Bus attacks all too frequent

IT’s a story that’s becoming all too familiar — attacks on buses that are not putting only the driver but commuters at risk.

In the latest attack, a group of delinquents throwing rocks at passing vehicles yesterday injured a passenger and damaged a bus, not to mention several taxis.

The man was hit about 4am yesterday when the bus was traveling along McMillan’s Rd in Karama.

Thankfully he only suffered minor injuries. Bushlock boss Tony Hopkins said it was the 14th time this had happened and the 25th time their bus had stuck in that area.

If it is not some thug threatening people with a machete, it’s little pebbles throwing rocks through windows.

The Transport Workers Union rightly says more has to be done to protect our drivers and passengers.

So while we agree more, yet finding a short-term and workable solution is complex.

Rock-throwing incidents are common in Darwin and Alice Springs and those responsible are often bored and simply don’t care.

These drivers are doing a great service for the community, and shouldn’t have to put up with these actions.

Police work tirelessly rounding up the culprits but can at times find it difficult to convince the courts the offenders need to stay in detention. There are also very valid reasons why juveniles are diverted from detention whenever possible.

A recent Productivity Commissioner report noted “repeat offending, housing and education and employment measures are not presently reported” in the Northern Territory.

Rectifying this absence of data would be a good starting point to better understanding the problem.

...and another thing

NHULINBUY residents are rightly angered that the absence of a full-time vet in their community has left them having to take matters into their own hands when it comes to the care of their beloved pets.

Some people are flying their dogs to Darwin to see a vet or giving them human antibiotics.

Pets are often an extension of the family, so it’s imperative East Arnhem Shire, Rio Tinto and the NT Government intervene and address the same scenario.

...and another thing

Trust, respect lost

As a long-time Port tong and employer, I created drama in my own life.

How much respect and trust can the Government expect to get from the hard-working public servants and the public in general?

The Federal Government is bad enough, but the NT Government takes the cake.

Harry Maschke, Winnellie

Wise counsel

The recent political debacle in the NT Parliament reminds me of some sage advice given to me by an old friend when I relocated to Darwin from Papua New Guinea in 1982.

He told me the total population of the territory was about the same as Wollongong Shire Council, and that I shouldn’t expect any more insight or vision from the Territory Government than I’d expect from Wollongong Shire Council — advice that stood me in good stead during my years in the Territory Public Circus.

Patrick Somers, Nightcliff

Abject failure

WHY was it no surprise to Territory public servants when they heard of the comic operation playing out in Parliament House?

They, more than any other employment group, were already used to the lack of direction afforded to their various agencies by a Government interested more in its own survival than taking the Territory forward.

Since taking over government in 2012, the Country Liberal Party has sent a wrecking ball through a public service they never trusted.

They replaced career public servants with old CLP cronies, resulting in dozens of experienced public servants leaving the Government or, like me, taking voluntary redundancies when their jobs were axed.

My long-running Territory Quarterly magazine was one of the first casualties of their tenure.

While the Country Liberal Party Government’s battles with teachers, ambulance crews, firemen and bus drivers are well documented, some what less known is their dis mantling of the Department of the Chief Minister.

Under the previous government, the Major Projects, Asian Relations and Trade agency was the government’s cornerstone of Territory development and, arguably, the most successful agency the Territory ever had.

It was MPART that was the first port of call for any developer or entrepreneur intent on getting a project under way. As a result, they presided over the greatest period of economic growth in Territory history: the completion of the transcontinental railway; the Darwin Waterfront precinct; the Darwin Business Park; the Darwin Marine Supply Base; and the enormous Ichthys project.

For five years, quietly and without fanfare, MPART staff nurtured and negotiated every aspect of the project with the developers, Inpex and Total.

But inexplicably, MPART was one of the first agencies to be terminated by the incoming Country Liberal Party.

Their talented staff were split up, with most shunted off to the obscurity of the Department of Business, an agency that was to also suffer Parliament House neglect.

Since the change of government, the Department of Business has had four ministers in two and a half years, as well as three chief ministers.

That lack of stability ensures no consistency of vision or direction, with the result being the agency’s total lack of achievement.

The Government’s absence of runs on the board is a testament to its failure to get the most out of a willing and resourceful public service.

After 11 years, I had enough and left the Territory Government service.

But I take no pleasure in hearing the former colleagues say: “you got out just in time.”

It could have been made much more productive.

Dennis Schulz, Tasmania

Enough is enough

TIME for one final coup, this time a coup de grace to finally put an end to this rattle of a Government.

Craig Drury, Coconut Grove

Warped priorities

The letter to the editor titled “Mean-spirited cop” by B Robin son, Katherine (NT News, January 29) sums up the priorities of the NT police force perfectly.

While people have their houses and businesses burgled, their vehicles stolen or vandalised, they are bashed, harassed and forced to relocate because of the air-thieving lowlifes in our community. Our guardians find it easier and more profitable to target the ordinary motorist for their priorities.

No wonder we have such warped priorities.

Craig Drury, Coconut Grove