Dying for a snooze

Tired driver lucky to survive accident

By ALYSSA BETTS

A TIRED man nearly killed himself while driving in Darwin yesterday — flipping his ute in a “full 360” over a fence and narrowly avoiding becoming another grim number in the Territory’s road toll.

His rollover early in the morning was one of 13 crashes in 24 hours that police, fire and ambulance services rushed to across the NT.

Territory Duty Superintendent Daniel Shean said police were concerned about the high number of crashes during the festive season.

“The last thing a police officer wants is to knock on the door of the next-of-kin to provide them with the grim news,” he said.

“The two most serious of the 13 crashes involved fatigue. The first was the ti- red man, 36, from Dundee Beach, who was driving down Marlow Rd, Berrimah. Supt Shean said the man had finished a night shift when the rising sun and a loss of concentration from driver fatigue became a “re- cope for disaster”.

“His Toyota utility left the road, veered down the embankment straightening on to the grass, then collided with a cement drain, which caused the vehicle to dig into the ground then flip 360 over a fence before landing up- right in a ditch,” he said.

The driver was extraordin- arily lucky, Supt Shean said, and walked away with minor injuries.

The second crash happened near Nhulunbuy just after midnight yesterday.

Police said a 32-year-old local was travelling into town when he lost control on a slight bend and crashed into a tree. The roof col- lapsed on him. Fire crews had to cut him free and St John Ambulance officers treated him before taking him to Gove Hospital. He was transferred from Gove to Groote Eylandt.

Supt Shean said that fatigue was one of six main causes in big crashes.

Supt Shean said he had seen tired people drive like drunkards. Police, fire and emergency crews want a crack this Christmas.

“You can help: don’t drink or take drugs and drive, don’t drive if you’re tired, drive with proper attention, obey the road rules, don’t speed and wear your seatbelt,” Supt Shean said.

Burnouts in danger ride

EARLY-morning burnouts allegedly ended in a drunken attempt getaway, a wrecked car and a number of charges for a Katherine man yesterday.

Katherine police officers said they spotted a black Ford Falcon XRS sedan doing burnouts on the Stuart Highway at the Chambers Drive intersection at about 2.25am.

Police said they flicked on their lights and told the driver to pull over, but the 23-year-old allegedly hit the accelerator and police then pursued.

Police said the car drove through a number of roundabouts before eventually pulling to a stop at O’Shea Park, where the driver and his passenger allegedly legged it.

The passenger was nabbed and the driver was later collared at Kalano Community.

Police said the driver re- turned a mid-range blood-alcohol reading of 0.12 per cent — more than double the limit. The car reportedly copped a hiding during the drive — police said its undercarriage was severely damaged, and that it would need to be towed.

Police were yesterday ex- pected to charge the man with a number of offences, including recklessly endangering life, drink driving, failing to obey the road rules and driving at a speed and manner dangerous.

Langdon to join 60

FORMER Darwin journalist Allison Langdon will become the youngest female reporter to join 60 Minutes since Jana Wendt found fame with the Channel Nine current affairs program in the 1980s.

Langdon, 31, replaces Tara Brown, who is currently on ma- ternity leave and is expected to deliver her second child in the coming week.

“It is fair to say that this has been a burning ambition since I was young,” Langdon (pictured) said. “I have spent 10 years in the newsroom, which has been awesome — but I can’t wait for a new challenge.

“And 60 is the one that you strive for and the one I’ve wanted for ages.

“I’m very pleased they’ve given me the chance.”

The new-reclusive Wendt joined 60 Minutes in 1982, aged 25. She was the program’s first female reporter, joining original journalists George Negus, Ray Martin and Ian Leslie.

Brown was 23 when she ac- cepted her role in 2001.

Email prompts fears for man

AN EMAIL has police worried about a 46-year-old Nhulunbuy man.

They believe Christopher Flet- cher may have gone to Cairns in November.

Police said Mr Fletcher had not been heard from until a former employee received an email from him on Friday.

A police officer who had contact with Mr Fletcher is urged to call police on 131 444 or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Watery warfare in CBD

WET-season pressures burst into watery warfare in Darwin’s CBD yesterday.

A group of locals packing heat turned up on the Esplanade in the afternoon hours.

Sunday Territorian photographer fox MORRISON caught them with a fine array of fully loaded water pistols — shooting the crap out of each other.

The group hopes the day will eventually turn into Darwin’s annual Biggest, Most Epic, Water Pistol Fight, with many capital letters.

Admittedly, the numbers were small, but it may be history in the making.

Before that, is the event becomes big enough to draw thousands and turn into a marketing behemoth, complete with T-shirts for sale.

Public Programs Territory Portraits Floor Talks

Sunday 12 December

2pm: His Honour Tom Pauling AO QC with the Government House Foundation Collection of winning Portraits of a Senior Territorial Art Award.

2:30pm: Mrs Shirley Downin A/ Curator of the Museum and Art Gallery of the NT explores the art of portraiture.

The Chan Contemporary Art Space at State Square opposite Parliament House.

Opening hours: Tuesday – Friday 10am – 4pm

Weekends 10am – 3pm.

For more information visit www.arts.nt.gov.au

Opening hours:

Sunday Territorian, Sunday, December 12, 2010 – 5 +

SUNDAY SESH @ MONSOONS W/ DA BOMZ!