

**DIY JOBS
COSTING
HOME
OWNERS**
MONEY SAVER HQ >> P37

**AFANT
AGAINST
BOATIE
BREATH TEST**
REPORT >> P3

**YOUR
8-PAGE
COMMONWEALTH
GAMES LIFTOUT**
>> INSIDE TODAY



Welcome to the Outback, Charlie!

**Arnhem Land adventure
awaits royal prince >> P4-5**

Bulugambi Marika, 1, painted with the Rirratjingu clan design (minyitji) depicting the wirrkul pattern on his face, in the community of Yirrkala. The painting is for the visit of Prince Charles, who was in Cairns yesterday after taking in the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast
Main picture: MICHAEL FRANCHI



CLP STALWART DIES

Foundation 51 founder Graeme Lewis collapses at party meeting >> P9

Graeme Lewis passing shocks CLP colleagues

CRAIG DUNLOP

COUNTRY Liberal Party stalwart Graeme Lewis died suddenly after collapsing at the party's Central Council meeting yesterday.

Mr Lewis was a foundation member of the CLP and most recently served a five-month stint as the party's general secretary, during which party leaders set about rebuilding the party from its 2016 election rout.

Former Chief Minister Shane Stone paid tribute to Mr Lewis for his long-term contribution to the Territory community.

"Graeme Lewis was a proudly parochial Territorian, who made an outstanding contribution to our community on many fronts," Mr Stone said.

"As a committed member of the CLP he previously held the positions of President, Secretary General, campaigner and fundraiser.

"On a personal level he was a loyal and committed friend, who I will miss enormously.

"The Territory has lost a true believer and we are poorer for it."

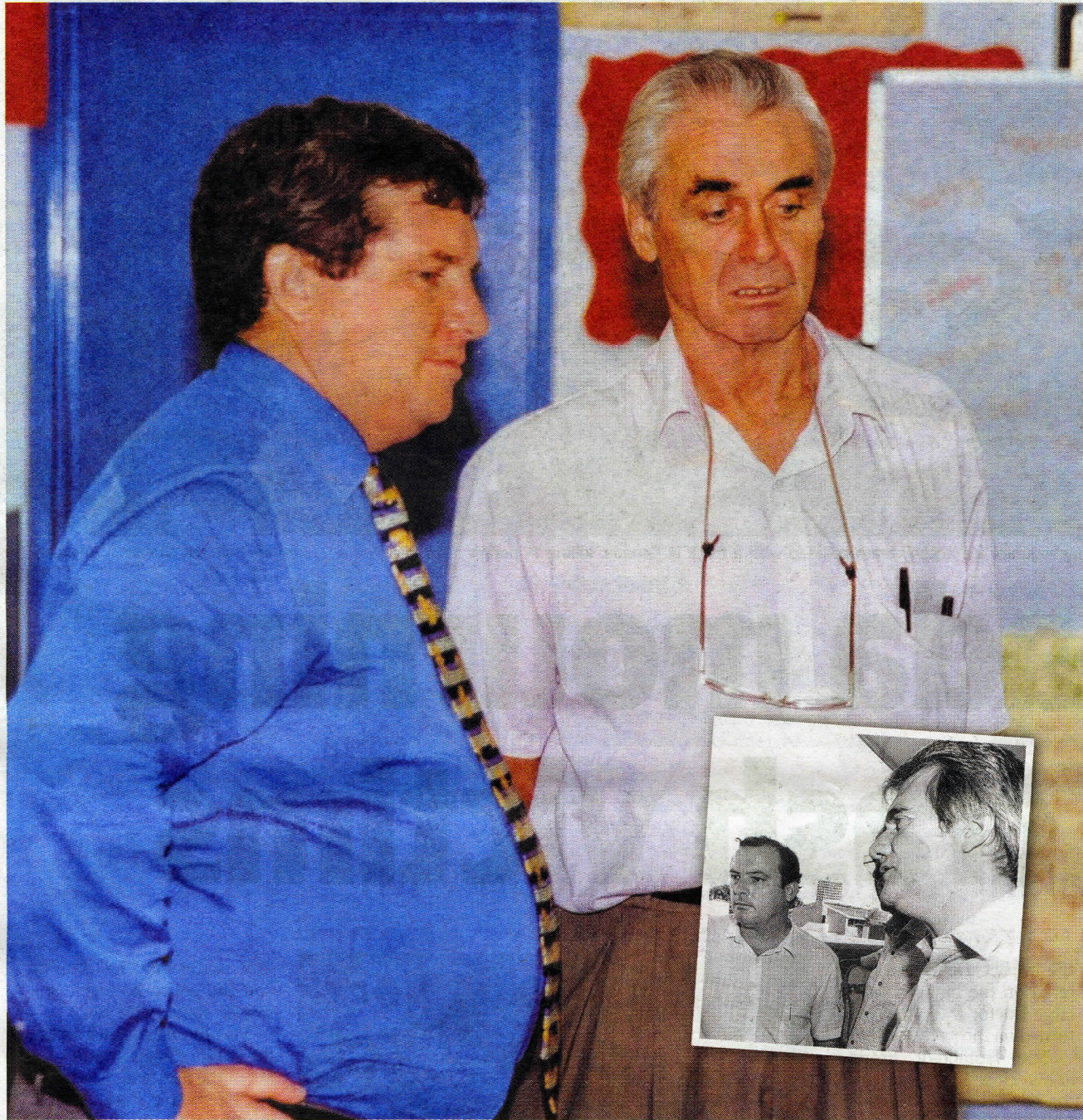
Mr Lewis's period as party president coincided with what many consider party's "glory years" of the Everingham government.

His political legacy includes much of the fundraising much of the campaign war chest that bankrolled the CLP's return to power in 2012.

Mr Lewis, a member of the party's Trower branch, was unwavering in his loyalty to the CLP but his level of influence within it proved divisive in recent months.

In a statement yesterday the party remembered Mr Lewis for his mentorship to party members and elected representatives.

"He was a great mentor to many people – including to party members and elected representatives – and always had time to give everybody from ordinary members to



Former NT Chief Minister Shane Stone (left) and party stalwart Graeme Lewis (right) in the mid-1990s. Inset: Paul Everingham and then CLP president Graeme Lewis

Picture: SUPPLIED

Cabinet Ministers and Chief Ministers," the statement said.

"Graeme not only helped set the direction of our great party for a number of years and was instrumental to our many successes, but he was also a prolific fund raiser which

of course is critical for any political party to survive.

"Graeme was a proud Territorian through and through and was committed to fighting for small business, rural industry and better services for all Territorians.

"The entire CLP family extend their sympathy and thoughts to Graeme's wife Nora and their family at this difficult time."

Mr Lewis was a successful accountant, a general manager of Darwin Private Hospital, a

member of the steering committee that established Essington International School in the late 1980s and chair of the Waterfront board.

Mr Lewis's family are expected to announce funeral arrangements in coming days.

Products cheap but living isn't

PRICES of popular goods are dropping across Australia but consumers are rarely noticing because of the cost-of-living squeeze caused by their everyday household expenses.

From cars and computers to breakfast cereals and shoes, an NT News analysis of Bureau of Statistics data has uncovered dozens of items that have dropped in price over the past five years.

The biggest price cuts have been in computing equipment and telecommunications, down 34 and 17 per cent respectively, while overall inflation in Australia rose 9.9 per cent.

The price of women's clothing also fell 11.6 per cent.

However, these savings are being offset by big price rises in areas such as utilities, health and education, and forecasters warn the cost of many services may rise faster in the coming years when wages growth picks up.

Telstra to sweeten NBN deal

AUSTRALIA'S largest internet provider is making a play to stop the skyrocketing number of NBN complaints, and will offer new customers a chance to get out of their broadband contracts early without paying a cent.

Telstra's planned "NBN Satisfaction Guarantee" could save new broadband users as much as \$270 in early termination fees, and will come after official complaints about National Broadband Network services jumped almost 160 per cent last year.

But the guarantee will not solve some NBN connection problems, the company admitted, as they could follow users to the next internet provider.

The guarantee would allow new NBN users to break their Telstra contract within 30 days of connection without penalty, which was a potential saving of \$270 and an extension of the company's current 10-day cooling-off period.

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