Central Advocate

Editorial

Affirmative action necessary for parity

It’s ironic the NT Government has come under fire for its commitment to boost Aboriginal employment and training.

Chief Minister Adam Giles announced a suite of measures in February as part of the government’s Aboriginal affairs strategy.

This included doubling public sector indigenous employment from 1900 to 3600 by 2020; and Aboriginal employment requirements for all government infrastructure contracts above $500,000.

There was also a new remote contracting policy that mandates 70 per cent of contracts for civil and construction projects under $5 million in remote communities go to local Aboriginal businesses by 2017.

The criticism of these policies is ironic because it’s hard to conceive that anyone doesn’t believe something should be done to improve skills and create jobs for indigenous people.

It’s called affirmative action, and similar policies to lift the employment of women have been in place for 20 years. Without affirmative action, disadvantageous sections of society will struggle to achieve parity with those who are more fortunate.

Much of the criticism seems to be based on fear and perceived inequity, which adds to the irony.

There are also concerns about potential rorting and unintended consequences.

It’s appropriate the government should have its policies independently evaluated, but any attempt to water down the intent of the policies should be resisted.

Quote of the day

“He came back filthy dirty and that’s what I want to see ... They’ve even got mud in their teeth”

Swell Mud Run Organiser Kylie Elston on 14-year-old winner Mihai Wollogorang, and the Muddy Fun enjoyed by all.

Stickers needed

Minister Chandler, bring back windscreen stickers for vehicle registration, please!

It used to be easy for a driver to check if the registration was current – a quick glance at the windscreen and there was the answer.

Passengers could also see.

Now it can be hard to know.

When a vehicle is registered, part of the payment goes to compulsory third party insurance.

This no-fault scheme compensates all people injured in a motor vehicle accident.

If the vehicle is not registered, this automatic cover will not apply, and “if you are driving an unregistered vehicle and are involved in a crash, you could be held personally liable for compensation to any person injured as a result of the crash” (Department of Transport road users handbook).

What happens next?

The driver is sued! The owner is sued!

The person(s) causing the accident are sued?

Maybe for millions, if death or severe disability has occurred.

And if they can’t pay?

It seems there is a rise in the number of unregistered vehicles detected by police using scanners, and hefty fines resulting.

Is there also a rise in the number of accidents involving unregistered vehicles?

What is going on?

Nowadays a reminder is sent to the registered owner five to six weeks in advance, by post or by email, and an NT registration app can send reminders.

However, there are problems with this...

People move around and postal delivery can be a problem for many reasons.

The reminder may be forgotten or missed.

Many people cannot or do not use computers or smart phones.

Secondly, the driver(s) may not be the owner, and have no easy way of knowing whether the vehicle is registered or not, but yet can be held personally liable for compensation, as above.

The reasons given by Minister Chandler’s office for stopping windscreen stickers included “to streamline service delivery ... in line with other Australian jurisdictions ... and e-commerce options are becoming increasingly popular.”

So what has been achieved?

Are the roads safer? It seems not. Is it to save costs?

Is it to raise revenue?

Could there be collusion on the part of the insurance companies, who are “off the hook” for personal injury comp if the vehicle is not registered?

That’s not a nice thought, but then the behaviour of insurance companies is not always nice.

Obviously “e-commerce” will continue but we can have windscreen stickers back as well please?

And by the way, a member of staff at MVR suggested I make my own windscreen sticker, as she had done. I did.

Mandy Webb, Alice Springs

Support solar

This letter is addressed to the citizens of Alice Springs as much as it is the editor.

We watch in dismay as the CLP invests $75 million in a gas power plant, in a town that two years ago was one of Australia’s seven official solar cities.

We have collectively let our guard down. We may feel pressured to accept this quick-fix option, as our existing power station is outdated and has let the town down.

But there is time to reclaim a solar future for Alice.

Interim replacement turbines for the Ron Goodin Station would allow reliable power for the town while the $75 million could be invested in solar power sufficient to meet daytime demand.

The only way that this will happen is if we make it clear to our political representatives that if they are to expect our votes, then we expect environmentally responsible energy supply for Alice Springs.

Catlin Coulston, Alice Springs

What do you think about the Sheffield Shield coming to Alice?

I think it’s a great thing for Traeger Park, Traeger is a really good ground.

It’s good to see Shed cricket in town. Redbacks for the finals!

I think it’s good for the town and will bring in some tourists.

Cricket is like watching paint dry, but great for the town.

RICHARD JACKSON PETER BAJCIC SOPHIE KLEEMAN LISA COURT

ALICE BY NUMBERS

12 CURRENT and former Australian cricket team members are in Alice for the Sheffield Shield this week.

$1400 WAS raised during a Yulara car wash for Fijian victims of Cyclone Winston.

$104 mill WAS spent on mineral exploration in the Territory last year.

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