Women sought to join council
THE NT Women’s Consultative Council is looking for new members. The council is open to Territory women of all ages, and will provide a direct link to Minister for Women’s Policy Bess Nungarrayji Price. Women who are passionate about making a difference in their community, whether that be urban, regional or remote, should put their hand up. Nominations from a diverse range of cultural and social backgrounds are encouraged. Visit women.nt.gov.au, email swpcnt.gov.au or call 8999 2598. The closing date is February 26.

CRAIG DUNLOP

Plan to deal with growth

Booming population considered

THE population of Litchfield will balloon in coming years and careful planning will be needed to minimise conflict between residents, developers and the horticultural industry, the NT Planning Commission says.

"The commission’s draft regional land use plan, released yesterday, says most of the growth will be focused around Holtze, Weddell, Noonamah, Noonamah Ridge and Murrumjuk. Planning Commission chairman Gary Nairn said the plan would need to strike a balance between maintaining the rural lifestyle and accommodating more residents.

"The plan also establishes policies to ensure sustainable use and protection of our natural assets, including ground-water," he said.

"The draft plan says the region’s youngest residents will be among the first to feel the squeeze of population growth. "In the short term, primary schools are expected to have capacity to accommodate additional children but it is noted that some schools are using transportable buildings to meet demand," the plan says.

"There is an identified future need to expand primary and preschools." Long term, about 40,000 people will live in Weddell and the draft plan recommends preserving the viability of Crown land set aside for the development. Goyder MLA Kezia Purick said the amount of government investment required would be huge, bordering on unaffordable.

"(Population growth) will happen but it’s in places like Noonamah Ridge where people will be unhappy they have large blocks with a development going in next door," Ms Purick said.

Recently released documents show Noonamah Ridge is likely to house about 7500 people once complete. Ms Nairn said community engagement with the Planning Commission had been strong, with more than 700 people showing up to community meetings and 90 formal submissions.

CRAIG TAIT and Dean Rielly will help host a Pink Stumps Day event at Howard Springs Oval February 26.

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