

## IN BRIEF...

**Three boarders found**

THREE boarders disappeared from Wangetti College, between Cairns and Port Douglas, late yesterday afternoon, sparking a police search. School community liaison officer Peter Chrisfield said the girls returned to the school later that evening. Investigations are continuing.

**Student hit by truck**

A BOY was hit by a truck after getting off his school bus on a rural road at Mena Creek, southwest of Innisfail, about 4pm yesterday. The Grade 8 student, who was knocked unconscious, was taken to Cairns Base Hospital in a stable condition. The accident happened on Japoonvale Rd, near the intersection of Gibson Rd.

**Police find body**

POLICE believe a body found at a swimming spot, near Goldsborough, is that of a Gordonvale woman, 44. The body was found about 500m east of Ross and Locke, on the Mulgrave River, about 12pm yesterday. The woman was last seen on Tuesday, about 3.30pm. A search started about 8am yesterday. The woman's abandoned car was found at the site on Wednesday. Investigations into the cause of death will continue.

**Thieves target home**

ALCOHOL, an electronic game console and games and mobile phone were stolen from a Kanimbla house on Wednesday night. Thieves also took a lawnmower. Investigations are continuing.

**Alleged rapist in court**

AN ALLEGED child-rapist was charged in Cairns Magistrates' Court on Wednesday with two counts of rape and two of indecent treatment of a child. The man, 56, also faces drugs charges and was remanded in custody until April 4.



**Wreck:** Police and fire crews walk through the debris from the back of the semi-trailer after it jack-knifed (main) and (right) the truck driver in the back of an ambulance after the crash. The driver's injuries were treated at Innisfail hospital.

Pictures: JULIE LIGHTFOOT

# Driver escapes horror highway crash

A MOURILYAN woman ran for her life as a truck veered off the Bruce Highway and headed straight for her home yesterday afternoon.

"I heard screeching, breaks and wheels and when I got to the front door it was coming towards me so I bolted," the woman said last night.

Moments later she ran for the phone instead after seeing the prime mover had smashed into a culvert, jack-knifed and sheared the cabin off.

The truck driver crawled out of the smashed front windscreen, bleeding from his head and legs.

"He's one extremely lucky man - his door was on the ground, the

load was right up beside him and there wasn't much room to move in there," a fireman said.

The 44-year-old Brisbane man was taken to Innisfail hospital for treatment.

Police were yesterday investigating whether anything left on the road had caused the truckie to lose control of his rig.

The crash happened just south of Mourilyan in the rain and on a slight bend in an 80km zone.

Water-based paint and hydraulic oil containers, timber and other building materials were strewn more than 20m from the toppled truck.

The highway was not closed during the accident.

# We're tops in tourism

## \$1.5b spent in region

AUSSIE holidaymakers and business people spent a whopping \$1.5 billion in the Far North in 2006 to make the region Queensland's fastest growing holiday hot spot.

New figures revealed the Far North hosted an extra 323,000 people, a 26 per cent spike, to lead the state in domestic visitor growth.

Brisbane and the Gold Coast recorded just 1 and 2 per cent growth respectively.

The Sunshine Coast and the Whitsundays recorded negative growth of -12 and -2 per cent respectively.

The Tourism Research Australia report found more than 60 per cent of all visitors to the Far North were Queenslanders.

Tourism Minister Margaret Keech said tourists were also staying longer, with visitor nights by other Queenslanders up by 15 per cent.

"Holidaymakers and the visiting friends and relative market were two strong markets during this period," Mrs Keech said.

"There was also strong growth in

**Gavin King**

kingg@tcp.newsltd.com.au

interstate and intrastate visitors. "It is also great to see Queenslanders holidaying and investing in Queensland."

Mrs Keech said the jump in the number of Queensland visitor numbers was the result of effective marketing campaigns, increased airline capacity and discount airfares.

The outlook for domestic visitor numbers was also positive, with Mrs Keech confident the new "Where Else But Queensland?" campaign would be a hit with southern tourists.

"We cannot forecast visitor numbers but the trends are strong, with a 5.5 per cent yearly trend increase over four years which is the second best of all Queensland regions," she said.

"The Tropical North is a wonderful and diverse destination and there's no doubting its pulling capacity for tourists."

## Your life. Your style. Your 4WD.



Proud supporters of



**GRAND VITARA**

3 door, 1.6 litre 4 cyl  
from \$23,990\*

5 door, 2.0 litre 4 cyl  
from \$28,990\*

5 door, 2.7 litre V6  
from \$30,990\*

5 door, 2.7 litre V6  
Prestige leather model  
from \$36,990\*

• Constant AWD with centre limited slip differential • ABS with electronic brakeforce distribution (EBD) & brake assist • All round independent suspension • Dual airbags • New generation pedestrian protection - front bumper, bonnet, windscreen wipers, headlights PLUS ON THE 5 DOOR • Dash select 4WD with low range • Flat tow capability • Tow capacity 1850kg

CAIRNS Trinity Suzuki, 455 Mulgrave Rd Ph 4081 5000

**SUZUKI**  
Way of Life

www.suzukiqld.com.au

\*Prices exclude dealer delivery & statutory government charges. Metallic paint, alloy wheels, fog lights and automatic transmission are optional extras where applicable (excluding Grand Vitara Prestige).

923344sl

5AC941/B