

Security icon Andy Price leaves huge legacy

How one man helped make Top End safer

Thomas McLean

It was a Friday night on Mitchell Street. A fight had erupted, and a broken bottle was coming for a young man's neck.

Andy Price, who was working in security, got the young man clear and took the glass himself — deep in the bicep, and bad enough for major surgery.

Yet, despite the injury, Andy never stopped going back.

"He was probably the most physically scarred person I've ever met in my life," his wife, Dani, said this week.

"Each and every one of those scars represents a kid, 18 to 25, that he stood in front of and defended. That is Andy. One hundred per cent."

Andy, who died suddenly this month aged 52, spent years building a safer Darwin.

He did it not through brute force, but through integrity, intelligence and a refusal to look away from what others preferred not to see.

"If I don't do it, then who will?" he would tell others.

Andy was a security professional, a private licensing inspector, a public order specialist, a de-escalation trainer, a mentor to young men in trouble and, according to those who knew him best, a "builder" who made people's lives better.

Dani first met Andy in 2003 in Fremantle, Western Australia. She was 17, working at a restaurant.

Andy worked at the nightclub around the corner from Dani and came in every Friday and ordered the same thing.

When things got out of hand at the restaurant on Saturday nights, he'd run down to help.

Dani and Andy briefly lost touch. Then, in 2007, they bumped into each other.

"We became very different — we started having coffee and that sort of thing," Dani said with a smile.

By 2008, they were together. They were partners for 18 years.

In 2012, they moved to Darwin to open Discovery, where they worked until about 2021.

Andy went on to join Neptune Security, help establish the Public Order Response Unit, and become what Dani says was the first-ever private licensing inspector in the Territory.

He was also the first civilian issued with OC spray before it was released to the public, Dani said.

His work was personal. Years spent in nightclubs had shown him the raw damage of alcohol. But what happened outside — Monday through Thursday on streets with no

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oversight and no safety net — drove him the most.

"Who was watching out for them?" Dani said. "That was his driving force. To start removing alcohol from the streets of Darwin."

She recalled the shift patrols after the alcohol harm reduction program began, coming across a two-year-old in the middle of the night, exhausted, nowhere to go, while both parents were drunk.

Andy "lost a lot of sleep over that," she said.

"Every single thing he's ever done has been developed from the concern and worry of others. It's never been about what could I be, what could I do. It was always: I didn't know this happened. I need to fix it."

Those who worked alongside him described a man who held himself to a high standard and uplifted others.

HospitalityNT remembered him as "a driving force in raising security standards, training, and safety across the Territory."

Notably, Andy's approach wasn't punitive.

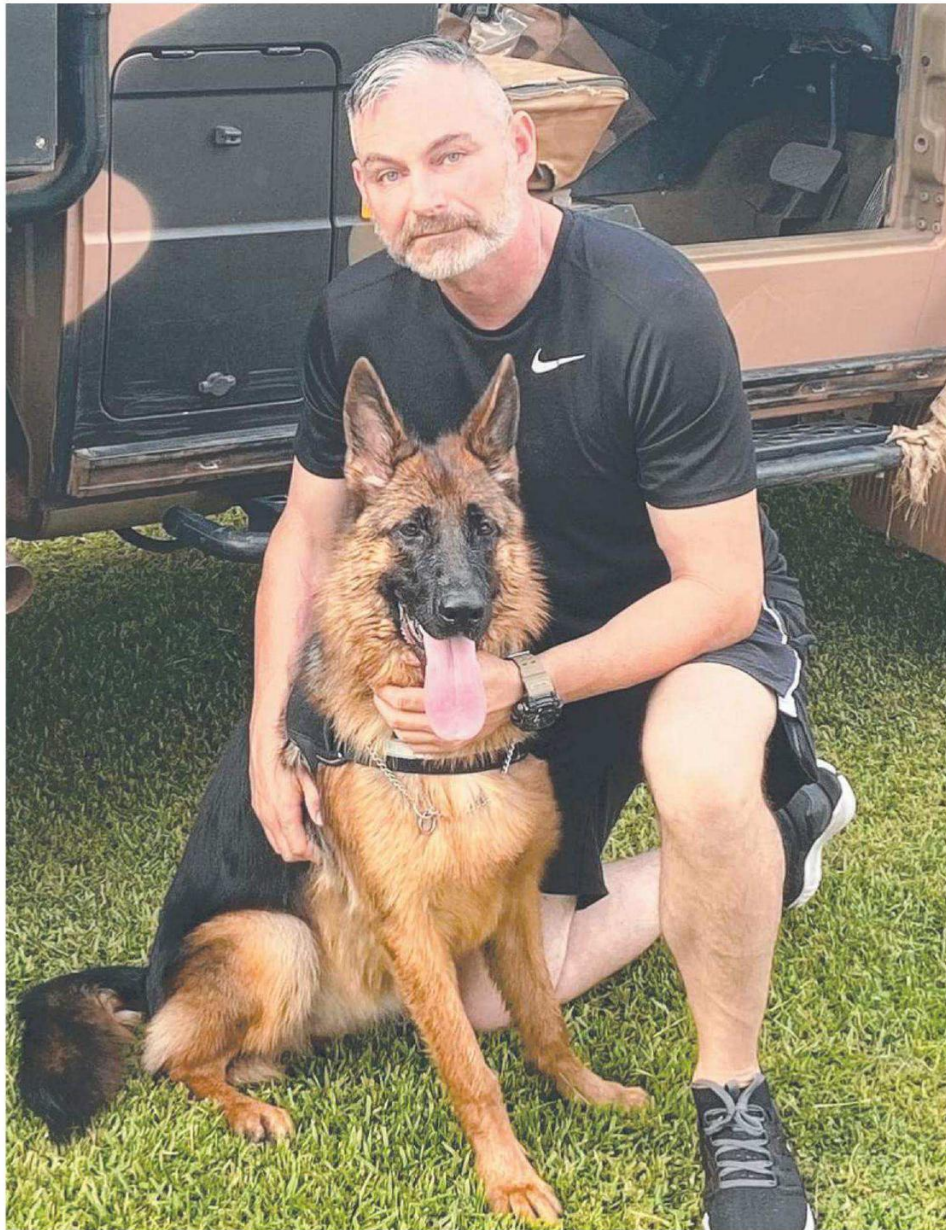
His most quoted line, Dani said, was: "99 per cent of the time, a bad incident is a good kid having a bad day."

Andy's philosophy came from personal experience. He didn't have someone to show him the way when he was young.

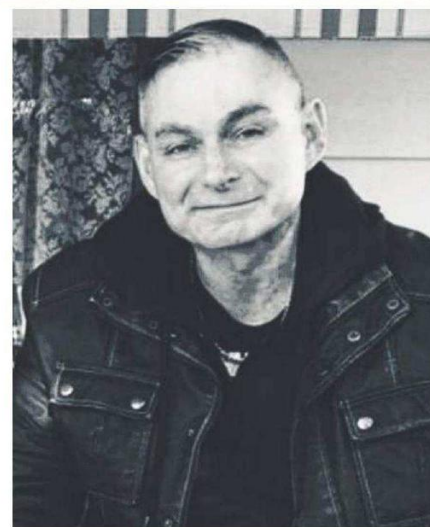
He made his mistakes, got hurt and learned the hard way. When he recognised that same pattern in other young men, he became the presence he'd never had.

In his final years, Andy turned his focus to teaching people how to avoid the fights he'd spent a lifetime managing.

With Personal Protection Strategies, he worked to translate 30 years of experience



Andy Price spent decades running towards danger, wanting to help whoever he could. Now, Darwin is mourning the security veteran who died earlier this month. Pictures: Supplied



into a framework for de-escalation.

"He spent such a long period of his life fighting, and protecting, and defending," Dani said. "And then devoted the last part of his time to teaching people how to prevent themselves from having to do that."

He was also working on training CCTV operators to identify pre-violence indicators through body language.

His collaborations extended to the NT Fight Series, building a professional fighting competition that gave Darwin athletes a stage of their own.

The police respected him, Dani said, because he had integrity and was honest.

It didn't matter if you were the police commissioner or the owner of a corner shop — to Andy, you were equal.

Away from work, Andy was a man who could not sit in silence.

He sang non-stop, proudly butchering the lyrics to the "girliest pop songs ever". He rhymed random phrases. He danced. He laughed loudly and always at himself first.

But most importantly, he loved his family.

He was, Dani said, protective of her "as a whole person — my happiness, my health, the whole lot."

"To say I admired him is the world's greatest understatement," she said.

"He was the best thing that ever happened to me."

Darwin will gather to remember him on Thursday, July 23, at the Darwin Ski Club from 2.30pm, with a wake to follow. All are welcome.

"I don't ever want anyone to forget him," Dani said, tears brimming. "He deserves to be remembered. He really does."

Darwin's new city plaza: Your say

Ryan Kirley

Darwin residents have just weeks to influence what their city's most significant new public gathering space will look like — and a sacred ancient tree sits at its heart.

Consultation is now open on the new Civic Centre Community Plaza.

Businesses, residents and visitors will have the opportunity to share their ideas on the facilities, features and amenities at the plaza during a six-week engagement period

that ends on August 28.

Once the Civic Centre is built, the old building will be demolished to make way for the new community plaza with the aim of creating a vibrant, welcoming place for people to gather for community and business activities.

Lord Mayor Peter Styles said the project created a unique opportunity for people to shape an important space for future generations.

"The Civic Centre Community Plaza will become one of Darwin's key public gathering places, and we want the community to tell us what will make it a space they are proud to use and enjoy," Mr Styles said.

"Whether it's somewhere to meet friends, attend events, relax in the shade or simply spend time in the city, this is an opportunity for the community to help influence the vision for the plaza."

At the heart of the future plaza is the Galamarrma, the Tree of Knowledge, a place of deep cultural significance.

The City of Darwin has committed to preserving the tree and integrating it into the design as a centrepiece.

Sought after ideas will explain how the space can welcome everyone and be easy to access and enjoy, connect naturally with the city around it, provide opportunities for play, learning and interaction and reflect Darwin's unique tropical lifestyle.

The community can get involved by completing the online survey via Engage Darwin, picking up a hard copy survey from the Civic Centre or City of Darwin libraries, or visiting one of the engagement locations being held across the consultation period.

The engagement team will be at the following events:

- Royal Darwin Show (July 23-25)
- Smith Street Mall (July 30)
- Parap Village Markets (August 8)
- Darwin Festival (August 14)
- Casuarina Square (August 16)
- Mindil Beach Sunset Markets (August 20)
- Malak Community Markets (August 22)