

NT police housing cuts loom

HAYLEY SORENSEN

DARWIN coppers will likely lose their lucrative housing allowances as part of savage cost-cutting measures to hit Territory policing.

Confidential police budget subcommittee documents, seen by the *Sunday Territorian*, show the force is planning to phase out the allowance for Darwin officers over the next four years and will scrap the allowance entirely for new Darwin recruits. Doing so is expected to save the force \$10 million in 2020-21.

The 2017 NT Police consent agreement shows officers are entitled to an annual \$25,671 housing allowance.

A more severe "high-risk" option would see the housing allowance removed altogether next financial year. That would save the force \$18 million a year, but is less likely to go ahead.

The documents show the force is also considering cutting the consolidated allowance by 2 per cent, for annual savings of \$3 million each year.

The consolidated allowance is worth 20 per cent of an officer's salary, according to the 2017 Consent Agreement.

NT Police Association president Paul McCue said the housing allowance was key to enticing police to the NT.

"Whenever we go and talk to new recruits who are starting in the job, one of the first questions we ask is 'why did you come to the NT?' and a key part of that is that we have competitive conditions, including the provision of assistance with housing," he said.

The *NT News* yesterday revealed the NT Police planned to slash \$31 million from its bottom line over three years.

The proposed cuts include sacking 54 civilian staff at a time when the force is trying to meet a politically-imposed target of recruiting 120 more sworn officers.

The documents also confirm NT Police plans to make it harder for officers to work their way up the ranks by limiting the number of officers who can enrol in promotional courses.



Territory boy Ceбby Johnson, pictured with hero Cyril Rioli, is in a serious condition after falling through a roof in Dromana, Victoria

Picture: SUPPLIED

Tragedy strikes boy who inspired change

HAYLEY SORENSEN

AT JUST 13, Ceбby Johnson has faced more hardships than most would encounter in several lifetimes.

But now, lying in a Melbourne hospital, the Tennant Creek teenager faces his toughest trial yet.

The footy star and six mates were mucking around on the roof of a pumping station near the Dromana reservoir on the Mornington Peninsula when a skylight

gave way. Ceбby fell 6m to the concrete floor, hitting his head on a pipe as he fell.

He was flown by helicopter to Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital where he remains in a serious condition.

Some of his Tennant Creek family are travelling to be by his side. He turns 14 on Wednesday.

In 2013, when he was eight, Ceбby became the face of the Northern Territory's child neglect crisis.

A story which appeared in

the *NT News* and other News Corp publications chronicled his difficult life – he had been bounced around to different relatives as a baby before he was taken in by Dennis Windsor, with whom he lived happily for a few years.

But when Mr Windsor died in 2012, the Warumungu boy was left on his own.

Again, he spent time with different relatives in insecure arrangements. He told journalist Paul Toohey he just wanted somewhere safe to live.

That story was the catalyst for change for Ceбby.

He was taken in by a woman in Melbourne who had read the article, and has spent the past four years living happily in Dromana.

He'd even struck up a friendship with his idol, Hawks star Cyril Rioli, and last year met Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull at a footy game.

Family friend Jasmin Afianos, who has known Ceбby since he was a baby,

said he had finally found the safety and security he craved.

Although it has been several years since Ceбby left Tennant Creek, Ms Afianos said he was well known and loved.

"The community of Tennant Creek is reaching out and channelling love and healing energy to him," she said. "It's important to all of us he gets through this."

"(Ceбby and his friends) were just being teenagers and he's paying a heavy price."

Japanese a welcome sight in the Territory

GARY SHIPWAY

THE first wide-bodied aircraft charter flight bringing Japanese tourists to the NT through one of Japan's largest travel wholesalers, JTB World Vacations, has touched down in Darwin with 234 passengers on board.

JTB World Vacations is the Territory's primary distribution partner in Japan.

The chartered Qantas A330 plane flight was the first of its kind to fly into Darwin from Japan.

The A330 dropped into Darwin yesterday and picked up 123 returning home Japanese tourists who had flown into the Top End several days



A Qantas Airbus A330

Picture: AAP

ago via other airports. It then returned to Darwin this morning.

Minister for Tourism and Culture, Lauren Moss said the Japan to Darwin Qantas charter with JTB World Vacations shows increased marketing activity in Japan is paying off.

"The chartered Qantas A330 plane has carried approximately 357 passengers over two flights – from Darwin to Narita, Japan and return – and is worth an estimated \$600,000 in visitor spend in the NT," the Tourism Minister said. "This is a posi-

tive step to ensure the growth of the Japanese visitor market within the NT and to grow the tourism economy within the Top End creating local jobs.

"Japan is the Territory's fourth largest tourism market and is extremely important to the NT. In the year ending March 2018 24,000 Japanese tourists visited the NT, which was a 13 per cent increase on the previous year.

"Of the Japanese visitors to the NT who were asked about where they had visited during their trip to the NT, 87 per cent said they went to Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park."

The Japanese visitor market is expected to grow about 5 per cent a year to 2020.



Australian Government
Department of Defence

EXERCISE PITCH BLACK

Exercise Pitch Black returns to the NT between 27 July and 17 August. This exercise is the Royal Australian Air Force's biennial, capstone International Exercise with 16 regional, coalition and allied nations participating. Personnel and aircraft will be predominantly based at RAAF Base Darwin and RAAF Base Tindal with a forward operating base at Batchelor Airfield.

The exercise aims to strengthen regional partnerships, improve interoperability between nations and promote regional stability. The training and integration of forces that occurs during this exercise directly supports the Royal Australian Air Force's ability to conduct operations. The exercise hosts up to 4000 personnel and over 140 military aircraft and will include day and night flying.

Further information about Exercise PITCH BLACK (PBK18), including flying times, can be found on the following website: <https://www.airforce.gov.au/PitchBlack>