Bishop’s in town for ball

CRAIG DUNLOP

FOREIGN Minister Julie Bishop arrived in Darwin late yesterday to attend the Darwin Turf Club Ball, a morning tea fundraiser for the CLP, and to meet with businesses in the Smith St Mall.

A spokeswoman for the Foreign Minister, whose seat is in Perth and who recently returned from United Nations Security Council meetings, said the “community engagements” and business visits formed part of her official duties. Her trip will be funded at taxpayers’ expense.

Ms Bishop’s visit will also include an $88-a-head morning tea fundraiser with CLP members at NT Museum’s Cornucopia Cafe this morning.

A spokeswoman for Ms Bishop said she was in Darwin in lieu of Prime Minister Tony Abbott, who was originally invited to the ball as a guest of the Darwin Turf Club.

Mr Abbott was last in Darwin three weeks ago, when he briefly inspected Talisman Sabre defence exercises and attended a CLP fundraiser.

His trip was also taken at taxpayers’ expense, despite controversy around Federal Speaker Bronwyn Bishop’s use of her entitlements to travel to party fundraisers.

Shortly before leaving Perth for Darwin, the Foreign Minister appeared on the Today Show to defend the speaker. “We should allow the Department of Finance’s investigation (into the speaker) to run its course,” she said. “There are many grey areas in Parliamentarians’ entitlements, it comes down to judgment.”

Mr Abbott’s press office did not respond to inquiries as to why he asked Ms Bishop to attend the ball in his place.

MULTICULTURALISM in Darwin was celebrated with song, dance and food at the Pesona Indonesia festival yesterday.

The Nine Hill group from West Papua warmed up the audience with a mix of traditional and contemporary song as the event kicked off at the Darwin Waterfront yesterday afternoon.

Community elder Henk Rumbewas said the group hoped to show their culture to the people of Darwin as well as take some of the Australian culture home with them.

“English is a foreign language so we would like to bring back English books to expose the issue of West Papua more,” he said.

“The earlier we expose English language the more chances there will be for our younger generation.”

Indonesian consulate employee Ardian Nugroho said upwards of 4000 people worked their way through the stalls and enjoyed the performances on stage into the evening.

“But we’re here to celebrate our culture so that it survives.” Indonesian consulate employee Arliam Napoeno said upwards of 4000 people worked their way through the stalls and enjoyed the performances on stage into the evening.

Festival brings diverse cultures together

Claudya Chairul, 9, Akeysha Newall, 11, Gladys Chairul, 9, Kimberly Fangidae, 10, and Christine Lidwina, 9, enjoy the chance to celebrate Indonesian culture at the Pesona Indonesia festival

Picture: ELISE DERWIN

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