Low security for crooks

THE Northern Territory has the lowest proportion of prisoners in medium or maximum security across the country, according to recent Australian Bureau of Statistics figures.

Numbers for the March 2016 quarter show 57 per cent of Territory prisoners are in “secure custody” — compared to the national average of 79 per cent.

Last month low-security prisoner Nigel Miaima, 24, broke out of the Alice Springs Correctional Centre.

Tom Volling

NT trails national average for prisoners in secure custody

He had been living in low-security cottages based at the centre, was serving a five-month sentence for stealing and breach of bail offences and was due for release on October 2.

The incident marked the latest in a litany of escapes from NT correctional centres during the past year, and the second within a month by lower security prisoners.

In May, four minimum security prisoners climbed a waist-high boundary fence to leave Darwin Correctional Centre at Holtze for a Saturday night.

In Alice Springs alone, last year saw the escape of a 30-year-old, a 16-year-old faced with serious charges and a number of youth detention centre breakouts.

The Territory also had the highest average daily imprisonment rate at 958 prisoners per 100,000.

The next closest was Western Australia with 294 per 100,000.

Between the December 2015 and March 2016 quarters, the Northern Territory increased by 60 prisoners per 100,000 adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

Meanwhile the number of offenders serving community-based corrections orders has increased for the fourth consecutive quarter.

There were 63,035 persons in community-based corrections during the March 2016 quarter which represented an increase of 13 per cent per cent from the previous year.

ABS Crime and Justice Statistics director William Milne said these orders typically involved compliance with conditions such as community work, supervision or program attendance.

Probation accounted for 60 per cent, or 38,080 persons in community-based corrections.

“Prisoners in Australia reached 37,996 persons, increasing by seven per cent (2,529 persons) from the March quarter 2015. The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in custody also increased, rising by seven per cent (720 persons) during the same time period,” said Mr Milne.

RSL in hands of accountants

THE Darwin North RSL has been placed under a statutory manager after the Director-General of Licensing undertook an investigation into the sub-branch.

The committee of the RSL ceased holding office yesterday at 1pm, and Stuart Reid from Meertens Chartered Accountants took over.

Director-General Cindy Bravos said the appointment of the statutory manager to administer the affairs of the Darwin North RSL was in the interests of the club members and creditors.

$20 million to help homeless

THE CLP pledged $20 million over 12 months to fund specialist homelessness services in the NT if re-elected in August.

Housing Minister Bess Price last week announced Housing Department grants for 2016-17 for 17 non-government organisations across the Territory.

Mrs Price said the funding would see more than 50 homelessness programs delivered in various areas.

“One in every 200 Australians are homeless but this figure jumps to 15 in the Territory,” she said.

Have a say on rates structure

PALMERSTON Council is seeking public feedback on the introduction of a new residential rating structure for Marlow Lagoon properties.

The proposed rating structure will see a valuation-based differential rate established and set at 0.350971 per cent for 2016/17, with a minimum rate set at $127 (excluding the waste charge which shall remain the same as the rest of the city).

For further information on the proposed rating structure for Marlow Lagoon, visit www.palmerston.nt.gov.au.

Woman dies in NSW crash

A WOMAN is dead and eight others have been injured after a vehicle collided with a four-wheeler drive in northern NSW.

The death is the second on the state’s roads on election day. Police said she was a passenger in the car when it struck the four-wheeler drive in Tabulam and died at the scene.

One of the injured had been seriously hurt and all had been taken to Lismore Base Hospital.

Earlier, a man died in a motorcycle crash on the NSW mid north coast after veering off the road.

Load of reasons to be careful as fire danger looms

TAMARA HOWIE

FIRES have warned that high winds and dry conditions are a perfect storm for scrub fires, even without the help of crackers.

Watch commander Matt Brookhouse said all crews were kept busy yesterday with fires which were fuelled by the winds which lifted most of the firecracker smog in the early morning.

“It’s not uncommon when it starts getting windy we tend to have a bit busier,” he said.

“The other reason is fuel loads — the fuels we’ve got to burn has dried out so it makes it easier for it to ignite.”

Fire crews attended to a small grass fire in McMinn St yesterday morning.

Firecrews attended to a small grass fire in McMinn St yesterday morning.

“Got police to attend due to smoke going across the road,” Commander Brookhouse said.

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