



A fire caused evacuations at Adelaide River and (top right) blanketed Darwin yesterday

Pictures: JUSTIN KENNEDY AND GLENN CAMPBELL

Fire triggers evacuations as Darwin cloaked

LAUREN ROBERTS

A ROARING fire which engulfed scrubland in Adelaide River has taken more than 15 hours for firefighters to get under control.

Emergency services were notified about the blaze at midday on Friday and the incident was closed at 3.15am yesterday morning.

Bushfires NT chief fire

control officer Andrew Turner said it was a big fire, believed to be more than 15,000ha.

"It's been going for two days and it's still going," he said.

"We're in our fire danger period and any fire that gets going has the opportunity to grow."

Mr Turner said hundreds of large bales of hay had been destroyed and there was some

asset damage, but no houses were affected.

Several residents were evacuated for their own safety.

Northern Watch Commander Senior Sergeant Drew Slape reported the bushfire was about 20km north of Adelaide River.

Two helicopters and two fixed wing aircraft were used for water drops, said a NT Fire and Rescue Service

spokeswoman.

Black smoke made visibility in the area difficult and Northern Territory Police helped with traffic diversions.

The smoke made its way to a number of Darwin suburbs and blanketed the city.

After the incident, a total fire ban was put in place for Darwin, Batchelor and Adelaide River until midnight last night.

Gunner says Oz Day must 'evolve'

HAYLEY SORENSEN

AUSTRALIA Day must "evolve" to include Aboriginal history and schools should be at the forefront of that discussion, Chief Minister Michael Gunner says.

In a powerful speech delivered at Jabiru's Mahbillil Festival to mark the anniversary of his election, Mr Gunner, who is president of the Northern Territory Australia Day Council, said January 26 must acknowledge Australia's "entire story".

He said a national day of observance should commemorate the frontier wars and schools should teach about the "displacement, the trauma, disease and the massacres" of Aboriginal Australians, Mr Gunner said yesterday.

"Australia Day should be about unity, not division, and for the health and harmony of our nation, Australia Day must evolve.

"This means more than acknowledgement of country and a smoking ceremony.

"It means a genuine celebration of the Aboriginal contribution to our national identity.

"A celebration of all this continent's waves of immi-

gration. And acknowledgment of the frontier trauma passed from generation to generation and still killing people today in the guise of grog, suicide and sickness."

He said January 26 marked the start of "our modern nation".

"The arrival of Arthur Phillip at Sydney Cove also marked the landfall of the disease and dispossession – and for many Australians, it is a date of mourning," he said.

Mr Gunner also announced a plan to develop "complementary street and place names to elevate Aboriginal identity, language and history into the everyday".

He said Australians should know the Aboriginal names given to places.

"This is about historical accuracy as much as it is about respect," he said.

He said he would speak with Aboriginal groups, land councils, Parks and Wildlife and the NT Heritage Council to determine how best to acknowledge the "historical injustices in our own backyard better".

"This could mean markers or monuments so people know what happened, where it happened, and when it happened."

Massive Inpex floating gas facility moors

THE Inpex-operated LNG project's floating production, storage and offloading facility has been secured in the Ichthys Field, 220km off the north coast of Western Australia, where it will spend the next 40 years of its life.

The equivalent in length of more than three soccer fields, the Ichthys Venturer has been towed from South Korea.

Ichthys project managing

director Louis Bon said the mooring was a milestone.

"Completing the complex operation of connecting 21 pre-installed mooring chains, weighing more than 15,000 tonnes, from the seabed to the FPSO is testament to the well-co-ordinated work of our personnel, including contractors and subcontractors from around the globe," he said.

The FPSO has been de-

signed to process and store most of the condensate delivered from the Ichthys LNG Project's central processing facility, Ichthys Explorer, before periodically offloading it to carriers for export to market.

The Ichthys Venturer is moored 3.5km from sister facility, Ichthys Explorer, and together they represent some of the largest and most advanced offshore facilities in the world.

Mechanics are becoming endangered species

GREASE monkeys are becoming extinct.

Employers failed to find enough mechanics to fill more than half of the jobs available in the automotive industry last year. Disinterest from teens with a passion for smartphones was a key reason behind a forecast national shortfall of 35,000 auto trades workers industry-wide by the end of this

financial year. Motor Trades Association of Australia chief executive Richard Dudley said young adults were leaving it until later to get their driver's licence – if they got it at all – as smartphones, social media and other technology enabled them to socialise without leaving the house.

"The propensity to jump in your car and go and see friends

is not as prominent as it once was," Mr Dudley said.

"If they are interested in getting their first car, the most important thing to them is smartphone connectivity and that technology is available."

Employment Department figures show a national shortage of auto electricians and motor mechanics for the past decade.

Elizabeth River closures

Waters of the Elizabeth River will be closed intermittently, pursuant to Section 51 of the Ports Management Act, until Friday 15 September 2017.

The affected area is down stream of the Palmerston Boat Ramp, from the overhead power cable crossing and as far as the overhead cable special buoy. Closures will operate as a stop/go arrangement, allowing boats to pass through the area when safe to do so.

To ensure your safety and a safe work area please follow all directions given by boat ramp traffic control and Power and Water patrol boat staff.

The Regional Harbourmaster has approved and directs that entry into and transit through the closed waters is prohibited to all persons and vessels except the Northern Territory Police, authorised Power and Water employees and those vessels and persons authorised by the Power and Water patrol boat.

Closures are necessary to allow Power and Water contractor, Downer Group, to replace high voltage overhead electricity cables crossing the Elizabeth River.

To locate alternative boat ramps in the area go to nt.gov.au/marine/for-all-harbour-and-boat-users/find-a-boat-ramp

For more information visit powerwater.com.au/works or call 1800 245 092. Follow @PowerWaterCorp on Twitter and Facebook

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