

KWIKASAIR
EXPRESS

Maloney Street
Tennant Creek N.T. 0860

Telephone (089) 62 2914

A Division of TNT Australia Ltd

TENNANT
& DISTRICT
TIMES

Est. 1975

Vol 11 No 11 Friday 30 March 1990

PRICE 40¢

PIONEER
EXPRESS
Tennant Creek
Agent
Paul Ruger

Phone 62 2211

Polling booth fiasco

Mayor Paul Ruger has written to the Australian Electoral Commission detailing the inexcusable delays and inconveniences endured by local residents when voting in last Saturday's federal election.

Mr Ruger has been inundated with complaints from residents who were obliged to queue for up to one and a half hours to vote at the only polling booth in Tennant Creek.

From 8.30am until 1pm, a queue of more than 200 people stretched from the polling booth in the gymnasium of the High School, along the pathway to the office, across the front lawns of the school to and along Stuart Street near the entrance to the showgrounds.

Once inside the polling booth, many people

who were not on the electoral roll then formed another queue to enrol and cast a provisional vote. Up to 40 people were in this queue for up to three hours.

The staff employed by the Electoral Commission clearly had difficulty coping with the crowd arriving to vote.

However Mr Ruger said the staff did a creditable job under intolerable conditions.

As the day wore on, the area became foul where some people had been spitting and throwing cigarette butts.

A few people had

urinated while standing in the queue, both inside and outside the polling booth, and one person had vomited.

The flies had a field day.

It is alleged there were many instances of misdemeanours where voters were intimidated by one candidate's representatives.

On arrival at the polling area voters were given 'How to Vote' cards on behalf of the two party candidates.

Selected voters were then accosted by some of the helpers who snatched the opposing 'How to Vote' cards from them, leaving

them uninformed voters with one only 'How to Vote' card and no choice of candidates.

There was also selective handouts of food, drinks and lollies together with voting instructions, which caused more than one person in the long queue to ask, "Could this be bribery?"

As always, there was a good story to relate.

The incapacitated and the elderly were encouraged to go to the head of the queue by those who were weary and annoyed by the extreme delay, but were still able to consider others.



Above: Beth Engles casts her vote