

Truckie fined \$700 for drugs

A TULLY truck driver caught with methamphetamine has been fined \$700.

Wayne John Blair, 34, appeared in Cairns Magistrates' Court yesterday charged with possessing a dangerous drug and obstructing police.

The court heard Blair was driving a semi-trailer from Cairns to Tully on February 9, when he was stopped by police because the truck had Victorian number plates.

Prosecutor Constable Samantha Montague said the defendant told police he was looking for the vehicle's log book, but officers also noticed him picking up a black and grey film canister.

Blair then threw the canister into the long grass next to the road.

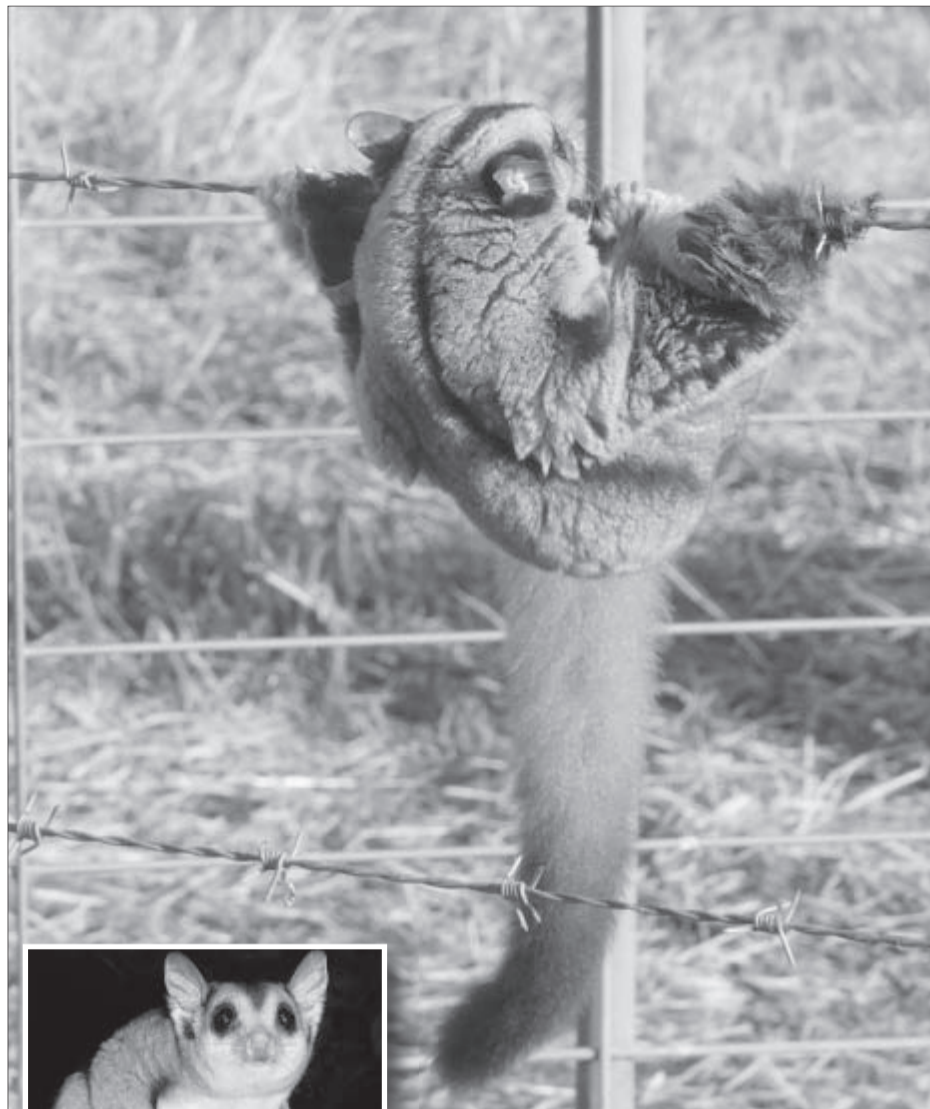
Constable Montague said it took police some time to find the canister, but when they opened it they found a white powder inside that was later identified as methamphetamine or speed.

The defendant told police he bought the drug in Cairns.

Defence solicitor Andrew McGinness said his client had an excellent work history and there was no suggestion that he consumed any speed that day.

Mr McGinness said Blair was not a habitual drug user and he co-operated fully with the police.

Magistrate Trevor Black did not record a conviction.



Rescue: Three mahogany gliders have been released to the wild after being rehabilitated. Picture: DARYL DICKSON

Gliders wing it on return to the wild

A TRIO of mahogany gliders has made a triumphant return to the skies after being grounded by barbed wire injuries nine months ago.

The tiny marsupials were yesterday released back into the wild at Girringun National Park near Cardwell, south of Cairns, by Environmental Protection Agency conservation officers.

They had all been rescued from barbed wire fences.

"Their super-elastic flying membranes between their legs were torn or punctured and it's taken a long time but they've grown back," a delighted Cardwell wildlife carer Daryl Dickson said.

The trio was released complete with radio collars yesterday so their progress could be tracked to help with future recovery and release efforts.

Conservation officer Mark Parsons said the marsupials would also be part of a wider study into

It's going to be wonderful to see these three realise they're free

— Daryl Dickson

how gliders crossed gaps in their habitat, months after specially designed crossing poles were built above the Bruce Highway at Corduroy Creek, south of Tully.

Too many gliders died on the top strand of barbed wire fences, Ms Dickson said.

"They don't see them (fences) at night and that's why we're encouraging property owners to use standard top wires and attach flagging tape," she said.

"It's going to be wonderful to see these three head up to the top of a tree and realise they're free."

Greener option better all round Call to share a ride, split cost

Caitriona Murtagh
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GET ready to ride – ride share, that is.

Eco-conscious Cairns resident Andrea McNamara has signed the city up to a national ride-sharing website and is calling on commuters to car pool to curb emissions and save at the bowser.

Drivers who log on to the Need a Ride website can now find a lift or offer passengers a spot in their car on trips between Cairns suburbs or as far afield as the Tableland and Cassowary Coast.

"It gets a lot of cars off the road," Ms McNamara said.

"Instead of four people driving cars, you've got four people sharing.

"It's the emissions of one car not four."

The site also helps calculate the cost of a journey and split expenses between passengers, usually less than a bus fare, Ms McNamara said.

And as unleaded fuel yesterday sold for about \$1.53 a litre around the city, she said with four people in the car, you are only paying a quarter of the cost.

"Instead of having \$50 a week in petrol, you'd have \$12.50," she said.

Ms McNamara, who already



Come along for the ride: Andrea McNamara wants Cairns to embrace the idea of car pooling to save costs and cut carbon emissions.

combines ridesharing on the school run with cycling to work, was optimistic the scheme would catch on.

"Habits change slowly, but with the petrol costs we've got now, they're habits we're prepared to change."

James Cook University energy expert Doug Goudie said ridesharing was one possible solution we're set to embrace as oil supplies dwindle, fuel prices skyrocket and carbon emissions reach critical mass.

"The assumptions of cheap freely available petrol is wrong,"

he said. "All of our urban planning was based on that assumption – we'll live in the Tableland or wherever and commute."

Working from home, signing on for eight day fortnights to reduce commutes by 20 per cent, cycling and relocating to be closer to school, work and play were all shaping up as solutions to the fossil fuel crunch, Dr Goudie said.

» Curious about car pooling? Check out www.needaride.com.au or visit the CAST stall at Envirofiesta, Little St Park, North Cairns on Saturday.

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