

# Back with brawn, a beer and a touch of brutality

**NIGEL ADLAM** reviews the NT Government's first three weeks in power

**L**ABOR'S first week in office in 2001 after 27 years of CLP rule was characterised by soothing words from then chief minister Clare Martin.

Territorians who didn't vote for the ALP — actually a 52 per cent majority — had nothing to fear; no capitalists would be strung up from lampposts outside Parliament House.

The only public servant to be sacked was former CLP election candidate Margaret Lyons, whose presence in the Chief Minister's Department made the new rulers uncomfortable.

She was only too happy to bank her payout and go.

The CLP's first two weeks back in power have been characterised by a kind of brutality not seen since John Howard came to office federally in 1996.

Brutality is not necessarily a bad thing — just painful.

The man behind it all is Col Fuller, who was a big noise in the CLP administrations in



CLP powerbroker Col Fuller

## This Territory child needs a long-term carer

Andrew\* is currently a child in care who has special needs and who deserves a loving family to care for him. Can you help us achieve this?

### Andrew\*

I am a 9 year old boy who needs a special carer. I have had a tough childhood and I have been living in care since April this year. I would love to live in a home where I am the only child or in a household where there are children older than me.

I love trying different types of food, going fishing, playing rugby and going to the skate park to ride my scooter. I enjoy learning new things through experience and I need lots of support to develop my reading and writing skills.

I need my carer to help me when I feel sad or angry and assist me when I don't understand why things make me upset. I try my best to be happy, but when I'm not, I will need my carer to help me to learn new and positive ways to express my emotions. I need a devoted home where I will be provided with long-term stability, encouragement, patience and I will be nurtured in a loving and safe environment.

**Preferred area for placement: Darwin / Palmerston**

If you think you can help Andrew\* to live a healthy and enjoyable life in a healthy and supportive home, please contact the Manager of Alternative Care- Home based Care, on (08) 8922 7077. All enquiries will have a two-week turnaround.

\*The name has been changed to protect the privacy of the child.

the 1980s and 1990s. He was enticed out of retirement to work out how to get the CLP back into power and, once there, how to remodel government.

Seven department chief executives were sacked on his orders after being offered alternative jobs in the public service that their pride would not allow them to accept.

Ten new departmental heads were brought in, two of them out of retirement and nearly all of them Fuller's associates from the old glory days of Marshall Perron.

How 10 blokes — and they are all blokes — can be cheaper than six blokes and a woman is puzzling, especially when they are being paid at

least as much as those sacked. Many of the new chief executives are known CLP men.

Chief Minister Terry Mills says the break-up of "mega departments" into smaller units will enable the public service to be more focused and efficient.

It would not be fair to judge if this is true for a year or two.

And it should be acknowledged that many experienced public servants thought the big departments, especially NRETAS, were unwieldy.

Having said that, rank-and-file bureaucrats are questioning the need for the total makeover. Were they really that bad? Was service really that awful?

The reforms seem to model

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