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THE TERRITORY DECIDES

PALMERSTON ISSUES

Development must fit population boom

LAUREN ROBERTS

PALMERSTON is one of the nation’s fastest growing cities, with the ABS predicting the population could reach as high as 42,000 people by 2021. The city’s council is aware some of the current CBD infrastructure is not equipped to handle such a population boom.

“Palmerston City Centre has developed in an unplanned and uncoordinated manner, resulting in a centre that is unlikely to sufficiently support the growing population.”

PALMERSTON CITY CENTRE MASTER PLAN

Aroundabouts creating hazards for pedestrians and the inconvenient location of key facilities like the medical centre outside of the CBD as potential problems as the population continues to increase.

 Territory Labor leader Michael Gunner said Palmerston must be developed as a city in its own right. “A city that provides great housing options, good services and a range of different sport and recreation opportunities,” he said. Transport and Infrastructure Minister Peter Chandler said supporting Palmerston as the city expanded was a “priority” for the CLP.

“I will continue to work with Palmerston Council and grow this area together.”

The new, two-level, 116 bed Palmerston Regional Hospital is currently under construction, with doors on track to open to residents in May 2018. Gateway Shopping Centre is also under construction, scheduled to open April 2017. Palmerston Regional Business Association president Wayne Zerbe said the development of Palmerston over the past 20 years had been “nothing short of staggering”, with a new hospital, several new shopping centres, Quest and Rydges Hotels and two more major developments in the CBD getting underway.

The CLP promised the region a $30 million police station if re-elected, to match NT Government a $30 million police station if re-elected, to match NT Government.

CRIME in Palmerston has concerned residents for a number of years, and will be a key election issue at the polls on Saturday.

The major parties have put fighting crime high on the agenda in the lead up to the polls, with both CLP and NT Labor pledging to build a new police station in Palmerston if elected.

Dave and Tara Russell have lived in Gray with sons Max, 11, and Oscar, 11, for five years, and want more funding and support for Palmerston police officers.

Last Wednesday, the twins had their bicycles stolen by thieves who broke into their school.

Mr Russell said the teenage thieves were known to police, who were unable to provide any further info to the family. “The police chased them through the scrub,” Mr Russell said. “They did what they could.” Mrs Russell said police officers and the school acted quickly after the incident, but was disappointed by the theft. “(Police) are stretched – there’s a lot of petty stuff that happens, and at some point they had to stop chasing the bikes,” she said. “There’s only so much they can do.”

The twins received the bikes as Christmas presents last year.

While the family isn’t optimistic about the return of their bikes, anyone with information can contact Palmerston Police Station.