Two killed as three survive horror smash

SYDNEY: Police were yesterday waiting to speak to three men injured in a horror crash on the NSW Central Coast that claimed the lives of two friends.

Police said the crash happened in the early hours of yesterday when a southbound vehicle hit the embankment north of Jolla Bridge.

One man, 31, was thrown from the car and died at the scene. A second man, 22, was trapped in the wreckage and died before he could be released.

Three other men, aged 29, 22 and 27, were treated by paramedics then taken to hospital in a stable condition with non-life-threatening injuries.

Police said they hoped to speak to the injured men, all of whom are thought to be from the Sydney suburb of Auburn.

Traffic in the area was disrupted for five hours.

TEEN DIES IN FALL

PERTH: A 17-year-old boy has died in Perth after falling off the back of a utility.

Police said the boy suffered severe head injuries when he fell from the tray of a Nissan ute late in the evening on Christmas Day.

He was taken to the northern suburb of Granada but died of his injuries.

HOSTAGES FREED

BRISBANE: Police have rescued a mother and daughter who had been held hostage by a younger in a north Brisbane house for more than five hours.

Inspector Sean Cryer said Special Emergency Response Team officers entered the Banyo house through an upstairs bathroom window yesterday afternoon and found the pair tied up.

He said the woman in her 40s and the teenage girl did not appear to have major injuries.

RAID ON DRUG HOME

PERTH: A 47-year-old man has been charged over a drug stash, estimated to be worth $1.5 million.

Police raided a home in Morley in suburban Perth on Tuesday, uncovering about 3kg of drugs believed to be methyamphetamine.

They also found more than $17,000 in cash.

PLANES FOR SUDAN

MELBOURNE: Australia will provide a military aircraft to help UN peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan with the country facing civil war.

The two-week mission may involve moving military personnel and evacuating some people, the Department of Defence said.

By IAN MCHEDTRAN

One of Australia’s most important wartime relics, the Singapore raider MV Krait, will be removed from the water and preserved in a permanent display at the National Maritime Museum at Sydney’s Darling Harbour.

The 31-metre, 40-tonne former Japanese fishing vessel carried 14 members of the top-secret World War 2 ‘Z’ Special Unit from Australia to Singapore in September 1943 when they sank 40,000 tonnes of enemy shipping anchored in the bays Japanese-occupied waterway.

Six of the 14 raiders, led by Major Ivan Lyon, paddled 50km into the harbour in two-man kayaks to attach limpet mines onto the sides of several Japanese ships.

The Japanese were taken completely by surprise and they assumed that the raid was organised locally so they tortured hundreds of people and murdered 70 on October 10, 1943 in what has become known as the Double Tenth massacre.

Six of the Jaywick men were executed by the Japanese following a botted raid in Singapore codenamed Rimau in September 1944.

Former ‘Z’ Special operative and the prime mover behind the Krait project, Douglass Herps, said he was pleased that the vessel was to be preserved.

“The Jaywick raid was a wonderful uplifting event for the nation and it took the Japanese completely by surprise,” Mr Herps said. “It was a great, great victory.”

A memorandum of understanding is being developed between the Australian War Memorial (owner of the Krait) and the Maritime Museum to collaborate on the preservation project.

This is a project as important as it is exciting.

By IAN MCHEDTRAN

Operation Jaywick is regarded as one of the most brilliant special-forces operations in history and the Krait, named after a small but deadly Asian snake, is credited with sinking more enemy shipping than any other Australian warship.

Former Defence Force chief Peter Cosgrove is considered a favourite to replace Governor-General Quentin Bryce.

By IAN MCHEDTRAN

Sydney: The body of a four-year-old Connor Elliott Graham has been found in the Clarence River on the NSW mid-north coast.

The boy had disappeared from his bed on Chatsworth Island in the early hours of yesterday.

A police spokesman confirmed his body was found in the Clarence River. Inspector Brendan Gorman said he did not suspect foul play.

“We believe the child left the premises of his own volition,” Insp Gorman said.

Police, the dog squad, police helicopters, volunteers and 29 SES workers searched the water and cane fields in and around Chatsworth Island, which is about 60km north of Grafton.

A boy belonging to Connor had earlier been found at a nearby nature strip.

Residents of the community of about 150 had joined in the 16-hour search.

“It’s awful,” Chatsworth General Store owner Anne Law said.

“There have been a lot of people searching... a few people have been diving.”

Connor was put to bed on Christmas night and his parents checked on him about 3.30am (ARIDT) and found him sleeping. Police said in a statement.

After about 7am, they discovered he was gone.

By IAN MCHEDTRAN

BRISBANE: The Federal Government insists a decision has not been made on who the next governor-general of Australia will be, despite reports former general Peter Cosgrove has been picked.

A spokeswoman for Prime Minister Tony Abbott’s office yesterday said: “No decision has been made.”

Mr Cosgrove, a popular former chief of the Defence Force, has been considered a front-runner to replace Governor-General Quentin Bryce and serve a five-year term from March.

Acting Prime Minister Warren Truss said Mr Cosgrove would be an excellent candidate, but there were other suitable candidates.

Mr Cosgrove led the Australian contingency in the 2003 East Timor peacekeeping mission, subsequently commanding the army and serving as Defence Force chief from 2002-05.

Since leaving the military, Mr Cosgrove has worked as a non-executive director of Qantas, a Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu consultant and been the chairman of the South Australian Defence Industry Development Board and peak aged-services industry body Leading Age Services Australia.