Crackdown on public housing offenders

HOUSING Minister Bess Price has introduced a stricter “three strikes” policy for public housing tenants that could see them removed quicker if anti-social behavior continues.

Ms Price said yesterday the new stricter policy will add to the execution of the Public Housing Safety Strategy.

“Another addition to the three strikes policy is the removal of a verbal warning,” she said. “From today, there will be an option for it to go straight to a first strike with no verbal warning — where appropriate I have instructed the department that all complaints are to be investigated and if they find substantiated incidents of anti-social behaviour against a tenancy then a strike in writing will be issued. Changes to the strategy will also see all strikes recorded against a tenant for 12 months before being wiped clean, as opposed to the old six months.

“We want people to do the right thing and only in extreme incidents of anti-social behaviour will the department be taking action to terminate a tenancy after three strikes,” Ms Price said.

The NT Government strengthened visitor guidelines for public housing tenants earlier this year, limiting visitors to a two-week stay in remote and urban areas before needing to seek permission.

The Housing Department said people can report anti-social behaviour by calling the public safety hotline on 1800 685 742, Monday to Friday during business hours.

Green light for barge ramp job to support navy

AN $18 million project to construct a multi-user barge ramp in Darwin has been approved by Parliament. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence Darren Chester announced yesterday it had been included in the government’s $155 million defence package.

Mr Chester said the facilities, at East Arm in the Port of Darwin, would provide the logistic support capability for the Royal Australian Navy’s new Canberra class landing helicopter dock ships and other amphibious vessels.

“Darwin is and will remain, strategically vital for enabling ADF maritime operations across Australia’s vast approaches, particularly in relation to Australia’s developing amphibious capability,” he said.

Fred McCue

TWO people have been rescued after being trapped in a mangrove forest on South Goulburn Island for almost 24 hours.

The couple became stranded in mangroves on Whalebone Beach on the far eastern side of South Goulburn Island, about 300km northeast of Darwin, on Sunday while fishing in an expanse of the trees.

Police, including water police, and NTES volunteers searched mangroves on the far eastern side of South Goulburn Island on Monday looking for the couple who were caught by rising tides.

The man and woman went fishing on low tide but miscalculated the speed of the incoming tide and found themselves stranded. After the tide dropped later on Sunday the 28-year-old man and his partner, 27, attempted to walk out but became disoriented in the dense mangrove forest.

The couple were able to contact police via mobile phone in the early hours of Monday, sparking a land, sea and aerial search.

They were finally picked up by a team on a boat that was searching along the high-water mark among the mangroves.

The man and woman were transferred to the Warruwi Health Clinic, where they were treated for exposure and severe dehydration.

Sergeant Wade Rogers from NT Water Police thanked NTES volunteers involved in the search.

He said their expertise and “can-do” attitude made the job so much easier. “Once again, though, we ask people to be prepared. Consider investing in a personal EPIRB device if you intend travelling in remote areas, where mobile phone service can be intermittent or patchy.

“At the very least, purchase a phone that will give you GPS co-ordinates, and learn how to access them quickly,” Sgt Rogers said.

Darwin girl making a splash as new face of Speedo

Darwin girl Sarah Butler has been chosen to be the face of swimwear brand Speedo Australia, with posters of her as far afield as London.

Although she’s yet to see the 6m-high posters of herself, she’s had good feedback from friends.

“All of my friends keep sending me photos when they see the posters, it’s quite flattering,” she said. “They’re all over Instagram too.”

Despite four years interstate, she says she still thinks of Darwin as home, with her parents and sisters living here.

In her short modelling career, she’s been a Miss Universe Australia national finalist and appeared on reality TV show Australia’s Next Top Model.

Craige Dunlop

FORMER Darwin swimmer Sarah Butler has hit the big time, becoming the global face of Aussie swimwear brand Speedo.

The 23-year-old, who last year swam at the Commonwealth Games Trials, was approached by Speedo to model their swimwear, with giant posters of her on display as far afield as Sydney and London.

“Speedo approached me because they wanted to get a swimmer in their photos rather than a model,” she said.

“I look like a typical swimmer, I’m fit and strong, I’ve got broad shoulders and muscles,” she said. “Although she’s yet to see the 6m-high posters of herself, she’s had good feedback from friends.

“All of my friends keep sending me photos when they see the posters, it’s quite flattering,” she said. “They’re all over Instagram too.”

Scrymgour to take Tiwi Islands role

AUSTRALIA’S first indigenous female minister will take on the new chief executive role of the Tiwi Islands regional council.

Marion Scrymgour, who was chief executive at Katherine’s Wurli-Wurlinjang Health Service, will take on the role over coming months. Councilors were suspended in March and former CEO Alan Hudson stood down a day later after a compliance report highlighted 40 areas of concern within the council.

In the meantime, Darwin alderman and former Darwin mayor Garry Lambert was acting chief executive while the council got back on its feet under official manager Allan McGill.

Ms Scrymgour, who represented Labor under the leadership of Clare Martin, said she was looking forward to getting started.

Human rights chief will give oration

AUSTRALIAN Human Rights Commission president, Professor Gillian Triggs, will be in Darwin tomorrow to give the fifth Austin Asche Oration in Law and Governance.

Prof Triggs has combined an academic career with international commercial legal practice and has advised the Australian and other governments, as well as overseas organisations, on international legal and trade disputes.

The Austin Asche Oration will be held in the dining room and Ntirimk Lounge on level four of Parliament House from 5pm to 7pm. It is free and open to members of the public. Her lecture is entitled The Expansion of Executive Discretion: Implications for the NT.

The event honours Austin Asche AC QC and his contribution to the law, tertiary education and the community.