

Crystal ball gazing

Where we will be in the year 2030

By NICK CALACOURAS

TERRITORIANS were this week given a quick glimpse into the crystal ball to see their future. And what an interesting future we have.

Our population is predicted to grow — approaching 300,000 by 2030. Most of this growth will be in Darwin and the indigenous population.

We are also going to get older. The number of Territorians aged over 60 is expected to double.

To cater for these new Territorians, we will need 42,739 new houses and units.

We also need to build 26 new schools and hire 786 teachers.

We will need five times as many hospital beds, to be serviced by 105 new doctors and 961 nurses.

The population is expected to grow the economy by 208 per cent — with a Gross State Product from \$15.6 billion to \$47.9 billion.

There will be 41,400 new Territorians in the workforce and 3650 new businesses.

But life is expected to get a bit more difficult.

Motorists will pay up to \$8 a litre for unleaded petrol.

Temperatures will rise by 3 degrees — making central Australia hotter and drier and the Top End hotter and wetter.

The number of days each year over 35 degrees will increase from 11 to between 28 and 69.

The sea levels will rise, cyclones will be more frequent and intense and extreme weather events will start to impact biodiversity, habitats and tourism.

This will hurt our farming production by up to 20 per cent — affecting the \$218 million cattle industry.

And as the number of hot days increases, more Territorians are likely to suffer heat-related illnesses and tropical diseases.

The Territory 2030 steering



VISIONARIES: The Territory 2030 Steering Committee — (from left) Bill Moss, Vicki O'Halloran, Jan Ferguson, Steve Margetic, Jonatha Carapetis and Denis Mackenzie. Picture: CLIVE HYDE

committee this week released a draft strategy for the next 20 years.

The committee declared that by 2030, the Territory would achieve statehood, major remote communities would become economic centres, Territorians would stop smoking, drinking and eating themselves to death and housing would be the most affordable in the economy.

The plan was to put down our aspirations in writing first — then come up with a way to achieve them.

The committee broke down the areas of need into six categories.

EDUCATION:

- Halve the gap in literacy and numeracy between indigenous and non indigenous students by 2020 — and halve it again by 2030.

- Increase the proportion of students finishing year 12.

- Ensure all school-age Territorians are enrolled and attending school.

- Ensure students have access to

boarding schools that are close to home.

- Establish Darwin as a “university town” — a hub for international education.

HEALTH:

- Decrease the chronic rates of disease suffered by adult Territorians.

- Ensure indigenous Territorians live as long or longer than other Australians by 2030.

- Halve the gap in life expectancy between indigenous and non-indigenous Territorians by 2030.

- Reduce the number of Territorians who smoke to the national average.

- Dramatically reduce the amount of alcohol Territorians consume, especially among those who drink at risky levels.

- Improve access to primary health care services.

PROSPERITY:

- Secure new private sector investment to continue to expand the economy.

- Expand the manufacturing sector and establish Darwin as a centre for oil and gas activity.

- Increase the number of flight and shipping links.

- Investigate a rail-link from Mount Isa to Tennant Creek.

- Maintain the Territory's growth at 1 per cent above the national average.

ENVIRONMENT:

- Meet national biodiversity targets.

- Reduce amount of water being used by Territory households by 20 per cent by 2015 and a further 10 per cent by 2020.

- Reduce the amount of waste being taken to rubbish dumps by 50 per cent by 2020.

KNOWLEDGE:

- Increase public and business expenditure on research and development.

- Establish government-sponsored partnerships with Asia on research and development.

- Establish the National

Aboriginal Arts and Culture Precinct with regional hubs.

- Establish access to high-speed broadband for Territorians in major towns and communities.

- Ensure all Territory businesses in main urban centres have access to high-speed broadband internet by 2012.

SOCIETY:

- Achieve statehood.
- Ensure every Territorian has access to appropriate accommodation by 2030.

- Ensure housing purchase and rent affordability exceeds national average from 2015.

- Put a focus on work-life balance.

- Increase the number of Territory teams participating in national sporting competitions.

- Reduce the number of victims of assault, property crime and anti-social behaviour.

SHANE STONE'S VIEW:
PAGES 20, 21, 22

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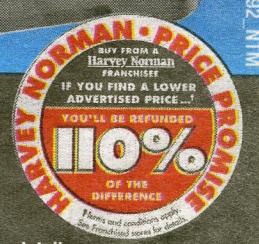
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Governments are



Former Northern Territory chief minister, Shane L. Stone, has his say on the 2030 draft strategy

WITHOUT wanting to be unkind and diminish, in any way the enthusiasm of committee members or public servants who have toiled away at this project for some considerable time, there is something fundamentally flawed in our community when a government abdicates its responsibilities.

That is, to develop policy from an unelected and unrepresentative committee co-chaired by a merchant banker from Sydney.

Remember the Wran Report of the mid 1990s — I sure do.

What precisely does Paul Henderson and his Cabinet colleagues think their job is? The Chief Minister says in the introduction: "It's important for us to plan today the direction the Territory will take into the future".

The slogan "fresh ideas, real results strategy" (that's the strategy in case you missed it; the ideas and results bit) is emboldened as though this is

difference — good on them. They will be hoping the Chief Minister pays closer attention than the Prime Minister did to the 2020 ideas.

If you want an example of a committee crystal ball gazing into the future, look no further than the 1995 Wran Committee — again chaired by a Sydneysider and Premier turned merchant banker. What a fizzer that was — no railway until next century, Neville Wran told me.

My response was unequivocal, "bullshit" and we built the railway — I had the commitment from John Howard in two years. And that's my point, Governments are elected to govern — to get on with it, be innovative and put the shoulder to the wheel. "Make it happen" should be the catchcry of all governments.

It used to be said that what marked the Territory out from other jurisdictions was that in the Territory we looked to see what was right with a project rather than what was wrong with it. That is no longer the case.

Look no further than our mining



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australia's farming future

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY



STALLED: The NT Government has 'lost control' over indigenous issues some revelation.

It's almost as catchy as Denis Burke's Foundations for our Future, which was another failed exercise in gobbledegook politics and aptly described as the longest suicide note in NT political history.

It's also a bit reminiscent of the 2020 Rudd Summit which suggested that, having been elected, they had better cobble some ideas together fast. History has now consigned that taxpayer-funded talkfest to the rubbish bin after the Prime Minister lamely offered some crumbs more than a year after the event, excluding the biggest ticket item — the Republic.

And 2030 is destined for the same fate, notwithstanding the conscientious efforts of the committee, public servants drafted to the cause and those making the submissions believing that they can make a

sector and the limp-wristed response of the NT Government to the events surrounding MacArthur River Mine. Apparently that was a "Federal problem" notwithstanding hundreds of Territory jobs were at risk.

Perhaps we could have a 2030 section on ministerial responsibility, the Westminster system and how it particularly applies to Health Ministers who are seemingly not in charge or responsible for our hospitals and Education Ministers who sack department heads by proxy.

I can hear the mantra now; "we need Governments that think outside the electoral cycle and plan for the future". That's true Paul and that's your day job, so I suggest you get on with it.

The five focus areas are all important, but most of those aspirations can't wait until 2030 particularly when it comes to

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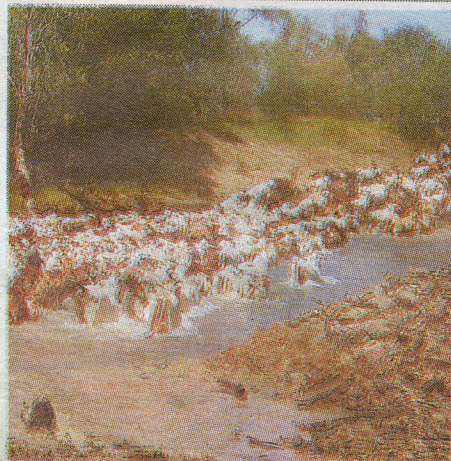
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elected to govern

indigenous Territorians.

The comprehensive failure of the Martin Labor Government to address dysfunction on Aboriginal communities was borne out by the intervention of the Howard Government and the renewed commitment to the intervention by the Rudd Government. What that tells me is that neither side of politics in Canberra trusts the Territory Government to handle indigenous affairs any more.

The Martin Labor Government was complicit in the greatest walkover in the NT by a Federal Government ever. The repeal of the euthanasia legislation paled in significance when compared to what happened here as Australian Federal Police and the Australian Army took "control" of Aboriginal communities because of the failure of the NT Government to act.

How can the Government talk about progression to Statehood so emphatically, when the Territory Government has less authority than it did 10 years ago — perhaps Clare and Paul understand, they have been surrendering Self Government powers since being elected, rather than defending them.

Apart from the intervention the Territory Government meekly rolled

‘The five focus areas are all important but most of those aspirations can’t wait until 2030’

over and surrendered its authority over uranium mining in 2005. When was the last time you saw a Territory Minister say NO to the Commonwealth on anything? Instead, we witness an indecent haste to roll over on every southern legislative template and social experiment out of Canberra.

I don’t see a great deal in the 2030 planning to ensure that you can walk the street safe at night or go to a shopping centre without fear of harassment or attack. I don’t see much thought being given to a criminal justice system that is so comprehensively failing its law abiding citizens that people now cite public safety as a reason to move interstate in their retirement.

Chief Minister, the people can’t wait until 2030 to see whether you and your party cut the mustard — based on past performance over the past 10 years you could understand the scepticism of the person on the street.

It’s great that education has been highlighted. Given that the NT Government today gets almost three



ATTENTION: Chief Minister Paul Henderson will hopefully pay more attention to the 2030 draft strategy than Prime Minister Kevin Rudd did to the ideas that came from the 2020 Summit, Shane Stone says

times the revenue via the GST than what I and my CLP predecessors had at our disposal I would have expected most of these plans to be implemented already. Territory Labor has had a decade running the show with all those GST revenues so what’s been holding you back? It’s not as though there has been a population explosion up here.

I can only urge and encourage Territorians to read this document and then ask the question — is this for real?

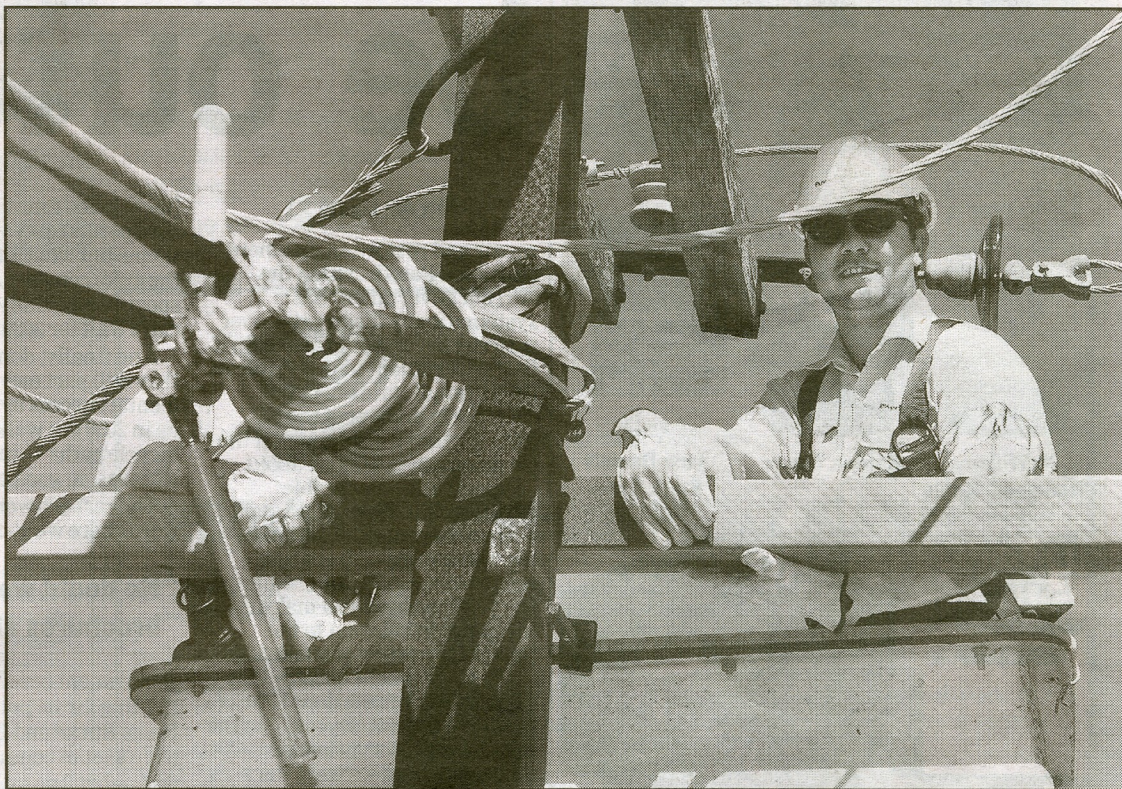
There are more pressing and immediate issues that should be at the forefront of Government today — not 2030 — such as guaranteeing when you switch on the light something actually happens. At one point the northern suburbs of Darwin were entirely reliant on generators; it beggars belief that such neglect over a decade could come to this.

I wonder whether the Sydney-based Chairman is aware of such a failure of infrastructure as he presides over a Committee making forecasts 20 years on. Part of the “enviable lifestyle” is having electricity.

If NT is to “invest in its economic future” its needs reliable electricity supplies now — not 2030.

If you are serious about “broadening the economic base” you need to start with a reliable and affordable supply of electricity now and not in 20 years time. And if you are really serious about developing Darwin as an “international city” then the Government needs to

CONTINUED: PAGE 22



LIGHTS ON NOW: The Northern Territory deserves reliable electricity now — not in the year 2030

Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee

Public comment closing soon


The Darwin Harbour Advisory Committee advises that public comment on the draft Darwin Harbour Regional Management Strategic Framework 2009-2013 is closing soon.

To have your say on the draft Strategic Framework visit www.harbourplan.nt.gov.au or phone 8924 4139 for an information kit.

The Strategic Framework outlines a set of guidelines for the management of environmental, social, cultural and economic values and uses of the Darwin Harbour region. It also aims to:

- inform the community of the important elements and appropriate use and treatment of the harbour
- inform industry and business of community and government expectations on the use and conservation of the region
- guide all users of the region including the community, industry, business and developers in decision-making regarding their use of the region

The closing date for submissions is Friday 15 May 2009.

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Ministers should be out and about

FROM: PAGE 21

repair and restore engagement with Asia Pacific which the current government has systematically dismantled over three terms. It would also help if that government took a stand on the abysmal state of airline services in and out of the NT.

As for the environment, if the Government is serious about "ecologically sustainable development" they could start with some good old fashioned town planning — that's not rocket science. To his credit Gerry Wood has been making this point in relation to the Darwin Harbour for some time.

My government declared the Charles Darwin National Park (a first for a capital city) and set the threshold preservation for mangroves and we were very pro-development. It's a matter of balance and not six glossy points that are incomprehensible — what does "equity and cohesion are intrinsic to the way the Territory operates" mean when speaking of the environment? We get the drift that ecologically sustainable development

(mentioned four times in the six core points) may well be the theme but what's the process and the enforcement? As for loss of species, especially fish stocks, we can't wait for 2030 on estimates.

And finally, don't laugh, but they will part measure environmental success by how many of us in 2030 are walking and using bicycle paths — in the tropics and wet season; good one.

The rest are words and more words here we go again; a

brochures about it in our letterboxes. The economy is holding but only just; as we all know we are historically counter cyclical to national trends. What really takes the cake is the section on where they, the committee have been — great stuff. The sad fact is that instead of a committee, that's where the Ministers should be, out and about listening and talking to Territorians. At least Allison Anderson learned that skill from

population of more than 200,000 it probably would have been better if he hadn't let that slip. Please Chief Minister, don't presume to make any future commitment on my behalf based on less than .001 per cent of the population.

Finally, it seems the 2030 "idea" is not unique to the NT — Abu Dhabi and Kenya are on the same program. But then again democracy is not top of mind in those places so 1 per cent telling the rest how it's going to be wouldn't be out of the ordinary.

Governments should plan, consult, listen to the community and gauge ideas for the future. But don't ask someone else to do it for you — that's your job.

No one doubts the bona fides of the committee and their interest in the wellbeing and future of the Territory nor the commitment of those public servants engaged in the process. My point is that the Chief Minister and his Government should get on with the job they were elected to do and stop hiding behind consultative committees whose recommendations will be quietly shelved as time drifts on.

'No doubt we can look forward to copious colour brochures about it in our letterboxes'

government bereft of any ideas fighting for its political survival. Denis Burke and Paul Henderson have a lot in common. Track through it line by line, section by section and join those who despair that this is what your government spends its time and money on as services across health, education, infrastructure and public safety collapse around you. No doubt we can look forward to copious colour

CLP Ministers. When was the last time we saw a minister front a public meeting? They are nowhere to be seen as they send the public servants as sacrificial lambs, or worse, as occurred in the middle school "consultation" debacle, consultants, usually from "south".

The Chief Minister's media release says the committee has received 77 submissions and met with over 300 people. In a



PLANNING: The 2030 draft is concerned with ecologically sustained development, but what about 'good old fashioned' town planning?

Northern Territory Government DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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