

Darwin

TEN years ago any Darwin people who wanted to study at university had to leave the Territory.

This was disastrous for our community – bright students opted against further studies, while the best brains in the Territory simply crossed the border never to return.

Now, more than a decade later, the brain drain is over thanks largely to the strong growth of the NT University.

Just this week, NTU vice-chancellor Ron McKay confirmed the university continues to record growth in the number of new students, particularly those outside of Darwin seeking access to external courses.

In 1996, there were 500 students enrolled off-campus – now there are 3164.

With second semester enrolments not yet completed, there are already 200 more students at NTU this year compared with last year.

The NTU can attribute much of its success to excellent student-teacher ratios which help encourage new enrolments and the building boom in the 1990s which has produced some of the best campus facilities in the country.

To mark a decade in the making, the NTU Foundation recently launched the 10th Anniversary Project to fund a new entrance parkland with impressive architectural, engineering and landscaping features.

Donations to the NTU Foundation will ensure that the Territory's university continues growing into the new millennium.

A new friend in Canberra

FORMER chief minister Shane Stone's likely appointment as Federal Liberal Party president can only be good news for the Territory.

The job of national president of any major political party is a position of considerable power and influence which Mr Stone should be able to exercise to the Territory's advantage.

But for some curious reason Chief Minister Denis Burke disagrees. Mr Burke says he is "uncomfortable" with the move.

But with the NT Budget heavily reliant on Commonwealth grants and the powers of our legislature subject to the whims of federal MPs, the NT needs as many friends as possible within the corridors of power in Canberra.

Mr Stone's close relationship with the Prime Minister, for example, should be something Mr Burke could be using to his advantage.

More than most, Mr Stone is adept in moving in federal circles, and his new appointment should bring many positives to the Territory.

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