



### Robyn LAMBLEY MLA *Member for* ARALUEN

#### Welcome

#### Dear Residents,

The Winter months in Central Australia bring us many cherished events, not least the Alice Springs Show.

The first Show was held in 1960 on Anzac Oval. It later moved to Traeger Avenue and in 1980 found its home at Blatherskite Park.

The Alice Springs Show Society do an amazing job at pulling together this enormous two day event.

Parliament is currently in recess for a month, returning next for one week at the end of July 2023.

With less than 14 months until the August 2024 NT General Election, Territorians will see an inevitable increase in political activity and campaigning from now on. The current Labor Government has been in power since 2016. This election will be a close competition with law and order and cost of living pressures being front of mind for most voters.

In the meantime, the Araluen Electorate Office and myself are here to help you in any way we can.

Call us on 89 51 5588. If you wish to receive all editions of the Araluen News, just send an email to:  
[Electorate.Araluen@nt.gov.au](mailto:Electorate.Araluen@nt.gov.au)

#### What will Government deliver Alice Springs by the end of 2023

**In politics it is always better to under promise and over delivery!**

**This is a schedule of work promised by Government to be completed or commenced in 2023.**

#### Completion in 2023:

- The CBD street works on Bath St, Gregory Tce, Hartley St and Parsons St.
- The Hospital accommodation complex next to the 24 Hour Store on Todd Street. This is privately owned but will be leased by the NTG for 15 years.
- The Akeyulerre Healing & Cultural Centre, next to the Guide Hall. The NTG provided \$6m to this project in 2018.



#### Commencement in 2023:

- Clear Anzac Oval to build the National Aboriginal Art Gallery
- New Renal Unit at the Alice Springs Hospital. This was meant to be a general hospital outpatient unit funded \$25m by the federal Government in 2019.
- The new Tourism Central Australia building at the base of Anzac Hill
- Allocation of \$250m for community safety promised by the Federal Government in February 2023
- \$5.6 million for the Watarrka Track, a new outback hiking experience, with construction anticipated later in 2023

#### Outstanding projects:

- The National Aboriginal Art Gallery announced in 2016
- The National Aboriginal Cultural centre announced in 2016
- Expansion of Flood Mitigation outstanding since 2017
- The CBD revitalisation project announced in 2017 and funded \$20m – Kwatja Water Park, cooling and greening initiatives.
- New Arumbera Industrial Estate (behind the Yirara Lutheran College) announced in 2021
- New Rugby Union and League Fields. Plans to move Rugby and League from Anzac Oval have been ongoing since 2022

#### Alice Springs Show - 7 & 8 July



Alice Springs Show in the 1960's



Alice Springs Show in the 1980's



Alice Springs Show in 2022

# Revelations from Budget Estimates 2023

## What is Budget Estimates?

Every year the Budget Estimates Committee sits for two weeks to thoroughly question Ministers one by one on their portfolios and the proposed spending of each government department in the upcoming financial year.

Budget Estimates is a vital process for scrutiny of spending and holding governments accountable for their use of tax payer monies.

The Estimates Committee is traditionally composed of a majority of Opposition and Independent Members of Parliament, however in recent years this has been changed to include a preponderance of government Members. This is just one more move by the current NT Labour Government to diminish democracy in the Territory.

It is always interesting grilling the Ministers on their portfolios, and every year some surprising facts and figures come to light.

One such surprise was that certain Members of Parliament used tax payer funds to pay for their fuel cards whilst on holidays interstate! Some of the important points raised have been highlighted in the following columns.

## Treasurer

The net debt of the NT has grown to over **\$10 BILLION** and the cost of servicing that debt is **\$1.3 million PER DAY**

Nicole Manison, as Treasurer from 2016-2020, has acknowledged her responsibility for creating the highest level of debt in Territory history

The NT has the lowest economic growth in the country

The Treasurer refused to give out any information on the pay out of ex-Commissioner Chalker

The NT Public Service has been reduced by 495 in the last year down to 22,040

During COVID the government spent \$8 billion, but none of this was spent on infrastructure in Alice Springs

## Health

The Minister for Health is continuing to blame the COVID pandemic for issues within the health sector workforce

There is a shortfall of more than 140 nursing and midwife positions in Central Australia

There are 7376 people employed in the Health service across the NT, including 1029 doctors

Nursing staff in Alice Springs describe feeling burned out, over worked and under valued, with reports saying the Hospital was running with only 50% of nursing numbers

In 2023 more than 1100 health service staff have resigned from the sector

A new morgue is being built to be culturally appropriate for Aboriginal people at a cost of \$23 million

## Education

NT Public Schools have 30,000 students

NT School have the lowest attendance records in the country, which the Minister attributed to poverty and parents taking their kids out of school

School attendance has improved by a whopping 0.6% compared to last year

In 22/23 there were 28 staff injuries recorded, 1381 students suspended and 8 incidents involving edged weapons in schools

NT Schools have \$140million sitting in the bank, with only \$20million allocated to particular projects

There is a huge shortage of School Counsellors in NT Schools, with over a quarter of positions unfilled

## Population

The government is hoping to have 300,000 residents in the NT by 2023. It currently sits at 245,000

The NT is hoping to attract 10,000 international students by 2025, which is hoped to boost our slow population growth

## Housing

The NT has the highest rate of homelessness in the country, more than 12 times the national average

The NTG is "well placed" to build an additional 157 new remote houses next year

Last year the NTG wrote off \$69.7 million in remote housing debt, and in just 9 months this year has accumulated an additional \$6.8 million in unpaid rent debt

Nearly \$1.07 million has been allocated to address the shocking state of roads in the 17 Town Camps around Alice Springs

This year the NTG spent a staggering \$44million on repairs and maintenance on Public Houses

## Tourism

Crime is not a factor impacting the tourism industry, according to the Minister.

The tourism industry employs 6800 people across the Northern Territory

Half the revenue from the Parks Passes has been given to Land Councils

\$2.2million has been generated by the new camping fees in the NT

Minister Manison has not admitted that crime plays any part in the decline of tourist numbers to the Territory

## ICAC

The Independent Commissioner Against Corruption ("ICAC") receives more than 300 referrals each year

The ICAC is expected to release an additional 3 reports before the end of the year on allegations of corruption or misconduct

ICAC is operating with a 20% staff shortage

Despite a statement from the ICAC Commissioner that his budget had been reduced, the Chief Minister denied a reduction in budgeted funds



# Revelations from Budget Estimates 2023

## Energy

There are 2 large scale solar farms at Batchelor and Manton still unconnected to the grid after more than 3 years

The NTG Home and Business Battery Scheme offers \$5000 per household or business, down from \$6000 last year

Jacana has 90% of the energy market in the NT, the other 10% being held by Rimfire Energy

The Ron Goodin Power Plant in Alice Springs was due to be decommissioned 10 years ago, but is still used as a backup

Power and Water will increase their revenue by \$30.388 million in 2023/24, meaning higher electricity bills for Territorians

## Gas Industry

Gas production at the Beetaloo Basin will commence late this year or early next year

The Government has yet to implement all the recommendations of the Pepper Inquiry into Fracking

The Minister said that Traditional Owners have not been resistant to fracking the Beetaloo Basin

The government has stated that they will not undertake fracking outside of the Beetaloo Basin

## Economy

Lifting the cap on taxi licenses was promised in 2017, but this has been pushed back to 2026 as there is "no demand for taxi licenses" according to the Minister.

The cost for most infrastructure projects in the NT has increased by 30% due to costs of labour and resources

## NTEC

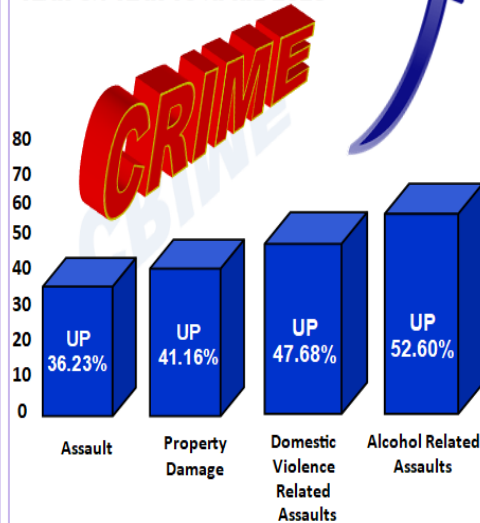
The NT Electoral Commission has not had a permanent office in Alice Springs since 2019, but will be establishing one soon in preparation of the upcoming referendum

The last two by-elections, for Fannie Bay and Arafura, cost a combined \$322,000 of tax payer funds

## Crime Statistics

### NT CRIME STATISTICS

**ALICE SPRINGS**  
**YEAR ON YEAR TO APRIL 2023\***



\*Statistics taken from NT Police, Fire & Emergency website

Unfortunately crime continues to rise across many categories of offending in Alice Springs, as can be seen by the statistics to the year ending April 2023.

The Chief Minister refused to acknowledge responsibility for the soaring rates of alcohol crime in the wake of allowing alcohol restrictions to end in across the Territory in June last year

Our police do a fantastic job, but they can sometimes be hampered by ineffectual policies, such as the weakened presumptions against Bail introduced last year, which often quickly sees offenders back on the streets.

## Howard Springs

For weeks the Chief Minister refused to admit that any criminal damage had occurred, repeatedly saying it was just "wear and tear" but is now "substantial and unacceptable".

265 King sized single mattresses need to be replaced, over \$10,000 was spent to replace misused fire extinguishers, 673 windows were damaged, costing \$300,000 to replace

Additional damage was made to fences, locks, plumbing and fire extinguishers and no charges have been laid for this damage

## Crime and Police

Minister for Police dismissed a NT Police Association survey indicating officers feel undervalued and overworked, saying this survey was "outdated"

Minister for Police also said that the impacts of crime in Alice Springs had been exaggerated, just before the Prime Minister was forced to intervene in an effort to reduce the devastating impact to the community

Last year 132 people were allowed on bail whilst wearing electronic monitoring devices, 127 of these being under 18 years old

There is a large back log of victim of crimes applications, with \$3.8million in compensation being paid out last year

Development of a knife crime strategy is underway, to be completed by August; there have been 10 stabbings in the last few weeks

There is \$116 million in fines outstanding, up by \$2million from last year  
The cost of the failed prosecution of the Children's Commissioner Colleen Gwynne was \$263,000

The cost of the Wadeye riots from 2022 is \$11.4 million

The NT Vehicle Fleet had 12 cars damaged last year, costing \$635,000

## Youth Detention

The upgrade to the Alice Springs Youth Detention Facility will cost \$26million and is said to be completed by the end of the year.

The Holtze Youth Detention Centre was expected to be completed at a cost of \$55million, but has been blown out to over \$90 million

## Prisons

On average prisoners are out of their cells for 11.7 hours each day

There are 2039 people in prison in the NT, 1270 in Darwin, 654 in Alice Springs and 73 in Barkly, 49 in Batchelor and 40 in Darwin Watch Houses

The original capacity design for the Alice Springs prison was only 476 and is now massively overcrowded

## Denial Doesn't Change the Facts

Oh the joys of Budget Estimates Hearings.

This year we were treated to a Shakespearean-like performance of "The Elephant in the Room" with a star studded cast of senior NT Ministers.

Credit goes to Ministers Manison, Lawler, Worden and Fyles for stealing the show. The Fawcett Towers famous episode "Don't Mention the War" had nothing on this comedy of errors over the last fortnight. The production indulged a kaleidoscope of themes you would expect in any political high drama including "Never let the truth get on the way of a true story" and "Deny! Deny! Deny!".

The elephant in the room was of course the subject of crime.

One by one Ministers told us that crime is not the enormous problem we all know it to be.

The Treasurer, Eva Lawler, told us our sluggish economy had nothing to do with crime. She maintained it was impossible to measure the cost of crime, despite the fact that other Australian governments seem to do it quite effectively. Lawler even went as far as to berate the shadow Minister for Education, Jo Hersey, for daring to ask questions on the impact of crime on schools, students and education outcomes.

Our Tourism Minister, Nicole Manison, was quick to relegate crime to the back bench. She told us that crime was only a minor factor in the significant slump in tourism this year and that the fall in tourism numbers is due to "cost of living pressures".

This is despite the fact that just a few hours north of Darwin, millions of Australians are literally pouring into Bali.

The Minister for Police, Kate Worden, predictably told us that crime has been universally exaggerated. She attempted to convince us that at the peak of the "crime crisis" in Central Australia in January the situation wasn't as bad as locals knew it to be, but were actually improving.

The theatre reached a crescendo in the second week of Estimates when the Chief Minister delivered a staggering Prima Donna performance. Fyles sat looking stately, expressionless, with her lips pierced tightly shut and audaciously refused to respond to the barrage of questions on crime from the Opposition.

Gobsmacked in disbelief we were subjected to this fantasy world the Government had concocted, a deliberate show of deceit and distortion for some warped political agenda. Apparently it has all been one big storm in a teacup. There is nothing to see here,

according to our leaders.

The severity of crime across the NT is a figment of our imagination, a perceptual distortion.

Well Ministers, tell that to the victims, family and friends of those who have been murdered, maimed and traumatised by brutal acts of violence in recent times.

Denying the extent and seriousness of crime is pathological and adds to the suffering of people. There can only be a few reasons why the Fyles Government are taking this smoke and mirrors approach to crime.

Firstly, for the Government to acknowledge the problem of crime is to accept responsibility. This requires a level of maturity and wisdom obviously lacking in the psyche of this Labor leadership group.

And secondly, denying the severity of crime is a political manoeuvre to avoid alienating certain people and communities. We all know NT Elections are usually won or lost on a handful of votes. The next NT General Election is in August 2024, just months away. This was a glimpse into the NT Labor's 2024 Election campaign strategy.

For a Government to distort and deny crime is paramount to criminal behaviour itself. It is an extremely dangerous and destructive tactic for any political party to adopt.

Demeaning and belittling the experience of so many Territorians whose lives have been damaged and destroyed by crime is unforgivable, unconscionable.

Whilst I can make light of the histrionics we were treated to by the Government during Budget Estimates Hearings, we were seriously deceived by our leaders. This orchestrated denial of crime was completely out of sync with the experiences of ordinary Territorians.

The moment in Estimates when I realised just how deeply in trouble we are was during a flurry of yelling and high emotion over the Police Minister's denial of crime being particularly bad in Alice Springs. At that point I asked Minister Worden, who was seated close to me, "then why did the Prime Minister come to Alice Springs in January". She shrugged her shoulders, raised her eyebrows and mouthed "I don't know". This unforgettable interaction was not recorded by Hansard, but it left me cold.

Territorians are in more trouble than they ever realised under a Labor Government that is perversely intent on twisting the narrative of crime to serve their own political ends.

## Community Events



**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

**Old Timers Traeger Museum**

1 day a week or fortnight

Museum to open 7 days a week

April to end October

2pm - 4pm

Contact: Margaret Opie

0428 714 128



Alice Springs  
**SENIORS EXPO**

CONNECTING COMMUNITY

FREE: entry refreshments  
stalls entertainment  
raffles demos workshops

Tuesday 22 August, 10am to 2pm

Alice Springs Convention Centre,  
93 Barrett Dr, Alice Springs



**RED CENTRE NATS** 1-3 SEPT 2023

IN ASSOCIATION WITH SUMMERNATS



**THE CentralianToday**

**The local newspaper  
is coming back for  
Central Australia!**

First edition of the new weekly newspaper  
based in Alice Springs on sale late August.

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