No-limit trial ‘will put lives at risk’

BY CONOR BYRNE

A COLLEGE advocating for thousands of doctors has urged the NT Government to put the brakes on its open speed limits trial, calling it “permission to drive even more recklessly”.

The 15,000-strong Royal Australasian College of Physicians said having no restrictions on speed posed significant dangers to motorists and pedestrians.

But NT Transport Minister Peter Styles said the decision was evidence-based — as the 200km stretch north of Alice Springs was “low crash risk” and had been fatality free for 10 years.

RACP Territory chairwoman Dr Christine Connors said the decision was evidence-based — as the 200km stretch north of Alice Springs was “low crash risk” and had been fatality free for 10 years.

“The plan to turn a 200km section of the Stuart High- way into an open speed limit for 12 months is irresponsible,” Dr Connors said.

“The Northern Territory Government is putting the lives of Territorians at unnecessary risk.”

“Unfortunately the group most at risk will be young men, who represent a significant proportion of people dying on our roads.”

The Territory had a per-capita fatality rate twice the Australian average before speed limits were introduced in 2007.

About 17 per cent of fatalities in 2012 were attributable to speed, and more than a quarter of the 210 fatalities were men aged between 16 and 45 years old.

“An open speed limit is giving young men permission to drive even more recklessly,” Dr Connors said.

“We should be protecting these young men as well as others using our roads.”

Transport Minister Peter Styles said the Northern Territory Government had made an evidence-based decision on the trial.

“We believe Territory motorists have the maturity to realise the importance of driving to their capabilities, the conditions of the road and the condition of their vehicles,” he said.

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Miriam-Rose’s legacy

By ALISON BEVEGE

A PRIMARY school principal who won Australia’s highest recognition for outstanding achievement has now been honoured with her own foundation.

Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, 62, from the Daly River community of Nauiyu, 220km southwest of Darwin, won the Order of Australia for her services to education and indigenous art in 1998 and has been a tireless campaigner for her community.

Human rights law professor and Jesuit priest Father Frank Brennan said Ms Baumann was a practical local leader — and had designed her vestment when he was ordained in 1985.

“She’s one of the great leaders of the country in terms of bringing together artistic inspiration and the hard discipline of education,” he said.

A foundation has now been opened to raise money to help remote indigenous children get better access to education and learning opportunities, including by boarding in cities.

Ms Ungunmerr-Baumann, who also has an honorary PhD in education, has now been made the chair of the new Miriam-Rose Foundation.

“My plan is to help kids here in Darwin and in Bel- yuen too,” she said.

INPEX will help fund a new purpose-built Open Education Centre in Darwin, the company’s chairman announced with the NT education minister yesterday.

The centre at Darwin High will cost $14.6 million — of which $3 million will come from INPEX.

It will replace the Rapid Creek offices of the Open Education Centre.

Staff will temporarily be based at Nightcliff Middle School next year.

“Darwin is very important to the future of INPEX and we are pleased to be able to give back to the local community by contributing to the future educational opportunities for all Northern Territory students,” chairman Naoki Kuroda said.

Flanked by Chief Minister Adam Giles and Education Minister Peter Chandler in Tokyo, Mr Kuroda said the company wanted to be a good corporate citizen.

Mr Chandler said the new centre, a distance education school for senior students, would allow them to access about 180 subjects.

“The centre will provide students from all regions of the NT with access to quality secondary educational opportunities,” Mr Chandler said.

Gorey units get revamp

JOHN Gorey Apartments on Elliott St, Alice Springs, are to be “renewed”.

Ten properties will be sold under the affordable home buyer initiative.

Another 10 will be rented to workers for up to a year.

The Gorey Centre will complete some of the work, which is expected to be finished by the first quarter of 2014.