

# NORTHERN TERRITORY NEWS

EDITORIAL, June 15, 1995

## Police and priorities

THE possible loss of 23 Territory police to Queensland should not cause excessive alarm, but it is a further sign that all is not well within the NT Force.

This is Queensland's second raid on the Territory. The first, in November last year, resulted in 14 police applications to move to that state.

Add the latest 23 applications, and we have a total of about 5 per cent of the Territory police seeking to move in just six or seven months.

Include also the normal rate of attrition and the problem becomes clear. We are in the process of losing too many trained and experienced police.

Why? NT police Association executive Max Hill believes the NT does not offer sufficient "incentives" to police, especially in remote locations.

By "incentives" read pay. Police are in the midst of enterprise bargaining and Queensland may have provided the association with just the boost it needed.

Territory police salaries are roughly in line with salaries elsewhere in the states. And police here seem to put in a lot of overtime bringing their pay packets to very respectable sums. It is not at all unusual for a constable to take home more money than, say, a senior lecturer in physics at the university.

## Inducements

As well, police in remote locations have other inducements. Their overheads are negligible. Some accumulate staggering overtime entitlements.

Police would have a difficult time convincing Mr and Mrs Wagaman Terrace that they are hard done by. A few things could improve, but by and large police are not doing too badly.

The only people with legitimate complaints are average citizens who have seen a 70 per cent rise in crime in the past 10 years while the clear-up rate has plummeted from 45 per cent to about 26 per cent.

Break and enters and random thugery have become a plague while police in unmarked and air-conditioned cars chase drivers doing 70 kmh on 60 kmh roads.

While looking at pay and conditions, police may want to examine their own priorities in the allocation of resources.

In the meantime, there should not be too much fuss about a few police who want to leave for Queensland. They may find that police life there is not all beer and skittles either.

# Not a chance of racing into Run

Warwick Stanley

## Comments

CHIEF Minister Shane Stone may be prepared to flag off another Cannonball Run, but he should not be dragging Marshall Perron's starting cloth out of mothballs just yet.

No matter how keen organiser Allan Moffatt may be to get his show back on the road, he still has to sort out the legacy of that first event.

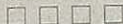
Apart from the sour taste left in the mouths of entrants and organisers following the deaths of four men in a crash during the event, the heaviest fallout is legal action.

And among race entrants, there is lingering disaffection with Mr Moffatt's company, Raceage Pty Ltd.

Mr Moffatt has said that in the event of another run being staged, there will be a need for better planning and that "every improvement would need to be considered".

According to the leading competitors in last year's race, he should apply that resolution to his personal management style.

To concerns voiced about the safety of the event, Mr Perron responded as recently as March by flagging an "expert evaluation" of last year's event and a review of the safety measures taken.



THIS was in line with the report of Coroner John Lowndes, who recommended these and other moves before the staging of a second event.

Mr Lowndes found the Government had failed to discharge its fundamental responsibility to ensure public safety in the planning of the 1994 run.

Meanwhile, Raceage and the Confederation of Australian Motor Sports (CAMS), are the subject of a legal action taken by Susan Pritchard, the widow of race official Keith Pritchard.

Following Mr Pritchard's



The crowd at the start of the Cannonball Run ... Chief Minister Shane Stone said he had been impressed by the way the event had been "enthusiastically embraced" by many Territorians

death in the crash involving two Japanese entrants at a checkpoint near Alice Springs, she is suing for damages over possible breaches of Commonwealth law.

Her advisers believe that in the circumstances of the run, Commonwealth law was breached and that she and her children are eligible to receive full compensation.

A decision on liability for his death is likely to involve a ruling on so-called "no-fault" provisions in NT law about death or injury on public roads.

The action puts a new light on comments made by Mr Moffatt during the event when he said: "There has been a tragic accident, but that's all it is - an accident."

Mr Stone said on Tuesday he would not comment on any legal or administrative aspect of the event or the likelihood of another being staged.

He said the matter had not come to him for consideration and that he was still settling in as Chief Minister.

But he added that he had been impressed with the way the Cannonball had been "enthusiastically embraced" by many Territorians.

He said: "I went down to the wharf. I drove out and saw the numbers of people on the side of the road."

"I think the Cannonball enjoys very strong public support."

Public support, perhaps. Support from prospective competitors is another matter.

Apart from the almost certain restrictions which would have to be imposed in the name of safety, some of the drivers in the first event have vent their spleen since its running in May last year.

Event "winner" Ron Conrad said he had been told \$150 000 was the total prizemoney for the event.

He said earlier this year: "I got a trophy and \$2500 prizemoney, which I was a bit disappointed in."

"The registration fee was \$7500 and that was to register in the event."

"I paid additional for accommodation, flights to get up there, transport for my vehicle back and forth and ancillary costs for fuel and this sort of thing."

"It probably, all up, cost about \$30 000."

When Mr Conrad rang Mr

Moffatt to inquire about the prizemoney figures he had originally been quoted, Mr Moffatt came up with his now well-known line.

Mr Conrad said: "I said: 'Can you tell me how much it is?' And he said: 'Not at this stage, but it will keep you in hamburgers', quote unquote."

Another competitor to win a prize, Alex Danilo, is even less happy than Mr Conrad.

He told a Channel 7 reporter last week: "My reaction was I thought it was a joke."

"I looked at the cheque and thought, no, this is pathetic."

"We immediately went and rang up Ron Conrad just out of interest to see what he'd won."

"When he told us he'd won \$2500 I thought that that was an even bigger joke."

Like Mr Conrad, Mr Danilo has left the matter in the hands of his lawyer.

Mr Moffatt is still to answer calls from both men for him to account for his company's actions and pay the money promised.

They have their own answers as to where the prizemoney might have gone.



## WHISKING'S VIEW

VIDEO CAMERAS FOR CASINO?

SURVEILLANCE CENTRE



## WHISKING



SAID Mr Danilo: "The thing was that the organisers were flying around the world trying to attract competitors."

"I know they flew to America and tried to attract competitors."

"They went to Indonesia to try to attract Tommy Suharto, so they were spending money flying all over the world."

"They had a very nice sort of little limousine service; they had a lot of very nice cars to ferry themselves around in during the event."

"And I'd say they probably paid themselves some sort of wage which all helped to chew the money up."

Believe it or not, both men say they would like to run in the event again.

But they say they would prefer to take part in the event without the involvement of Mr Moffatt and his organisational crew.