His performance was the highlight of last year’s National Indigenous Music Awards where he blew some of the country’s most experienced musical performers off the stage. Having just released his debut album Youngblood, Yirrmal now lives in Victoria but, with a pedigree like his, there’s no doubting his Territorian status.

### ROB COLLINS
It will be difficult to top 2016 for actor Rob Collins, but we think he might manage it. The Darwin product became one of Australia’s biggest heart-throbs through starring roles in the ABC’s Cleverman and Ten’s The Wrong Girl. Both shows will be back again in 2017. Collins has been at the top of his game for a while, having previously acted in stage juggernaut The Lion King and we’re sure even bigger things are on his horizon.

### STEVE GOUGH
Camera-shy Steve Gough has been painting landscapes from his Darwin River studio for years and, now in his 60s, his career is going from strength to strength. His work Bush Zero, Darwin River (pictured), was selected to show in the Wynne Prize at the Gallery of New South Wales in 2015. It’s one of the most prestigious art prizes in the country. After recently going part time in his job as a registered nurse, Gough has more hours to devote to painting, so his career as an artist will only ramp up from here.

### CHANSEY PAECH
This young pollie made headlines across Australia in 2016 as the country’s first openly gay Indigenous member of parliament. But there’s a lot more to the new Member for Namatjira than being the poster boy for diversity. As Deputy Speaker, the 29-year-old is responsible for keeping order among much older and more experienced parliamentarians. A rising star within Territory Labor, Paech will be keen to take on more responsibility when it comes his way.
THE ROPER RIPPER
Celebrity crocodile and king of the Adelaide River Brutus has stalked waterways of the Territory for an estimated 80 years. But could he lose his place as the NT’s most fearsome reptile? A new challenger, the Roper Ripper, could be out to unseat him from his throne. A group of fishermen who saw the Ripper sunning himself on the banks of the river after which he is named said he could be eight metres long. That would make him bigger than the biggest known croc ever. Whether or not that estimate of his length is a tall tale, there’s no question Brutus better watch his back.

JARED SHARP
Lawyer Jared Sharp was one of the key figures in the Four Corners piece that led Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to call a Royal Commission into youth justice in the NT. With that now underway, the real work to reform the Territory’s failed youth justice system is beginning, and Mr Sharp will be at the coalface. Formerly with the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency, Mr Sharp has moved into a new role with Jesuit Social Services, with a focus on restorative justice for young offenders.

RUTH WALLACE
In 2016, Ruth Wallace became the first female Australian researcher to be awarded a Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Agriculture and Life Sciences. In a few weeks, the director of the Northern Institute at Charles Darwin University will head to the US to work with researchers at Kansas State University. Her role centres on engaging remote communities in biosecurity surveillance.

BOB AND DAN RICHARDS
Last financial year, Humpty Doo Barramundi produced 1700t of barra. This year, they want to double that. Recently completed expansions have cemented their place as Australia’s largest barra producer and the NT’s most successful aquaculture venture. Family run, with Bob Richards (pictured) and son Dan at the fore, Humpty Doo Barramundi has set its sights on conquering the Asian market.

KAITLYN SOWRY
The former Litchfield FC junior put it all on the line when she took the plunge to move interstate to seek a career as a professional footballer. The 15-year-old left her family and friends and now plays for Eastern Suburbs FC under-15s — a Brisbane National Premier League outfit — as a winger on either flank. Her performances in that competition prompted her selection in the Queensland National Youth side, aligned with the Brisbane Roar. Her goal for 2017 is to make the under-17 Australian Institute of Sport side.

PIO PUAUTJIMI
This talented star could be one of the next Territory footballers to make it big on the national stage. Another product of the Bathurst Island Football production line, the 17-year-old goal sneak was a 2016 nominee for the NT News Rising Star. He has been a prominent figure in this season’s St Mary’s NTFL Premier League campaign, booting 22 goals in 10 games.

ANDREW LIVERIS
Donald Trump will be sworn in as US President on January 20. Darwin-born Andrew Liveris will have a box seat in this brave new world as the head of the American Manufacturing Council. He will be responsible for steering the private sector group that advises the US secretary of commerce. Not bad for a Greek kid from the Top End.