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EDITORIAL
NT News

Model needed for statehood

TIME will tell whether this latest push for Northern Territory statehood - the latest in a long, stalled history of pushes for NT statehood - is the real deal.

Given the comments Adam Giles made very recently - that statehood was not a burning issue - it remains to be seen whether the latest announcement is a dusting off of distraction to ongoing government instability.

It could also be argued that problems facing the NT Government are a symptom of a shallow political talent pool and that a moment of frustration with the system might not be the opportune time to argue for more responsibility.

Statehood is, however, inevitable. One day, the talk will be more than just talk. And it is important to get the model right.

Setting a three-year timeframe is a positive step. It allows us time to sort out the potentially controversial details in a move towards statehood. What do we call the new state? How many senators will we send to Canberra? What does it mean for our remote communities, land rights and our large slice of GST revenue? Above all, a date gives us a kick in the pants to do something. The idea had become stagnant without anything to work towards.

We would anticipate a proper debate within the community, a constitutional convention and then a proposal that does not grate against the will of Territorians.

Statehood would be set back another two decades if we have a repeat of the Shane Stone proposal and the 1998 vote that was lost because of the way it was presented, despite Territorians largely supporting the idea in principle.

There is much food for thought, and certainly a lot of work to be done between now and 2018. But if things come together, today's announcement could be a great moment for the Territory.

...and another thing

IT'S a heartwarming tale as old as the hills.

Bat meets girl. Bat gets sick. Girl arranges to fly bat from the Tiwi Islands to Darwin for specialist vet treatment.

Sometimes we wonder whether the world has gone a little bit batty. Whether the same aerial urgency would have extended to a sick human?

But then again, maybe we're just being a bit cynical. It takes a big heart to pitch in for a little critter, and we hope he pulls through.

The Fixer

WHAT: Street lights out on Lee Point Rd between Union Tce and Lanyon Tce
WHO'S RESPONSIBLE: PowerWater general manager for Power Networks John Greenwood.
CONTACT: 8924 5068



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Letters

Training in vain

INTERESTING read about Corrections and Batchelor Institute's plan to offer VET training to prisoners "so they can return to their communities and make an immediate contribution".

How? What is the point of wasting money on training a prisoner in, say, welding? How many metal shops are there in communities that can offer employment? Have you ever been to a community? There is no industry, no jobs.

I'm all for training if a prisoner is going to stay in a large centre like Darwin, Gove, Katherine. Fair enough, they are going to have the opportunity to at least look for a job, but why waste taxpayer money on training if when they get out they go to, say, Wadeye? There is nothing there for them to do, no jobs.

Stop wasting taxpayer money just to be able to say, "Look at the training we are doing for prisoners", just to keep the do-gooders happy.

Redneck, Humpty Doo

Fracking fears

THE old saying "never let the facts get in the way" seems to have been applied liberally by Frack Free NT spokesperson Lauren Mellor (*Sunday Territorian*, July 19, 2015).

Campaigns against unconventional gas development often go straight to scare tac-

tics, and Ms Mellor lists examples from other industries to paint a picture of impending doom if the shale gas industry proceeds in the NT.

Ms Mellor fails to point out that many of the claims made about the shale gas industry in the US have been found to be false or grossly overstated.

The US Environment Protection Authority recently released results of a four-year study into possible impacts of fracking on water resources, concluding "we did not find evidence that these mechanisms have led to widespread, systemic impacts on drinking water resources in the US".

Hydraulic fracturing is an engineering process that has been used more than 2.5 million times worldwide over the past 60 years, without calamitous effects.

For the NT, the path toward a sustainable unconventional gas industry has been laid out in the Hawke Report, and the implementation of a strong regulatory and industry monitoring framework is the first step in developing an industry that stands to deliver significant economic benefits.

Steve Wright, Director, Energy Resource Information Centre, Melbourne

Chasing old mates

I LIVED in Darwin for 34 years and am looking for two mates, Paul Laverty and Colin Harvey.

My parents were up there years ago (I think around the time of an air strike because the old man had to catch a bus from Brisbane to Darwin) and my mum was up there by herself, but Paul and Colin and their families looked after her while dad was away.

I'll be in town from Saturday, July 25, until Wednesday, July 29, and was hoping to catch up with them. Please call me on 0429 345 877. Thanks.

Cameron McLean, Qld

Glass houses

MYSELF and my mate Laurence were outside Parliament House in April 2013 and I posed a question to Dave Tollner.

I asked, "Why slash the seniors interstate return travel allowance from \$1500 per two years to \$500?"

His reply was, "Roger, people are rorting the system!" My response was, "Well, it's not us seniors, sounds more like an administration problem."

The conversation was interrupted so did not go any further. It's now 2015 and the

travel rort scandal is high profile, but I am yet to note any seniors being charged or even questioned.

Maybe, like I also stated at that time to Minister Styles, there will be less of us because we now can only afford a one-way ticket out of the NT.

Roger W Miller, Farrar

Grow some brains

I CANNOT believe the number of young people still trying to kill themselves and anyone who happens to be in their "zone."

On Tiger Brennan Drive a P-plater in a ute decided he was going ahead of everyone else where it becomes one lane inbound after Berrimah Rd.

His eagerness to cut off merging traffic left him that close to my rear I could see up his nose in my rear-vision mirror, which pissed off the bloke he cut off, and it became a drag race with me in the middle.

It is the closest I have been to having a prang without hitting anything. It was unnecessary and I had murderous thoughts of my own.

You young people who think a car is a tool used for intimidating your fellow motorists will find someone else who won't cop your crap on the road sooner or later.

Hopefully that will be a copper, because the alternative could get you to manhood sooner than you expected.

Rudolph, Berrimah

On this day IN THE TERRITORY

10 YEARS AGO: There are 15 teacher vacancies in the NT for the start of Semester Two on July 25.

But NT Minister for Employment, Education and Training Syd Stirling said vacancies were at historically low levels.

20 YEARS AGO: The RAAF has promised to maintain existing noise levels over Darwin despite a build-up in aircraft numbers in the Kangaroo 95 military exercise.

More than 700 extra personnel will be stationed at RAAF Darwin over the next month.

25 YEARS AGO: Aborigines in Alice Springs' 18 town camps die at a rate of three times the NT average and twice the rate of other central Australian Aborigines, a report says.