

Finally, a win for ill firies



NT legislative change a relief after lengthy campaign

TERRITORY firefighter Jock McLeod and three colleagues have finally had a victory, of sorts.

All four firefighters have cancers contracted in the line of duty. But after a struggle of more than two years their employer, the Northern Territory Government, has finally

agreed to support firefighters with workplace-related illness through new legislation.

The Presumptive Fire Fighters legislation, which is backdated to July 2011 and contains a three-month sunset clause, passed through Territory Parliament this week.

Mr McLeod and colleague Tom Lawler have been the public faces of the fight by Territory firefighters to get the same legislative cover enjoyed

by every other fire service in Australia.

Diagnosed with bladder cancer in late 2012, Mr McLeod has never been in any doubt that his health problems stem from his job, nor did the urologist asked to provide a written report on his cancer for insurance purposes.

"He said, 'in the absence of nicotine addiction, the most likely cause of this man's cancer is from the inhalations of

hydrocarbons.'" Over the years Mr McLeod has watched more than 30 of his former colleagues die from various forms of cancers, all of which he believes were caused by their profession.

Mr McLeod hopes only limited numbers of firefighters will need to call on the legislation in coming years.

New safety rules and vastly improved protective gear than that worn by Mr McLeod when

he first entered the service in 1967 are likely to mean fewer cancers among firefighters in the future, he said.

"We were the old smoke-eaters because we had hardly any protective stuff, virtually nothing at all. We had just a shirt and trousers."

The campaign waged to finally bring the Government around on the issue included an online petition which drew 33,000 responses.

Mr McLeod's son Andrew, the former Adelaide Crows star, also threw his weight behind the campaign.

Former United Voice secretary Matthew Gardiner, who left Darwin in January to join Kurdish militias in their fight against Islamic State, was also another key figure in the struggle to get the legislation.

While saying he was "over the moon" about the fire fighters' success, Mr McLeod said he could not understand the Government's initial resistance to the legislation.

Pollie pays could soar

NORTHERN Territory politicians – who sit the least amount of days out of any parliament in the country – will now have a tribunal approve their pay rises, which could soar dramatically above current levels.

Legislation passed last night in Parliament has removed politicians' pay rises being tied to public servants' wages, opening the door for large increases.

Labor opposed the changes, calling it a "cynical move".

"I think it's disgraceful. Little wonder people are losing faith in politicians if they're getting greedy in the way the CLP is displaying today," Territory Opposition Leader Delia Lawrie said.

Treasurer Dave Tollner said the remuneration tribunal was a fair way to gauge future pay rises for politicians.

Recent changes mean our politicians sit 34 days this year.

An NT politician can expect a base salary of \$142,000, while ministers can make more.

The Chief Minister is our highest paid pollie, earning about \$280,000 a year.

Bargains galore at car-boot sale

BARGAIN hunters are being lured to the Trailer Boat Club car park this weekend for their first car-boot sale of the year.

"There are no fees, just the chance to either get rid of stuff or grab a bargain," DTBC general manager Alex Ehrlich said.

This Saturday's sale will be held in the TBC car park. Vendors can set up from 8am for the 9am start with a 10.30am finish. Breakfast is available.



Students Juliette Parsons, Amy Chittick, Jack Lake and Stevie Pocock will be representing the Northern Territory at Anzac Cove on April 25

Picture: HELEN ORR

Spirit of Anzacs alive as students head to Gallipoli

COURTNEY TODD

FOUR Territory students heading to Gallipoli for the Anzac Centenary commemorations were farewelled at Robertson Barracks yesterday.

The students were recipients of the 2015 Chief Minister's Anzac Spirit Study Tour

and will be at Anzac Cove on April 25 this year.

During the farewell, Amy Chittick from Darwin High School, Juliette Parsons from Darwin Middle School, Jack Lake from Palmerston Senior College and Stevie Pocock from Taminmin College were presented with the Australian

Army Rising Sun badge by Commander 1st Brigade, Brigadier Mick Ryan.

The students were asked to lay the Rising Sun badges at the Anzac Day ceremony at Lone Pine.

"For us to send young Australians off to the shores of Gallipoli for peaceful reasons

this time is a privilege and honour for the 1st Brigade," Brig Ryan said.

Juliette said she was "ecstatic" to be one of the students going to Gallipoli and was looking forward to following in the steps of the Anzacs.

"You can never really comprehend what it was like for

the Anzacs, but being over there will hopefully give us a bit of an insight," she said.

Chief Minister Adam Giles presented the students and chaperones, Palmerston history teacher Robert Lee and Corporal Cynthia Gilchrist from RAAF Darwin, with backpacks and uniforms.

Forum to spin a yarn revives lost art of storytelling

STORIES about the dark side of life will be laid bare from one Territorian to another in a new event to begin tonight.

Spun: True Stories Told in the Territory is Darwin's first regular public storytelling event – the monthly night out hoping to showcase the stories of everyday Territorians.

Spun creative producer Johanna Bell said it was some-

thing anyone could do, whether to tell or listen to stories.

"There's something very compelling about someone revealing a part of themselves first-hand, and also about seeing yourself in someone else's story," she said.

"It's a mixed storytelling forum, with people of different ages and backgrounds telling their stories in about eight

minutes – some stories are tragic and confronting, others heartwarming."

Spun will work to themes for each event, the first being *The Dark Side*.

NT Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation chief executive Frank Spry (pictured) will tell his story of being institutionalised for 10 years as a child. He said being approached

to share his tale brought out more than expected.

"I've not really talked about it ... I've had to really gather my thoughts and feelings," he said.

"I think people have lost the art of telling stories, and *Spun* is trying to capture the real earthy way of telling them."

Stories will be told from 6pm at Eva's Cafe at the Botanical Gardens, entry is \$7.

