

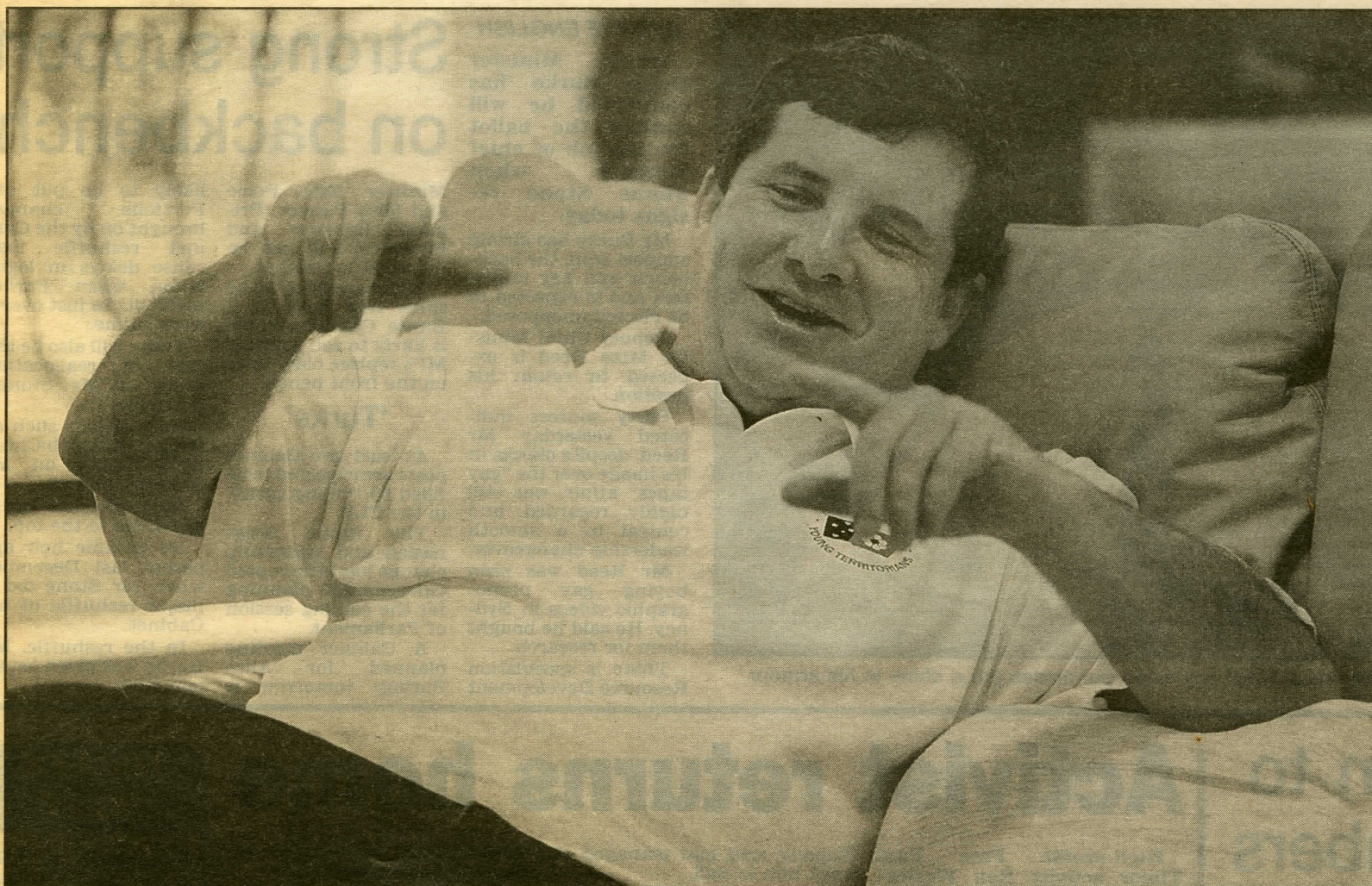
**TV
GUIDE**



**JENNIFER
ANISTON**
A FAMILY TRADITION

**HUGE MOVIES
ON THIS YEAR**

STONE TO QUIT TODAY



Burke tipped new chief

Shane Stone will resign as Northern Territory Chief Minister today, following pressure from disgruntled CLP backbenchers.

The resignation follows a meeting of disenchanted backbenchers and some Cabinet ministers late last week.

The backbenchers said the meeting culminated in a letter of no-confidence being drafted. Mr Stone said the sentiments of the letter were conveyed to him on Friday by his deputy Mike Reed.

Denis Burke is tipped to replace Mr Stone.

● Full Report Pages 2, 3

Shane Stone relaxes yesterday ... leaving the top job after pressure from backbenchers. Picture: KELLIE BLOCK

Gilchrist blasts record: Page 36

BRUNCH-LUNCH TODAY AT RORKES



Warne ...
given up

New enemy in TV ratings war

SYDNEY: Television networks launched their annual ratings war last night — but for the first time had a common enemy in the form of new competitor pay-TV.

While 900 000 Australian homes have pay-TV, until now actual viewer numbers for subscription networks such as Foxtel and Optus have been an unknown quantity.

But as AC Nielsen people meters recorded viewer choices for the opening night of ratings, data was collected for the first time from homes with pay-TV.

Pay operators will collect and analyse figures for two months before taking them to the market in an attempt to syphon advertisers off free-to-air networks.

Commercial

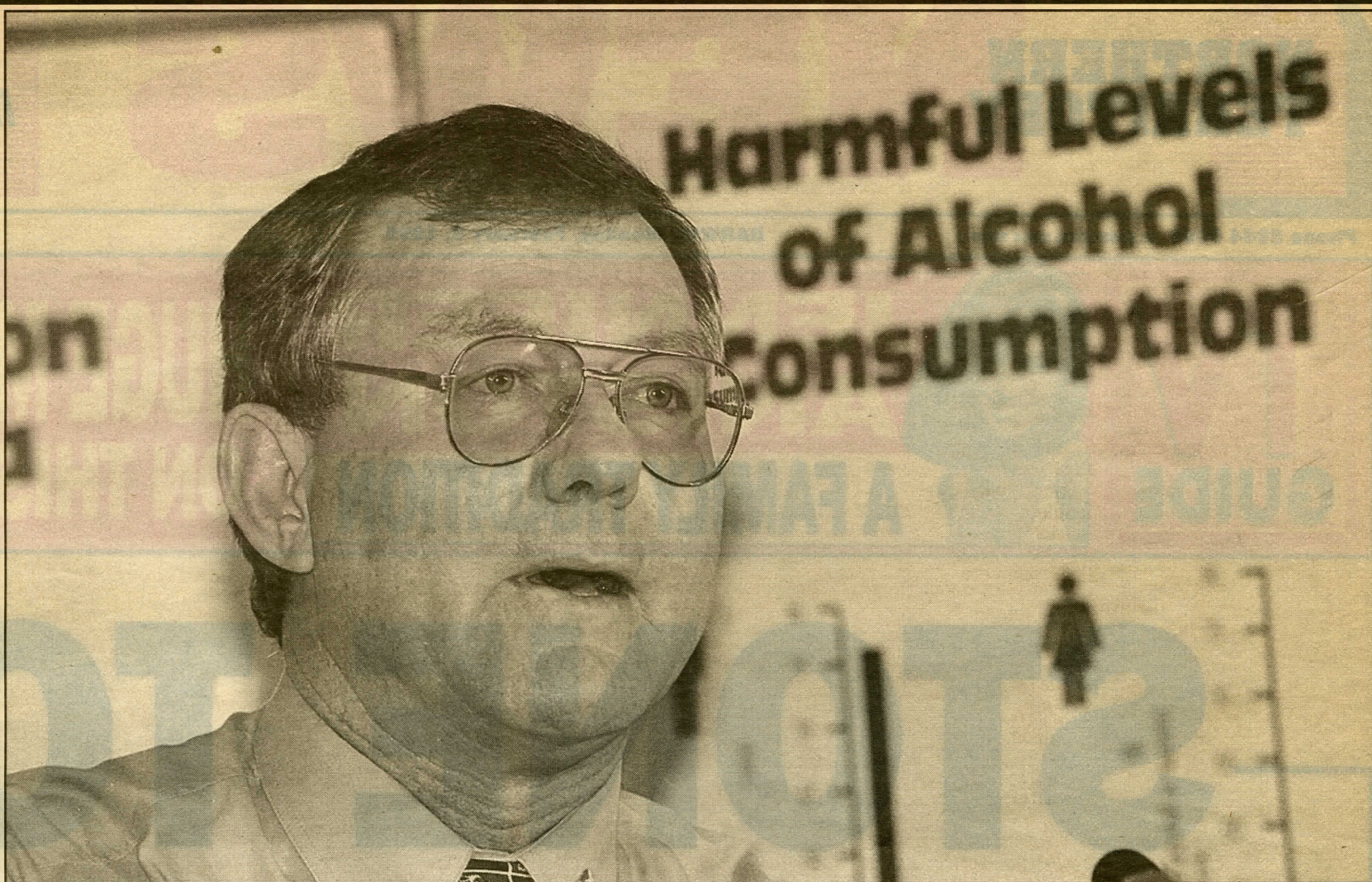
While free networks are loathe to admit pay has forced them to alter program schedules — and style of shows — 1999 is looking like a good viewing year.

All three commercial networks have developed interesting comedy and satirical projects for weeknight viewing.

Next week Seven launches a local satire/comedy with *The Big News*, a comedy series based on the week's news.

The second is *The Late Report*, a real life current affairs show with a satirical rinse.

One story has reporter John Safran following cricketer Shane Warne around and trying to make the player, who has given up smoking for a \$200 000 advertising contract, have a cigarette.



The likely new NT chief minister Denis Burke ... strong support on the backbench and with key senior ministers

I will run for NT's top job, says Burke



Mr Reed ... his gay video purchases put a chink in his armour

By DAVE ENGLISH

Health Minister Denis Burke has confirmed he will contest the ballot for the job of chief minister when Shane Stone resigns today.

Mr Burke has strong support from the backbench and key ministers and is expected to be elected unopposed.

Deputy Chief Minister Mike Reed is expected to retain his position.

Party sources indicated yesterday Mr Reed, despite chinks in his image over the "gay tapes" affair, was still highly regarded and central to a smooth leadership changeover.

Mr Reed was seen buying gay pornographic videos in Sydney. He said he bought them for research.

There is speculation Resource Development

Strong support on backbench

Minister Eric Poole and Mick Palmer (Primary Industry and Fisheries) will not be returned to Cabinet.

There are likely to be three new faces in a Burke Cabinet, which is likely to see younger MPs replace older ones on the front bench.

'Turks'

At least two Cabinet posts are expected to be filled by "young turks" in the CLP.

The Stone resignation and leadership change has interrupted Government planning for the coming session of Parliament.

A Cabinet meeting planned for Alice Springs tomorrow is

likely to be put off. Portfolio changes brought on by the Cabinet reshuffle may cause delays in legislation when Parliament sits in just over a week's time.

There will also be the task of reallocating some of Mr Stone's portfolios.

Negotiations such as the gas deal with China have hinged on Mr Stone's contacts.

Mr Burke has had a rapid rise to the top.

He became heir apparent last December when Mr Stone did a major reshuffle of his Cabinet.

In the reshuffle, Mr Burke was given seven portfolios.

Correction to Lotto numbers

The Tattersall's Saturday Tattslotto Draw numbers supplied to the *Sunday Territorian* newspaper were incorrect.

The correct numbers were 41, 8, 18, 39, 12, 30 and the two supplementary numbers were 24 and 38.

The incorrect numbers were supplied to the newspaper by the Tattersall's media agency.

Activist returns home

High-profile Free East Timor activist Rob Wesley-Smith arrived home in Darwin late last night, after being deported from Indonesia.

Australians for a Free East Timor spokesman Sonny Inbaraj said it was believed the Indonesian Armed Forces had a ban on Mr Wesley-Smith.

Mr Inbaraj said Indonesian authorities knew when Mr Wesley-Smith had landed in

Kupang, and had managed to track him to Bali.

Mr Inbaraj, who kept in contact with Mr Wesley-Smith during his detention in a Kupang hotel, said: "It is understood that there are two blacklists in Indonesia."

"One is the Government's blacklist and the other is the Armed Forces' blacklist, led by General Wiranto."

"We understand that Rob's name was removed from the

Government's list, but he remained on the other one."

Mr Inbaraj said Mr Wesley-Smith was "very disappointed", and had labelled the incident as "an indication of the double-faced policy in East Timor".

Mr Inbaraj said Mr Wesley-Smith had taken a risk by entering Indonesia, knowing that he had been on the Government's blacklist for years. He said: "Rob decided to take a chance, but unfortunately he had to return."

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Resignation is my own choice: Stone



Mr Poole ... facing chop



Mr Palmer ... dump tip



Ms Martin ... new Labor boss



Mrs Hickey ... resigned

By DAVE ENGLISH and GREG THOMSON

Outgoing Chief Minister Shane Stone said yesterday his resignation was "pretty much" of his own timing and came only slightly sooner than he had planned.

Mr Stone said yesterday: "I knew some people were snapping at my heels.

"I looked at it and thought: 'Do I want to go through this for the next few months or not?' I decided not.

"And remember it was I who called the meeting today."

He said he had made up his mind almost a year ago to quit about June this year.

He said: "Those backbenchers who are doing all the talking didn't have a unanimous position in the party by any means."

He said he had not received a letter demanding his resignation.

Mr Stone - who had four years in the top job - will formally resign at a special party meeting this afternoon.

Unopposed

Health Minister Denis Burke is expected to be elected unopposed as the new Chief Minister.

Mr Stone said: "It's an amicable transition. It's been going on for a while."

Mr Stone will stay on as Port Darwin MLA. Three CLP backbenchers who contacted the Northern Territory News yesterday said Mr Stone had been pushed.

One backbencher, who did not wish to be named, said: "Basically, we've had enough.

"It's a culmination of things which started back when Shane appointed himself as QC.

"We are basically reflecting the community concerns, he's on the nose out there, and we wanted him out."

Yesterday Mr Stone hosed down suggestions he'd been pushed, saying: "Of course there are always people snapping at your heels - in politics like everything else, there are different personalities at work."

Declined

He declined to say who was snapping at his heels.

It's understood last week's ALP leadership change which saw Clare Martin replace Maggie Hickey, who resigned to be with her sick husband, touched off the CLP backbench revolt.

Backbenchers who contacted the Northern Territory News yesterday said a letter of no-confidence in Mr Stone as party leader had been written last Friday.

It is understood at least two of Mr Stone's Cabinet ministers assisted in its drafting.

The letter was drafted after a majority of backbenchers met last Thursday and then held a subsequent meeting with at least three Cabinet ministers last Friday.

Mr Stone, who was in Perth for talks with Chinese officials about sales of NT gas, was telephoned about the letter.

The letter set out grounds for dissatisfaction with his leadership and also gave a period of grace in which he could quit in a dignified way.

Mr Stone informed fellow MPs, staff, close associates and key Darwin business figures on Saturday about his imminent departure.

He said yesterday he had decided, after nearly a decade in politics, "enough was enough".

Mr Stone said: "Quite frankly, it's nice to have my life back."

Mr Stone, who is 49, will remain as a backbencher until the next Territory election, as he does not want to prompt a by-election.

He said he was quitting now because he wanted to give the

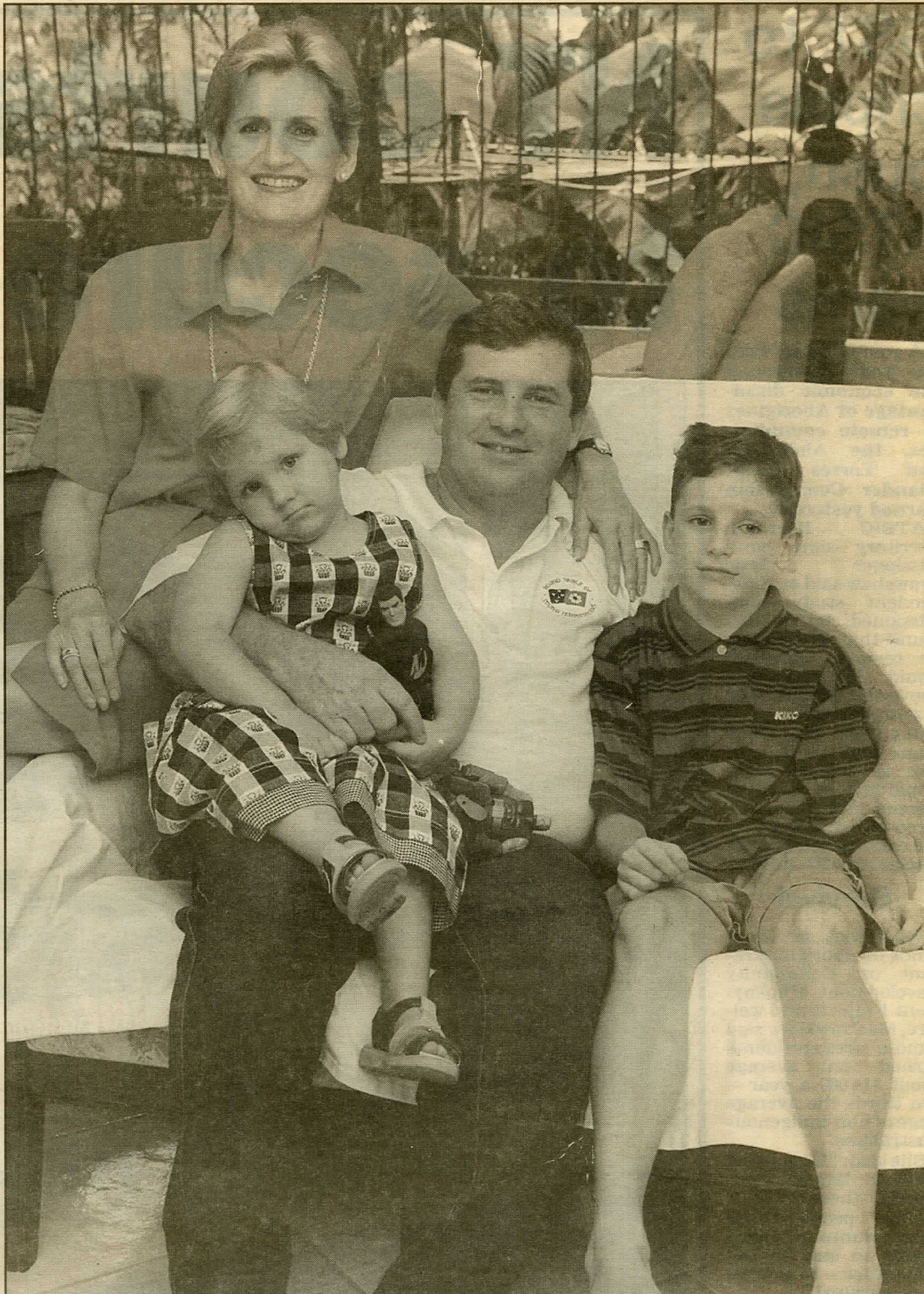
Backbenchers 'were snapping'

new CLP leader sufficient time to put his stamp on the "way things work" before the next election.

He ruled out a move either into federal politics or back to a career in law.

He hinted at a federally-appointed post connected with Asian relations.

He said: "It would be irresponsible not to give the new Chief Minister sufficient time to settle in - to work out how it all works. I came to the top job half way through a term, so its



Mr Stone relaxes at home yesterday with his wife Josephine, Jack, 9, and Madeleine, 3. Picture: KELLIE BLOCK

economic progress - I mean, 15 000 new jobs and that's in less than one term in office."

Asked how he felt personally about quitting the leadership, he said: "I'm fine.

"It's a crossroads for me.

"There must be a huge adjustment to be made which I'm sure I'll feel tomorrow."

"Sure, there's some feeling of sadness but heck, you get your life back."

The Stones have two children, Jack, aged 9, and Madeleine, aged 3.

Mr Stone's wife Josephine, who is a lawyer, said: "It has been a frantic 10 years.

"It has been intense and unremitting.

"I look forward to getting back our privacy."

Mrs Stone said the move coincided with her 40th birthday next week, which was "the nicest news for years".

Her husband quipped: "Not a bad birthday present."

● Wicking Page 10
● Statehood Page 10

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