Palmo swings Solomon

VOTERS of Palmerston have swung away from their traditional Country Liberal Party leanings at the federal election on Saturday.

Booths across the satellite city showed Labor grabbed a substantial amount of votes in the seat of Solomon, helping the party’s Luke Gosling claim victory over outgoing MP Natasha Griggs.

In the booth at Durack, Mrs Griggs beat Mr Gosling by one vote, 753 to 752.

In Gray, Mr Gosling ran to an easy lead, with 715 compared to 457 for the CLP.

At the central Oasis Shopping Centre booth, Mrs Griggs was pipped by Mr Gosling with 1680 to 1507. At Palmerston Senior College, in Driver, the Country Liberals also felt the turn of the tide, with Mr Gosling scoring 1022 compared with 856.

Bakewell was a similar story, with Mr Gosling scoring 952. Although Mr Gosling had already claimed the seat at his, elected officials will continue counting postal votes today.

As of yesterday, around 80 per cent of the vote for Solomon had been counted, with Mr Gosling leading by a convincing 7000 votes.

The election has been pegged as an early indicator of how the Territory election will play out on August 27.

LAUREN ROBERTS

LICENSED shooters have welcomed amendments to the Firearms Act that passed last week, extending the duration of gun licences in the NT.

Five-year licences were extended to 10 and one or three year licences were stretched to five. Darwin Rifle Club captain Nathan Richardson supported the changes.

“It will reduce the workload of the firearms department,” Mr Richardson said.

He said short licences caused a lot of paperwork, delays, and fees for renewals and police checks.

Mr Richardson understood the importance of monitoring those who held a gun licence, but said if a person committed an offence, their gun licence was revoked prior to their annual police check.

Palmerston Pistol Club president Tony Chalker said the changes were a good thing for licensed shooters, and for gun owners who did the right thing.

“I welcome the changes,” Mr Chalker said.

“I think it’s an excellent idea that we’ve fallen in line with other states.”

Mr Chalker said the proposed changes were first put forward two and a half years ago.

“I think (the NT Government) has seen the light because of the administration costs,” he said.

“The issue from the club’s perspective is the onus on reporting.

“Most people have no idea where their tax form from five years ago is, let alone their records. Make the clubs responsible for their shooters.”

Mr Chalker said he would support a central database with records of Territorian gun licences. Police Minister Adam Giles said hunters, sporting shooters and pastoralists would benefit from amendments to the legislation.

“The extension will benefit Territorians who are licence holders and provide a modest financial saving,” Mr Giles said.

“This will reduce the number of times Territorians are required to apply for licences.”

He said the initiative would also shift police time away from administration to compliance. “The bill also addresses an oversight in the Firearms Act by providing an exemption to law enforcement officers for the possession of ammunition with firearm.”

“There are no changes to laws that govern licence applications or storage of guns.

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