

INSIDE TODAY

TWO GREAT PAGES OF MOTORING

STARTS P33



YOUR COMPLETE WEEKEND

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

8-PAGE LIFTOUT

Permit bungle in fatal NT Run

By BOB WATT

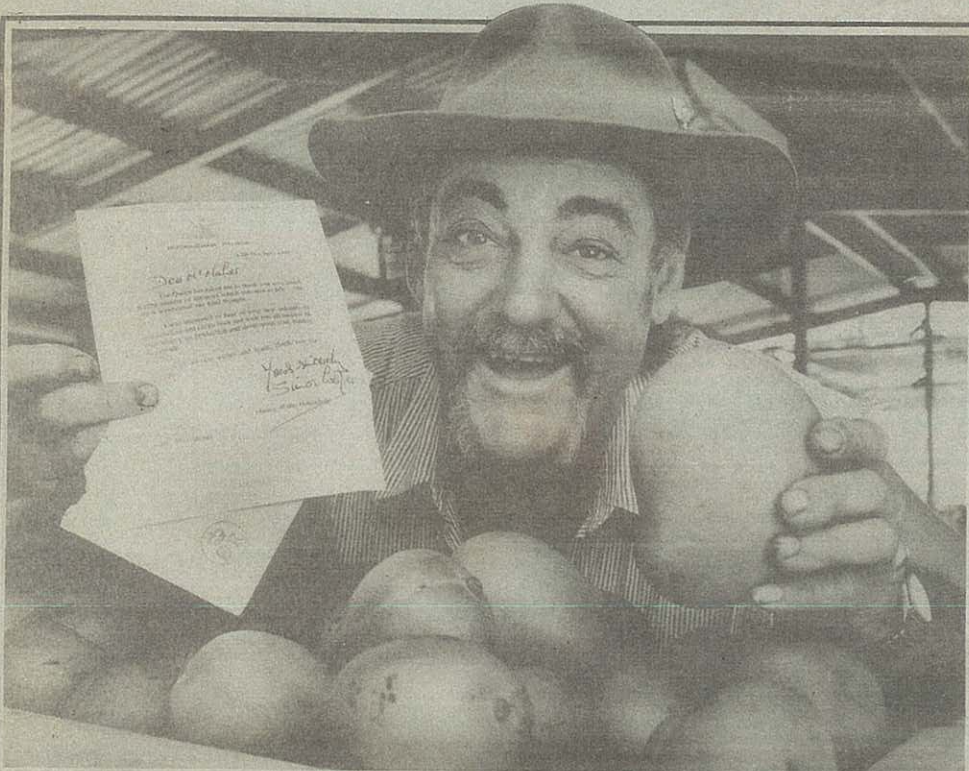
The peak motor sports body thought its conditions had been accepted by organisers when it issued a permit for the NT Cannonball Run, Darwin Coroners Court heard yesterday.

The conditions included a top average speed of 140 km/h and the wearing of helmets in the competitive sections.

Confederation of Australian Motor Sport chief executive officer Edgar Ritchie said: "I believed the (CAMS) conditions had been accepted by the race organisers."

He had put a hand-written note on a letter

• Continued: P2



Royal pick ... Max Maher yesterday with mangoes and his letter from the Queen. Picture: PETER BENNETT

NT mangoes for the Queen

Mangoes from someone's Darwin backyard have ended up in the Queen's fruit bowl. Max Maher, who operates Max's Mangoes, sent a box of Bowen mangoes to the Queen last month.

And last week Mr Maher got a letter back from Buckingham Palace saying thanks.

Mr Maher reckons Bowen mangoes, unique to northern Australia, are the best in the world.

So when a batch of pink-colored Bowens caught Max's eye he joked "that's fit for the Queen".

"I thought about it for a minute and thought why not? It would be good advertising

• Continued: P2
• Queen's gaffe: P9

eclectic - *adj.* 1. selecting; choosing from various sources 2. made up of what is selected from diverse sources 3. selecting and using whatever is considered best in all systems.

Entree

Crispy Skin Ravioli with a Duo of Cheese

Chilled Pear & Clove Essence Soup splashed with Prosciutto Rain

Main

Tenderloin of Beef & Blue Vein Cheese Coll

Quick Seared Emu Wafers Saltanbocca Style on a bed of Roasted Peppers

Dessert

Ginger Bread & Cinnamon Ice Cream Sandwich with Butterscotch Sauce

Frozen Lemon/Lime Souffle with Hot Black Cherry Sauce



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John Elliott ...
committal hearing

Elliott hearing: evidence allowed

MELBOURNE: A key crown witness in the committal hearing against former Elders EKL boss John Elliott and others is to give evidence next week after legal argument over his appearance continued in Melbourne Magistrates Court yesterday.

Magistrate Graeme Hicks yesterday ruled that two statements prepared by former Elders finance director Ken Jarrett could be used in evidence.

Ruled

But some of the material in one of them was ruled inadmissible because there was insufficient evidence to link it to the matter now before the court.

Jarrett is expected to appear on Monday.

Defence lawyers had applied for the evidence to be excluded from the hearing on the grounds that Jarrett's name had not been on the list of witnesses in the original hand-up brief.

Jarrett was granted indemnity from prosecution in the case against Elliott and other executives and two Sydney bankers, charged in connection with deals which resulted in a \$68.5 million loss to Elders.

Permit bungle in fatal NT Run

From P1
written by another CAMS official to a Run organiser Graham McVean on May 17.

His wrote in the margin: "Yes, CAMS permit confirmed" and faxed the letter to Mr McVean the same day.

The next day, believing that matters raised by the CAMS executive committee had been agreed to, he authorised issue of the permit.

That was four days before the Run began on May 22.

He had been authorised by the CAMS president and acting president, who had the same understanding, to issue the permit.

Mr Ritchie said he had taken up his job with CAMS as an administrator on April 11.

He was aware that between then and May 17 there were discussions between organisers and CAMS officials and that a letter was written to a Run organiser Allan Mfat on March 3.

Worried

This was the same date of a letter to Chief Minister Marshall Perron which, the court heard earlier this week, expressed concerns about the Run, in which four men died.

The CAMS letter said the confederation was worried about "sustained high speeds on open public roads by largely unevaluated drivers".

The court heard on Wednesday that CAMS had asked for a maximum average speed of 130 km/h.

It was also told that an average speed of 198 km/h was required for top cars to complete in the specified time at the 95 km Run section from Alice Springs on May 24, the day of the fatal accident.

Two Japanese competitors, Akhiro Kabe and Takishi Okano and Run officials Keith Pritchard and Tim Linklater, died when Mr Kabe's Ferrari crashed into the checkpoint at the end of the section. Mr Ritchie said yesterday that CAMS had advised the organisers it would not compromise any further than sustained average speeds of 140 km/h.



Mr McVean ...
made a loss

It had also asked for assurances from Mr Perron and police that the event would be run in accordance with "community standards".

He had not negotiated with the organisers on conditions of the Run, only on the



CAMS chief executive officer Edgar Ritchie yesterday

permit fee and the number of CAMS stewards to be present.

The permit fee was set at \$45 000 and three CAMS stewards were decided on.

Counsel for the Japanese families David Farquhar asked Mr Ritchie if he understood that helmets would be worn by all entrants in the competitive section.

(The inquest was told earlier that it appeared the driver and navigator of the Ferrari had died when their heads came together as the car slid sideways into vehicles at the checkpoint).

Mr Ritchie said he was not aware of the issue of helmets until after the accident.

He said: "I was aware of the issue of speed.

"There had been a number of discussions with organisers (about

speed) and our view had been documented."

Mr Ritchie told Mr Farquhar he was not aware if there had been any response from the organiser to CAMS' March 3 letter setting out its concerns.

Counsel for the organisers John Waters asked if Mr Ritchie was aware that in their report after the event the CAMS stewards had made no complaint about speeds or helmets.

Assumed

Mr Ritchie said he was not familiar with the report in detail.

He agreed with counsel for the NT Government Trevor Riley QC, that in the absence of complaint by the stewards it could be assumed that the event was conducted in accordance with CAMS requirements.

All safety aspects possible had been implemented, he said.

Mr McVean said plans to bring stars of the Cannonball Run films Burt Reynolds and Dom DeLuise and vocalist Whitney Houston to Darwin for the NT Cannonball were scrapped.

Even though the entertainment had been scaled down the organisers made a loss of \$160 000.

The inquest continues today.

Wife got in way of passion

SYDNEY: A man who began sleeping with his sister-in-law the day after his wife's funeral was found guilty of murder yesterday.

Maximo Pantoja, 31, bashed and strangled his wife Felicitas to death in the couple's Sydney home, a jury found.

However, they were unable to reach a verdict on a second charge of raping another woman a week before the murder.

Passion

Darlinghurst Supreme Court heard that the Pantojas, originally from Peru, lived with six other family members in Sutherland St and had a "particularly poor" marriage.

Pantoja had a "sexual passion" for his sister-in-law Zenaida Trujillo, which had caused him to kill his wife so he could "have his sister-in-law unhindered".

Pantoja was remanded in custody for sentencing submissions on October 28.

Mangoes for the Queen

From P1
for the Territory," Mr Maher said.

"The next day I took a box of 14 into NT Freight Service and sent it to England. It cost me \$230 - I nearly fell off the chair."

A letter from Buckingham Palace arrived last week thanking Mr Maher for his gift and wishing him all the best in the mango industry.

"With all her children problems at the moment I thought the mangoes might cheer her up a bit," he said.

Wicking P10

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Collision kills 20

BEIJING: At least 20 people died and more than 30 were injured yesterday after a train collided with a bus carrying workers to their factory in a south-eastern district of Beijing.

A spokesman said the bus was cut in half by the train as it drove through an unmanned crossing. Most of the victims were sitting in the back section of the bus, which was crushed on impact.

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