



ARALUEN NEWS

August 2026

Robyn LAMBLEY MLA

Member for **ARALUEN**

Welcome

Dear Residents

The July sittings of Parliament (21–22–23 July) were only three days but proved dramatic and historic. The controversial Child Protection Bill passed on the first day. The new Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill was introduced on the Thursday. This edition of Araluen News will be heavily devoted to this very important Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill 2026.

Parliament also revealed something significant for Alice Springs residents: a race is emerging in the NT for the next new hospital. Most locals will know I have been fighting for a new Alice Springs Hospital for over a decade - moving multiple motions in Parliament and lobbying hard for our cause. Now there is a strong bid from Darwin, following water damage to the old core of Royal Darwin Hospital earlier this year, and from Katherine, after the February flood event cut off their hospital.

The race is on.

Every NT hospital has an old, antiquated core well past its used-by date. The question for Alice Springs is whether we want a new hospital enough to fight for it against other NT centres. I want to hear from you - because unless this is a whole-of-community response, we will not win against a louder and bigger Darwin lobby.

What I love about this time of year in Alice Springs is everything!

Winter really is the best time to be in Alice Springs - breathing the cleanest air in the country, under the bluest sky, with an infinite chandelier of stars at night and enjoying the most wonderful landscape. We are also spoilt by the fantastic events and attractions on offer during winter.

I hope you can all make the most of what's left of the cooler months and appreciate just how lucky we are.



15 August 2026



My team: I'm thrilled to introduce Stephanie Gysen (L) Electorate Officer and Debbie McIntyre Day (R) as Assistant Electorate Officer for Araluen.

Voluntary Assisted Dying returns to the Territory

The Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill 2026

On Thursday 23 July 2026, the NT Attorney-General, Marie-Clare Boothby, introduced the *Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill 2026* into the NT Legislative Assembly. The Bill is flagged for debate during the August 2026 sittings of Parliament (25 to 27 August). Although this will be a conscience vote, the CLP Government has indicated the Bill will pass on their numbers, regardless of the debate and apparently what anyone else thinks. This is a long awaited, highly controversial and important piece of legislation for Territorians.

The Bill would restore a legal right to voluntary assisted dying in the Northern Territory, 31 years after the Territory became the first jurisdiction in the world to legislate in this area, in February 1995, before the Commonwealth overrode that law in 1997. The Commonwealth restored our power to legislate in 2022. The NT is currently the only Australian jurisdiction without voluntary assisted dying laws.

The Bill follows a 2025 inquiry by the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Parliamentary Committee, which reported in September 2025 after more than 400 submissions and 13 public hearings across 11 regions. A NT "Expert Panel" also undertook an inquiry in 2024, under the former Labor Government. These inquiries have formed the basis for much of the debate underpinning this Bill.

Full implementation of these laws will be within 18 months, with a mandatory review of the legislation three years after commencement. A broader analysis of this Bill is on Page 2.

I have been on the public record for many years expressing my personal concerns about aspects of Voluntary Assisted Dying. However, I will not be standing in the way of Territorians having the same access to VAD that all other Australians now have.

The implementation of these laws will be critical in addressing the sensitivities and ethical dilemmas faced by professionals working in this space, plus the safety and respect of people with a terminal illness.

Changes to Container Deposits

From 1 July, the Northern Territory's Container Deposit Scheme has been extended.

Wine and spirit bottles, plain milk containers (including long-life), and larger juice and flavoured milk bottles are now all eligible for the 10c refund - any beverage container up to 3 litres is covered.

Previously, plain milk and wine/spirit bottles were left out of the scheme (except wine and spirits, that were accepted directly at ASTC), meaning they went straight to landfill or the recycling bin instead of earning a refund. That's now changed.

- Local depots take the new container types the same way as existing eligible containers
- Containers must be clean, empty and lid-free
- Sort by material type (glass, plastic, cans) to speed things up at the depot

- Containers need to have been bought in the NT after 3 January 2012
- Returning more than 1,500 containers in a 48-hour period requires a signed declaration confirming they were purchased in the NT
- Some bottles will not have the latest labelling for the CDS but can still be deposited for 10c

NT CDS EXPANSION

Containers up to 3L included from July 2026



Wine • Spirits • Milk • More

How the NT's VAD laws will differ from other States

Every Australian jurisdiction now has voluntary assisted dying laws that converge on the "Australian model": an adult resident with decision-making capacity, suffering intolerably from an advanced and progressive condition, assessed by two independent practitioners, with an oversight board and conscientious objection protections. The NT Bill, introduced 23 July, follows this model closely, with differences concentrated in two areas likely to dominate the August debate.

Who can raise VAD. Under the Bill, the patient must raise VAD first, a doctor cannot initiate the conversation, though once raised, all options can be discussed. This aligns the NT with Victoria and South Australia. The more recent laws, in WA, Tasmania, Queensland, NSW and the ACT, allow practitioners to raise it, provided other

options including palliative care are also presented. The Expert Panel, the 2025 Parliamentary Committee Inquiry, and NT Health all recommended the Territory adopt that approach. The Government has not. Critics call the restriction a "gag clause"; the Attorney-General disputes that framing, saying the safeguard ensures the decision is unmistakably the patient's own.

Prognosis timeframe. The Bill requires a condition expected to cause death within 12 months. Victoria, WA, Tasmania, SA and NSW use six months, extended to 12 for neurodegenerative conditions; Queensland uses 12 months across the board; the ACT sets no timeframe. The 2024 Expert Panel recommended 12 months, but the 2025 Parliamentary Committee Inquiry recommended no timeframe at all, citing the

unreliability of prognosis. The Bill follows the Expert Panel rather than the Committee.

A national first. The Review Board would be chaired by the Chief Health Officer, a structure the 2025 Parliamentary Committee Inquiry called a significant departure from every other jurisdiction, justified on the basis that it lets the board draw on existing statutory powers rather than build new ones.

NT-specific provisions. The formal second request may be made by video recording, using Telehealth, as well as in writing, reflecting feedback from remote communities favouring consent that is seen and heard rather than signed. The Chief Health Officer may also exempt a person from the 12-month residency requirement where they have a substantial connection to the Territory, or live near the border and receive treatment here.

How many Territorians will use VAD and how much will it cost?

It is reasonable to ask how many people we are talking about. No official projection has been published for the NT. What follows is my own estimate, drawn from what has happened in the states.

Voluntary assisted dying accounts for a small share of all deaths wherever it operates. Victoria's Review Board reported 0.85 per cent of all deaths in 2024–25. Nationally the figure is closer to 2 per cent, including around 5 per cent of cancer deaths and roughly one in three motor neurone disease deaths.

The Territory records somewhere in the order of 1,200 deaths a year. Applying those rates gives a range of about 10 to 25 deaths annually once a service is fully established, with fewer in the first year or two, since every jurisdiction has taken three to five years to reach steady numbers. The more useful figure for planning is requests, not deaths. In its first seven

months New South Wales received 1,141 requests, and 398 people ended their lives using VAD. Victoria received 837 requests in 2024–25, and 171 applicants died before a permit was issued. Roughly three people begin the process for everyone who completes it. Each of those requests still requires two independent medical assessments. On that basis the Territory might expect 30 to 70 first requests a year. The typical applicant nationally is in their seventies, has terminal cancer, and is already receiving palliative care, more than 80 per cent are. That profile is less common here. The Territory population is younger, and a large proportion of Territory deaths occur earlier and from chronic disease.

Several remote communities told the 2025 Parliament Committee plainly that they would not want it for themselves, while supporting the right of others to choose.

Because most applicants elsewhere come through palliative care, and palliative care in the Territory is thinly stretched, the main pathway is narrower here than anywhere else in the country. Ten to twenty-five people a year sounds negligible. It is not, in resourcing terms. A review board, a pharmacy service, care navigators, accredited interpreters and a trained practitioner network all have to exist whether they serve twelve people or two hundred, and here they must cover 1.42 million square kilometres.

Voluntary assisted dying will not be expensive by the standards of a health budget. The risk is subtler: that its cost is absorbed within existing funding rather than added to it, in a system already struggling to deliver basic services across the Territory. The Government has published no costing and made no commitment to new money. That is what should be pressed in August when the Bill is debated in Parliament.

How will Voluntary Assisted Dying be delivered in the NT?

The Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill does not say how the service would be delivered. That was deliberate: the 2025 Parliament Inquiry recommended the legislation set the framework and leave the model to implementation. The NT Department of Health has indicated it will build a decentralised service over the 18-month implementation period. For Central Australians the model matters more than almost anything in the Bill. A right you cannot practically exercise from all corners of the Territory is not much of a right.

The 2024 Expert Panel, established under the former Labor Government, recommended a centralised service: a stand-alone team of practitioners, pharmacists and care navigators, separate from NT Health facilities. It would concentrate scarce expertise, give families one point of contact and deliver consistency across the Territory. The AMA NT supported it. The 2025 Parliament Inquiry, reporting to this CLP Government, disagreed.

It recommended a decentralised model delivered through existing public and private services, including GPs. The argument is relationships. The committee heard repeatedly that mistrust of health services is a serious barrier for Aboriginal Territorians, and that care delivered by people communities already know is more likely to be used. It also lets the service grow as demand emerges.

Neither model escapes the Territory's constraints. We have 262,000 people across 1.42 million square kilometres, the highest burden of disease in the country, and a health workforce around 22 per cent smaller than it needs to be. A centralised team still has to reach Borroloola in the Wet. A decentralised one still depends on practitioners already stretched thin.

No costing has been published, which is worth noting as the Bill goes to debate. Elsewhere, governments fund the non-medical machinery: care navigators, and

training. Doctors in private practice are generally not funded to participate. The Expert Panel accepted a centralised service would cost more.

Two Territory costs deserve attention. Accredited interpreters would be needed at every stage, no small item across 200 languages. And demand for palliative care rises sharply wherever voluntary assisted dying commences, while NT Health has described palliative care here as woefully insufficient.

The choice between models is a funding question wearing different clothes. A decentralised service is cheaper to establish, but works only if the navigators, interpreters, training and pharmacy arrangements behind it are resourced. Without them it risks becoming a service that exists on paper in Darwin and other larger centres and nowhere else. That will not be settled in August, but in budgets over the 18 months that follow.

Residents of Bonanni Circuit went to ABC Alice Springs in May 2026 with a question their council and the planning department had not answered: how did five commercial disability care facilities come to be approved in a single residential street? The NT Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, Josh Burgoyne, was interviewed by Stewart Brash on 29 May. His answer was, in short, that all five are lawful.

There is currently no limit anywhere in the NT on how many NDIS supported accommodation homes may be established in one street or one suburb. None. The planning scheme does not contemplate the question. That means an approval that looks unreasonable to the people living around it can still be entirely correct in law. The Minister acknowledged the planning advice he had received is contested, but said it is binding on him. The gap is wider than new builds. A provider can also buy or rent an existing house and convert it to supported accommodation, and there are no controls

on that either. So a street can change character without a single development application being lodged. This is not an argument about whether Territorians with disability should live in ordinary suburban streets. They should, and the whole point of supported independent living is that it happens in the community rather than in institutions. It is an argument about concentration and scale. Five commercial facilities in one short street brings a volume of staff vehicles, shift changes, support workers and service deliveries that no residential street was designed to absorb - and Bonanni Circuit's roads are narrow. The residents I have spoken with are not objecting to their neighbours. They are objecting to a planning framework that never asked the density question.

The Minister said construction already underway cannot be stopped without the Government exposing itself to liability for the providers' losses. He has directed parking and compliance matters to the Town Council,

which is responsible for enforcing the conditions attached to the approvals. And he has committed to working with his department on future legislative change, potentially including density limits. That is welcome, but it offers nothing to the people living on Bonanni Circuit now. The same is true in many other suburbs throughout the NT where the identical problem has emerged.

What I will be pursuing

I have written to Minister Burgoyne and will be pursuing three things: A firm timeframe for the promised density controls, rather than an open-ended commitment. Controls that capture conversions of existing dwellings, not just new developments. And genuine consultation with affected residents before any scheme amendment is drafted, rather than after. NDIS investment has grown quickly and that is a good thing. Our planning rules simply have not kept up. If you are seeing the same issue in your street, I would like to hear from you. Email our office with details: electorate.araluen@nt.gov.au

Alice Springs Town Council: Essential versus Discretionary Spending

Like household budgets, Alice Springs Town Council (Council) spending falls into two categories: essential and discretionary. In a household, essential spending covers bread, milk and toilet paper. For Council, it means repairing and maintaining roads, footpaths and amenities. Essential expenditure comes before all else.

Ratepayers fund most of Council spending, with around 80 per cent of revenue coming from rates and service charges. Council rates have outpaced wage growth and CPI over the past 5 years. How can this be justified? And how much of this revenue goes to essential versus optional spending?

Non-discretionary, or essential, spending is what Council is legally required to fund to operate lawfully and safely. That includes roads, waste collection and the Regional Waste Management Facility, rates administration and animal management; employee costs; asset renewal and maintenance; depreciation, amortisation and

loan obligations; compliance costs; and insurance and risk management.

Discretionary spending is everything else, money Council chooses to spend rather than money it is required to spend. This includes community events; in-kind support and sponsorships for outside groups; community and cultural grants programs; cultural funding tied to the Araluen Arts Centre collection; and uncommitted strategic project funding.

These are the ice cream and biscuits of the shopping list, things we all love, but can only afford in moderation. As a former Alice Springs Town Councillor (2004 to 2008), I would argue discretionary spending has at least doubled over the past 10 to 15 years. The real issue is transparency and priority. Ratepayers are entitled to expect more as they pay more. Most, if they had to choose, would rather see well-kept verges, roads, streets and amenities. Every dollar spent on discretionary programs is a dollar not going

toward fixing roads like Barrett Drive, still unrepaired five months after the mid February flood, or basic asset maintenance across town. Council staff providing endless in-kind support is at the cost of doing the essential work needed to make our town look fabulous. It is a vexed question, but elected members are charged with making difficult, responsible decisions with public money.

Council needs to publish a clear breakdown of discretionary versus essential spending, so every ratepayer can see exactly where their rising rates go and hold Council properly to account.

FACT: Under Section 222(1)(g) of the *Northern Territory Local Government Act 2019*, any land used for non-commercial purposes by a registered primary Public Benevolent Institutions (PBIs) or public charity is automatically exempt from paying rates across the NT. There are dozens of organisations registered as PBIs in Alice Springs spanning across Aboriginal healthcare, youth housing, legal aid, social services, and community support. Some PBIs are very big, powerful organisations such as Tangentyere and Congress.



Alice Springs Show, Day 2. Keeping warm and dry with Rachael Mashford. Photo: Gerry Lyons/Show

Gap Youth Centre Update

Plans are well under way to build a new Gap Youth Centre at their current Gap Road site, funded by \$20 million in Australian Government funding announced in October 2022. Progress has been slow but the end result should be worthwhile. The service has now moved into a temporary, Australian Government funded fit-out at 55A Gap Road (the old Lutheran Care offices) from 27 July 2026 and will operate there until this new Centre is built.

The NT Government Consent Authority approved the new centre in May 2026. Stage 1 of the project goes out to tender in August 2026, with demolition before the years end, and construction starts with Stage 2 in early 2027, idealing finishing in time for the Centre's 50th anniversary that year. A walk-through video is available on the Gap Youth & Community AC Facebook page or on YouTube:

[Gap Youth Centre - Walkthrough](#)

Crime Statistics

Comparing the year ending 31 May 2026 to year ending 31 May 2025 indicates a continuing fall in reported crime in Alice Springs. Good news!

Alice Springs Crime Statistics

Year to May 2025 compared to Year to May 2026

Crime	Year to May 2025	Year to May 2026	↑/↓
Crime Against the Person			
Homicide & Related Offences	3	1	+ 67%
Assault - Total	2306	1896	+ 18%
Assault - Sexual	140	111	+ 21%
Other acts endangering persons	296	309	+ 4%
Crime against the person totals	2745	2317	+ 16%
Crime Against Property			
Domestic Break Ins (including attempted)	1088	676	+ 38%
Commercial Break Ins (including attempted)	324	169	+ 48%
Motor Vehicle Theft	180	90	+ 50%
Theft other than MV	1727	1252	+ 28%
Property Damage	2925	1897	+ 35%
Crime against property totals	6244	4084	+ 35%

The offence data was extracted from NT Police SerPro system 17/07/2026

Bills Passed in July 2026

Youth Justice and Criminal Code Amendment Act 2026

The *Youth Justice and Criminal Code Amendment Act 2026* introduced several changes to the Territory's youth justice laws, aimed at providing clearer legal powers for police and corrections staff while maintaining safeguards for young people.

The Act creates a new framework allowing police to conduct protected interviews with young people they reasonably believe have committed, or have information about, an offence. Young people would continue to have important legal protections, including the right to silence, access to legal representation and the presence of a support person during interviews.

The Act also establishes a legal framework for Intake and Transfer Facilities, allowing young people to be temporarily accommodated when they cannot be immediately transported to a youth detention centre. In addition, Corrections Officers would receive the same legal protections under the Criminal Code as police and other frontline emergency workers, meaning assaults against them would be dealt with under the same provisions. This Bill was passed into law on 22 July.

Consumer Affairs and Essential Goods and Services Legislation Amendment Act 2026

Passed by the Legislative Assembly on 23 July 2026, the Consumer Affairs and Essential Goods and Services Legislation Amendment Act 2026 update the Territory's laws to better manage shortages of essential goods and services during emergencies or supply disruptions, particularly fuel.

The Act strengthens the MyFuel NT scheme by requiring fuel retailers to report fuel prices in advance, preventing price increases during the following 24-hour reporting period, and requiring retailers to notify the public when fuel is unavailable.

It also gives the Government stronger powers to respond to shortages of essential goods and services by expanding its monitoring and enforcement powers during declared shortages

NT Parliament Sitting Days 2026

25th - 27th August
13th - 15th October
20th - 22nd October
24th - 26th November

Parliamentary Update - Bills Introduced

Bills Introduced in July 2026

Education Standards and Registration Board Bill 2026

The Bill creates a new Education Standards and Registration Board by combining the Northern Territory Board of Studies and the Teacher Registration Board into a single organisation. The aim is to reduce duplication, simplify administration and make it easier for teachers and educators to deal with one board instead of two.

Importantly, the Bill does not change teacher registration requirements such as child safety checks, the school curriculum or Year 12 certification. These arrangements will continue in their current state. The new Board is expected to begin operating from 1 February 2027.

Liquor Amendment Bill 2026

This Bill updates the Territory's liquor laws with changes affecting communities, licensed venues and the hospitality industry. Existing Interim Alcohol Protected Areas will automatically become General Restricted Areas, meaning alcohol restrictions will continue but under a single, ongoing legal framework. Communities will also have a formal process to apply to change or remove those restrictions, supported by a community alcohol plan and local consultation.

The Act also extends police banning notices from 14 days to up to 90 days, requires BYO alcohol at licensed venues to be served only with food, replaces paper liquor licences with electronic records, and gives licensees up to 12 months before an inactive licence is considered abandoned.

Youth Parliament

Northern Territory Youth Parliament

The 23rd Northern Territory Youth Parliament was held in 2025, with 20 young Territorians representing schools, local councils and community organisations across the Territory.

During the week-long program, participants debated and passed nine Bills and petitions on issues affecting young Territorians. Youth Parliament is a non-partisan leadership program that gives young people firsthand experience of the parliamentary process while developing leadership and public speaking skills.

The 2026 Northern Territory Youth Parliament will be held at Parliament House from 21–24 September.



Delivering cakes to celebrate the start of Semester 2. Photo with Kim Leyland from OLSH Traeger Campus.

Free Morning Tea | Information Stalls
Interactive Displays | Giveaways & Prizes

ALICE SPRINGS

SENIORS EXPO

WEDNESDAY 12 AUGUST 2026
10AM - 2PM

Alice Springs Convention Centre
93 Barrett Drive
Alice Springs

Free entry

COTA Seniors Expo

12 August, Convention Centre 10am - 2pm

Alice Springs Disability Expo

13 August, Alice Springs Convention Centre

Rapid Ascent Run Larapinta

14 - 17 August, Alice Springs

Henley on Todd Regatta

15 August, Snow Kenna Park 12noon

Australian Ballet (Kids) Workshops

19 - 20 August, Alice Springs Public Library

Clontarf - Bill Kart Derby

20 August, Bunnings 8am - 12noon

Red Dirt Poetry Festival

20 - 23 August, Alice Springs

Shimano Gravel Muster

20 - 23 August, Alice Springs

The Australian Ballet - Nutcracker Act II

21 - 22 August, Araluen Art Centre

40th Anniversary - Todd Mall Markets

30 August, Todd Mall 9am - 1pm

Red Cente NATS

3 - 6 September, Alice Springs

desart Desert Mob

10 September - 25 October, Alice Springs

Centenary Celebrations - Adelaide House

12 September, 10am - 3pm

Alice Springs Rodeo

12 September, Blatherskite Park

Bush Bands Bash

14 September, Telegraph Station

NT Government - School Holidays

Term 3 ends Friday 18 September

Term 4 resumes Monday 5 October

ALICE SPRINGS RODEO

SATURDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER 2026

ASR Find us on facebook BLATHERSKITE PARK RODEO GROUNDS