



NORTHERN TERRITORY

NEWS

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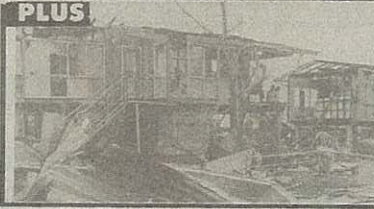
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DARWIN: Tuesday, October 18, 1994

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INSIDE TODAY

THE WAY WE WERE LOOKING AT THE NT'S PAST
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Perron warned on Run speeds

Reserve wallaby moves on trial

The NT Conservation Commission is planning to move up to 2000 wallabies from Darwin's East Point Reserve.

Commission staff will trial wallaby sedation and capture methods this week.

The trial will involve a few captive animals at the Territory Wildlife Park.

Seriously

Wildlife management chief officer Bob Fox said yesterday that there was a lot of work to be done before the East Point move could be seriously planned.

Mr Fox said no one had ever tried such a huge relocation exercise.

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Moving plans ... one of the thousands of wallabies at Darwin's East Point Reserve yesterday

Letter sent before tragedy

By BOB WATT

The major Australian motor sport organisation warned NT Chief Minister Marshall Perron of its fears about the Cannonball Run in which four men died, Darwin Coroners Court was told yesterday.

The Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS) said it was concerned about "sustained high speeds on open public roads by largely unevaluated drivers".

Public

The CAMS letter, made public for the first time, expressed concern about the "concept and conduct of the event".

It was sent to Mr Perron more than two months before the tragic Cannonball Run began on May 22.

The letter expressed concern

• Continued: P2



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More mud slinging in Parliament

CANBERRA: Innuendo and vitriol permeated question time in the House of Representatives yesterday, continuing a recent trend towards tit-for-tat mud slinging.

A low point was reached when Transport Minister Laurie Brereton questioned why National Party Leader

Tim Fischer was not breath-tested for alcohol after a car accident in January in which two people were killed.

The interjection was made in a rasping whisper by Mr Brereton, who was last week accused by Mr Fischer of being a "Pontius Pilate" on the snow for continuing a skiing holiday despite the fatal Seaview Air crash.

And Prime Minister Paul Keating has also become increasingly poisonous since the Opposition started querying his purchase of a \$2.2 million Sydney home.

When questioned about the house last week, Mr Keating suggested that links between Liberal Party federal treasurer Ron Walker and the issuing of a Victorian casino

licence "stank like a dead cat in the middle of the road".

At the beginning of question time yesterday, Opposition Leader Alexander Downer called on Mr Keating to withdraw his allegation unless he could produce evidence to back it up.

Mr Keating said: "You've been at it for two years in the

Senate — you turkeys," he said.

This was an apparent reference to Liberal Senator Michael Baume who pursued the Prime Minister over his piggery investment.

Yesterday, Government Senate Leader Gareth Evans called Senator Baume a "congenital, compulsive liar".



Mr Fischer ... low point



Mr Brereton ... probe

Seaview crash sparks inquiry

CANBERRA: A judicial inquiry into the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) was ordered yesterday.

The order came after it was revealed the authority had allowed planes of grounded commuter carrier Seaview Air to keep flying. Transport Minister Laurie Brereton said the inquiry would be headed by Sir Laurence Street and have the powers of a royal commission.

People

It follows the crash on October 2 of a Seaview Air twin-engined Aero Commander with nine people aboard en route from Williamtown, in New South Wales, to Lord Howe Island.

It also follows last week's announcement that the Australian Federal Police would investigate CAA staff associated with Seaview Air.

Perron warned on Run speeds

From Page 1

at the close intervals between vehicles and the likely size of the vehicle fleet, 118 on the third day when the accident happened.

CAMS said also that the high-performance vehicles would not be equipped with "normal competition safety equipment".

The March 8 letter, signed by CAMS chief executive officer Guy Bolleau, told Mr Perron about CAMS' "current ignorance of any specific approval by your Government of the concept and conduct of the event".

A member of the Government's Cannonball steering committee told the court that to his knowledge the committee had not been told of CAMS' concerns.

Recently-retired deputy police commissioner Bill Goedegebuure said he had never seen the letter, made public for the first time yesterday.

He had not attended every meeting but believed the committee would have been told of the letter if the operational committee had known of it.

Michael Adams QC, assisting the coroner, said Mr Perron's reply to CAMS addressed only some of the concerns and purported to reflect the views of the standing committee.

Astounding

He said Mr Perron's letter outlined some controls on roads but was not a complete response to the CAMS letter.

Coroner John Lowndes said: "I find it astounding, as it stands, that the letter was not referred to the steering committee."

"It concerns me that the Chief Minister's letter purports to reflect the views of the committee."

Mr Goedegebuure agreed with Mr Adams that the steering committee, chaired by Transport and Works Department deputy secretary Barry Chambers, was not asked to consider if the Run should occur.

Its job was to liaise with the organisers and make sure it took place as safely as possible.

He said if he had known that the top vehicles would have to average 198 km/h on the competitive section between Alice Springs and the fatal crash checkpoint he would have been concerned personally.

Mr Goedegebuure said: "The Run organisers were experienced people and I would assume they knew what they were doing."

Quoting some parts of Mr Perron's letter in reply to CAMS, Mr Adams said it assured CAMS that the competitive sections were being selected taking into account "normal traffic patterns".

All side roads would be under the control of officials, competing cars would be fitted with radios and cars would be monitored at all times.

Detailed drivers' sessions would be held each day and all drivers would be alcohol tested.

A traffic engineer told the court that driver error appeared to be the cause of the fatal accident.

Warwick Keirnan, a



Never seen the letter ... Bill Goedegebuure outside court yesterday



Mr Adams ... assisting coroner



Mr Perron ... letter on controls

Sydney consulting civil engineer specialising in traffic planning and motor accident investigation, said the Ferrari's excessive speed appeared to be the main cause.

He said the speed limit imposed for the lay-by was 60 km/h but he believed a driver

could have turned into it without problems up to 150 km/h.

Mr Keirnan agreed with Mr Adams that in layman's terms the driver over-corrected.

He said loose gravel in the recently-sealed lay-by at the ill-fated checkpoint could have been swept away be-

fore the high-speed event.

But there was no more gravel than normal for a recently-sealed road.

The Japanese crew of the Ferrari, driver Akhiro Kabe and navigator Takeshi Okano, and two Run officials, Keith Pritchard and Tim Linklater, died when the Ferrari crashed into the checkpoint.

A Run organiser, former touring car racing champion Allan Moffat, was not called to give evidence yesterday because of the time taken with other witnesses.

Mr Moffat and Johnny Kahlbetzer, the driver of a Porsche passed by the Ferrari just before it crashed, are due to give evidence today.

Darwin reserve wallaby moves on trial

From Page 1

He said: "The only similar undertakings I'm aware of involved a dozen animals at a time."

"They tend to be pretty nervy animals."

"They get stressed if they feel threatened or cornered — they can go crazy trying to get away, knock themselves out, run into fences and break bones."

"Years ago we used valium to move a few agile wallabies from Berry Springs."

Mr Fox said any capture techniques to be used had to be tried and tested, quick and efficient.

"Otherwise we could end up with a lot of dead and injured wallabies," he said.

Study

A three-year study by NT University researcher Simon Stirratt, released early this year, reported that there were about 2800 wallabies on the reserve, which could sustain only 1000.

Mr Fox said other factors to be considered in dealing with the complex problem included studying population cycles to know when was the best time to act, and examining genetic groupings, territorial concerns and release options.

He said: "We'd probably be looking for new homes within our own parks systems ... Litchfield Park is one of the options."

Mr Fox said the Wildlife Park trials would probably involve a combination of tranquilliser dart, trapping and feed drugging techniques.

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