Comfortable camping intent of the expo

IT was all about the creature comforts at the Darwin 4WD, Boating and Outback Camping Expo. There were the big toys for adventures, luxury swags and crowds thrilled to see a wider variety of stall holders at the expo, which continues today. Jessica Ireland from RJA Wholesalers was giving people a chance to put their feet up after a hot day training around the stalls in their cradle chair combo attached to a car towbar – complete with pillows and a foot rest.

“It’s definitely a luxury item but people of all ages are definitely loving the comfort products,” she said.

This was easy to see as many couldn’t resist the temptation to jump in the high-end swags on show, including the Scoggins family. Palmerston mother-of-two Laura Scoggins was eyeing off some roomy swags after the arrival of her two daughters Amaya, 18 months, and Ida, three and a half weeks.

“When you take a child camping that’s when you really have to worry about milk bottles, dummy, or prams.”

The 4WD, Boating and Outback Camping Expo continues today. Darwin Showgrounds main arena from 9am-4pm.

Teachers must count and spell Pyne’s way

TEACHERS will face a new exam on literacy and numeracy from August with the aim to stop universities from churning out graduates who struggle to spell and count.

Education Minister Christopher Pyne will announce a pilot program to test the first 5000 teaching students. But the guinea pigs for the test will be assured they can still graduate – even if they fail.

The sample exam paper reveals a taste of what can be expected, including the style of numeracy and literacy.

The test includes problems designed to examine teachers’ understanding of syntax, grammar and punctuation. Teachers will also be offered a calculator to assist with some questions that ask graduates to determine the percentage of funding remaining in an education budget.

From next year, the test will be a graduation requirement.

“I want to ensure we get this right,” Mr Pyne said.

“Too long there have been public concerns about the variability in the quality of teaching graduates and in the effectiveness of existing programs in preparing new teachers,” he said.

Tents go as Lam victims housed

ZACH HOPE

GALIWINKU’s tent city has been taken down and all residents displaced by Cyclone Lam are now in temporary transportable homes.

It has been more than four months since the Category 4 storm made a direct hit on Elcho Island, smashing about 50 homes beyond repair and severely damaging about 30 more.

In the ensuing housing crisis, the NSW Rural Fire Service shipped 32 tents to the island to accommodate between 300 and 400 people.

The tents, originally used to house people displaced from NSW bushfires, were mounted on the football ground, which became known as Camp Elcho.

The tents were supposed to stand for two months, but difficulties sourcing new temporary accommodation extended that time.

The tents are now packed and being returned to NSW.

The last of the displaced residents have moved into transportable homes, which have been clustered at Batha, the park near the ALPA Store and a space next to the market garden.

Each home in the cluster will accommodate about 10 people.

Some residents could be living in the transportable accommodation for years until their original homes are rebuilt as part of a $90 million recovery effort across all affected communities in Arnhem Land.

Only about 200 people have turned up each night to test city, meaning others had left the island or were crowding the homes of relatives.

East Arnhem Regional Council’s Kaye Thurlow estimated as many as 600 people had been displaced.

She said some of them had moved to communities on the Gove Peninsula.

Regional Recovery Co-ordinator Jim Rogers will host a barbecue today to celebrate the end of Camp Elcho and thank those involved.

“We would like to take this opportunity to extend a profound thank you to the NSW Rural Fire Service management and on-ground staff for their assistance during this natural disaster, including the loan of the tents,” Mr Rogers said.

He said planning was underway with the East Arnhem Regional Council to restore the football oval.

Teachers must count and spell Pyne’s way

TEACHERS will face a new exam on literacy and numeracy from August with the aim to stop universities from churning out graduates who struggle to spell and count.

Education Minister Christopher Pyne will announce a pilot program to test the first 5000 teaching students. But the guinea pigs for the test will be assured they can still graduate – even if they fail.

The sample exam paper reveals a taste of what can be expected, including the style of numeracy and literacy.

The test includes problems designed to examine teachers’ understanding of syntax, grammar and punctuation. Teachers will also be offered a calculator to assist with some questions that ask graduates to determine the percentage of funding remaining in an education budget.

From next year, the test will be a graduation requirement.

“I want to ensure we get this right,” Mr Pyne said.

“For too long there have been public concerns about the variability in the quality of teaching graduates and in the effectiveness of existing programs in preparing new teachers,” he said.