CRASH TROUGH OR CRASH

The Henderson Government should outline in detail its plans to dismantle the Major Crash Investigation Unit and explain its reasons for doing so.

Member for Katherine and former police officer Willem Westra van Holthe says he has spoken with a number of serving officers who are angry and confused about the proposed changes.

Under the Government’s plans, the existing complement of nine in Major Crash Investigation will be cut back to one or two crash reconstructionists, teamed up with two detectives in Major Crime.

“It’s not clear exactly why the Government wants to do this,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“When questioned about the changes, Police Minister Paul Henderson says officers currently working within the Major Crash Investigation Unit will be absorbed into other sections.

“Police and the community deserve a more substantial explanation than this.

“Given last year’s near record road toll, many serving police are scratching their heads as to what’s motivated the reduction in road safety resources and why the Superintendent of Road Safety is being shifted out of that position.

“The Major Crash Investigation Unit plays a key role in any charges that result from traffic accidents – it has been a highly successful component of the NTPFES for a number of years now and should be retained.”

Mr Westra van Holthe said the Government’s lack of detail on what amounts to a significant restructure is perplexing.

“I would have thought in the interests of open and accountable Government the Police Minister would have provided the community with a detailed outline of what it has in the pipeline.
“The Accident Investigation Unit was absorbed into the Crime Section, along with the abolition of the whole Traffic Section, back in 1991 – but was later restored because it failed to deliver outcomes on Territory road safety. I can only wonder what the Government thinks it will achieve with this latest move.

“Maybe it’s similar to its decision to force court prosecutors to wear uniforms in a bid to create an impression of extra police – without actually having to recruit any.”

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