

ARALUEN NEWS

November 2026

Robyn LAMBLEY MLA — Member for ARALUEN

Welcome

Dear Residents

As with most things in life, the best answer in politics usually lies somewhere in the middle. I have watched the pendulum swing from left to right on issues that matter to Territorians and seen the impact of policies that are too conservative or too radical.

The former NT Labor Government made some so-called "progressive" decisions that turned out to be regressive. One was an attempt in 2022 to stop school children being referred to as him or her, girl or boy. Thankfully someone saw sense and it was scrapped.

Dropping the Stronger Future alcohol bans on remote communities and town camps in 2022 was a radical decision that triggered an unprecedented surge in domestic violence and alcohol-related harm in Central Australia.

Politicians love to pat themselves on the back for being the first to do something, but sometimes they are first because no one has been dumb enough to do it before.

People who have followed my politics will know I tend to be a moderate - socially conservative. Change for the sake of change does not make sense. We must keep pace with a changing world, but in a careful and measured way.

The passing of the Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill in August was always going to happen. It was the will of Territorians. But it had to be done with the utmost care. Less than 4% of the world's population has access to legal euthanasia, for good reasons. It is not something to be taken for granted.

The beauty of a Parliamentary democracy like ours in the NT is that issues can be debated fully both inside and outside of the Chamber. In my many years of Parliament, I don't remember an issue debated as thoroughly as this Bill. This is how Parliament should always function, not just for the most profound issues.

Members of the Legislative Assembly should remember this as an example of democracy at its best. Instead of rushing Bills through, we should have every opportunity to scrutinise and debate the issues.

Democracy in the NT must always be honoured and exercised at all levels and in all ways.

Robyn

Thank you

I think I can speak on behalf of all Alice Springs residents in expressing appreciation for the help we received after the 12 October super-storm.

Thank you to the Alice Springs Town Council and NT Emergency Services. Thank you to the electrical contractors who stepped up and complemented the amazing response from Power and Water.

And thank you to everyone who helped strangers, friends and neighbours.

We saw Alice Springs at its very best: a kind and caring community.



Alice Springs Needs a Town Hall

Alice Springs has just lost one of its few community meeting rooms and we should be asking why.

In May 2026, the Town Council handed the Andy McNeill Room in the Council Chambers to Tourism Central Australia (TCA) as "temporary" office space. The Council says other rooms are available for public meetings, but none match the purpose-built size and convenience of the Andy McNeill Room.

This decision is part of a reshuffle of the Council precinct. A part of the old library has become the Tourism Visitor Information Centre; a new library is planned for the Council carpark; and a new TCA office is due to be built in mid-2029 on the site of the current library.

Given the Council's record of delays, this "temporary" arrangement with Tourism Central Australia's occupation of the Andy McNeill Room could easily stretch well beyond the timeframe. As we have seen with the upgrading of the Todd Mall, one year can easily become two. 2029 could easily become 2030!

It beggars' belief that a scarce community asset was given to an organisation that could have easily leased commercial premises. The arrangement suits Council and TCA. It does not suit everyone else.

I was an Alderman when the "new" Council Chambers opened in 2006, which included the wonderful new Andy McNeill Room. With a shortage of community meeting space, the demand to use the Andy McNeill has remained very high for decades. Calls for a Town Hall in Alice Springs have surfaced repeatedly over the years. Council has investigated and debated a Town Hall for Alice Springs many times. But nothing has eventuated.

Ironically, twenty years on, the shortage of community spaces is even worse. While the community waits for an upgraded Todd Mall, a new library, and for TCA to move out of the Andy McNeill Room, we should be planning for a proper Alice Springs Town Hall. A space always dedicated to the community.

Bird Watchers Banned

One of Alice Springs' best-kept treasures remains locked behind a fence.

For decades, the Alice Springs Sewerage Ponds were a special space for local birdwatchers and visitors. In the middle of our arid landscape, the ponds are a rare wetland habitat that attracts an extraordinary variety of birdlife.

More than 140 bird species have been recorded there, including migratory birds travelling vast distances across Australia and beyond. Power and Water once described the site as an important staging point for migratory birds and a location of exceptional environmental value.

Many locals have fond memories of early morning visits, sharing the experience with friends, family and visiting bird enthusiasts. The ponds became internationally known amongst birdwatchers and were often recommended through tourism networks as one of the best birding locations in Central Australia.

Unfortunately, public access has been closed for several years, much to the disappointment of the birdwatching community.

I have written to both the Minister for Essential Services, and the CEO of Power and Water, seeking answers about why access was closed, whether alternatives were considered, and what opportunities might exist to safely reopen the site.

Alice Springs has lost too many unique community experiences over the years. The sewerage ponds are more than an operational facility. They are part of our environmental heritage and hold a special place in the hearts of many residents. I hope we can find a way for future generations to once again enjoy this remarkable birdwatching destination.



Shop 1, Helm House | Crn of Bath Street and Gregory Terrace, Alice Springs | PO Box 2654, Alice Springs NT 0871
Tel: **08 8951 5588** Fax: 08 8953 8029 Email: **electorate.araluen@nt.gov.au**

Keith Laurie Flats to Be Demolished and Rebuilt

Tenants at the Keith Laurie Flats, on Bloomfield Street in Gillen have received significant news. I have lobbied Government for years about the problems at this complex, and I want to share an exciting update.

On 22 September, Community Housing Central Australia (CHCA), which manages the complex, which they call it 1 Musgrave Street, told tenants the site, has reached the end of its useful life. CHCA says the buildings are failing and repair is no longer economically viable.

The 2026-27 NT Budget allocated funds to demolish the complex, and CHCA says its bid for Housing Australia Future Fund financing to build 25 new homes has succeeded. Tenants will need to move out. Some units have already been decommissioned as beyond repair. CHCA says funding timelines are tight and outside its control.

CHCA staff have been helping tenants plan alternative accommodation, and those who want to return once the homes are rebuilt will be prioritised. Questions can go to CHCA on 08 8952 1266.

I know this news will be distressing, especially for older residents who have called these units home for years. My office is happy to help if you are having trouble getting answers.
I will keep pushing for clarity on timelines and for tenants to be properly supported through the move.

Three Strikes Policy for Public Housing

The NT Government is tightening up on public housing tenants who don't do the right thing. Its new "Three Strikes" policy targets tenants who repeatedly breach their tenancy obligations. Depending on how serious the behaviour is, a tenant may receive one, two or three strikes, and those who continue to engage in antisocial behaviour after repeated warnings may ultimately lose their tenancy.

The policy rests on a simple principle the Government has promoted in recent months: "pay the rent, look after the house and be a good neighbour".

The vast majority of public housing tenants respect the rules and responsibilities of their tenancies. But there are always a few who make life hell for their neighbours and trash their houses. For them, this policy draws a line in the sand. Bad tenants who don't respect the rules will be evicted.

Residents regularly tell me they want more consistency in how the Department of Housing and Community Housing Central Australia handle complaints. They want stronger action when problems drag on for months or even years. It is only fair that everyone to be able to enjoy their homes peacefully and safely.

It remains to be seen how effective "Three Strikes" will be in practice but the Government is certainly talking tough on this no nonsense approach.

Centralian Today - Now FREE:

The Centralian Today - our local weekly newspaper - is now FREE. You can pick it up at Newsagents, and Supermarkets around town.

Bring the Masters Home

By all accounts the 2026 Masters Games went well, thanks to the volunteers, staff and competitors.

The Alice Springs Masters Games began in 1986 and earned the name "The Friendly Games". Built by Alice Springs people, they thrived for decades until COVID. Then decisions by the former NT Labor Government delayed their return for six years, almost destroying the legacy built up over decades.

To revive the ailing Masters Games in 2024, management was handed to NT Major Events, a Darwin-based Government agency. That was a good temporary fix, but fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) management is no permanent one.

The problem is the model, not the individuals. Local knowledge does not come on a Qantas flight from Darwin. Paid staff and operational control centralised in Darwin is a world away from Alice Springs.

Imagine an Alice Springs-based team running the Darwin Festival. It would never happen, so why do we accept Darwin-based public servants running our show?

Numbers for the 2026 Games were roughly half those of the Games' heyday.
If the Games are to have a big future, we need a team of Alice Springs people 100% committed to the Games and to the town.

Days before the Games, I listened to an excruciating ABC Alice Springs Radio interview with a Major Events executive. Asked about the scrapping of the Masters netball competition, once one of the Masters' biggest events, she dodged every question. It highlighted the problem with managing our Games from Darwin: despite the best of intentions, these people are not local and do not understand our town. Locals are accountable to locals.

Most people I speak to are grateful for Darwin's help but believe the Games should return to being a local event. I have written to the Minister for Major Events.

I am confident local people and organisations could run the Masters, as we used to, with NT Major Events funding. This model is consistent with NT Government policy around local decision making, buy local and building stronger regional communities.

Good news:

Work on the Gillen Multi-sport Precinct on Flynn Drive has begun. This is a $14m project in the heart of the Electorate of Araluen. I know a lot of kids can't wait for these new facilities. Well overdue!

Preparation for Spring Storms

The recent spring storms have caused us all to think seriously about how we can better prepare. Alice Springs was hit by several big storms in October, on Friday 9th, Monday 12th and Wednesday 28th. The storms on the 9th and 12th were no ordinary storms but supercells, bringing very strong winds, hail and lightning in short, sharp bursts. The damage on the 12th was profound. Over the past 5 -10 years, spring weather events like these have become more common and arguably more intense.

Like our Top End friends, we should prepare our homes and yards for our "desert cyclones". The number of trees that were stripped and smashed in October was staggering. Trimming trees and even removing trees that are a risk to buildings should be a priority. Generators, batteries, torches, extension leads, phone chargers, chain saws - all these things suddenly became important, but who had them ready to go or indeed knew where they were?

The Alice Springs Town Council must lead the clean-up after storms, as they did so well in October. But the Council also needs to work with residents beforehand, so we are ready when the next big storm arrives.

In Darwin the Council usually provide an annual hard rubbish collection with occurs before the wet season. We need the same in Alice Springs. Old furniture, timber, broken fences and piles of junk become missiles in strong winds and must be removed from yards. An annual collection gives people a practical way to clear their properties before storm season. It is also a great recycling initiative with half the stuff put on the kerbsides picked up and repurposed before it gets to the landfill.

As I have said many times before - Alice Springs residents want an annual hard rubbish collection. This must be made a priority for Council. I have written to Council again on this issue.

What is a reasonable timeframe for Government Infrastructure Projects?

Too many NT Government infrastructure projects in Alice Springs are delivered on a timeframe equivalent to building the pyramids.

Take the Schwartz Crescent intersection upgrade. This was heralded as the solution to the traffic congestion of vehicles heading in and out of St Philips College in 2019. It is now scheduled for completion in 2028. A decade to upgrade an intersection!

How many students will have graduated from St Philip's College in that time, not to mention the school bus drivers whose excitement and anticipation expired years ago?

Then there is the endless announcing of the unimpressive milestones: tenders called, tender awarded, work begun, breaking ground, work almost complete. Drip feeding progress over a decade is really nothing to celebrate for a project that should take no longer than a few years from inception to completion.

These "legacy" projects "blow-out" even more when they are not delivered within a term of Government.

The Alice Springs Hospital new $25m "ambulatory" care unit was announced back in 2019. I was recently advised this project is back in the initial planning stage. If it actually ever happens, it will be a 10+ year project.

The National Aboriginal Art Gallery announced in 2016 and scrapped in 2025 was perhaps the worst example of Government mismanagement and waste I have ever witnessed in Alice Springs. That was a decade of nothing.

The 13 Darwin-Palmerston based Electorates or "seats" are usually the most important for winning government and holding government. This is where the money goes and where election construction timeframes are kept reasonably tight.

For the rest of the NT, it seems we have to be eternally grateful for anything we get, in any timeframe.

Voluntary Assisted Dying: What Happens Next?

The Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill passed the NT Parliament on 27 August 2026. But passing the law was the easy part. The hard work of making it real starts now, and three questions will decide whether Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) works for Territorians: how it will be funded, whether the timeline is realistic, and whether palliative care can keep up.

The cost: The Government has chosen a decentralised service model, which will cost more than a centralised one. A team of medical specialists travelling across the Territory to consult and manage patients is not cheap, and expenses for operating this will add up quickly.

Telehealth will be used for patient consultations. That approach is controversial and not accepted in other jurisdictions, but in a place as large and sparsely populated as ours it is clearly the more efficient and effective option.

Still, our basic public health services already struggle to attract funding and staff.

Establishing a new service will put further pressure on a stretched system.

The deadline: The Government has promised VAD will be available within 18 months, meaning eligible Territorians with a terminal illness will have access by February 2028. That timing is no accident. It lets the CLP Government head into the August 2028 NT General Election having delivered on VAD, an important political win.

Palliative Care: Research from other jurisdictions shows demand for palliative care rises once VAD is introduced. The Government will need to fund and resource that demand, yet palliative care services in the NT are already thin on the ground.

The roll out of VAD should see these questions answered - until then, Territorians should keep asking.

Crime Statistics

The latest crime statistics for Alice Springs show a continuing decline in crime, comparing the year ending August 2026 with the year ending August 2025. It is more good news, but some people do not want to hear it.

I have reported crime statistics in the Araluen News and on Facebook for many years, as they are publicly provided by the Police. Some people claim the numbers are bogus or made up. I do not share that view. I have always taken the statistics as provided, in good faith, and I do not believe any Government would be stupid enough to tamper with this data. It would be political suicide.

We all know improving crime statistics does not necessarily mean safer streets. They say nothing about the nature and severity of crimes, only the number. Still, for almost two years the numbers have suggested crime in Alice Springs has reduced significantly.

Crime	Year to August 2025	Year to August 2026	↑/↓
Crime Against the Person			
Homicide & Related Offences	2	2	NIL
Assault - Total	2,081	1,898	↓ 9%
Assault - Sexual	142	105	↓ 26%
Other acts endangering persons	291	304	↑ 4%
Crime against the person totals	**2,516**	**2,309**	↓ 8%
Crime Against Property			
Domestic Break Ins (including attempted)	1,097	493	↓ 55%
Commercial Break Ins (including attempted)	279	135	↓ 52%
Motor Vehicle Theft	174	79	↓ 55%
Theft other than MV	1,553	1,150	↓ 26%
Property Damage	2,816	1,645	↓ 42%
Crime against property totals	**5,919**	**3,502**	↓ 41%

The offence data was extracted from NT Police Force Statistical publications on 16/10/2026

Receive the Araluen News to your inbox:
Sign up to our newsletter and be the first to recieve a copy of each publication.
Contact the Araluen Electorate Office on 08 8951 5588 or via email electorate.araluen@nt.gov.au

CBD Used-Car Saleyard

Over the past 12 months, many would have noticed the growing number of used cars for sale in the CBD. On any given day there are as many as 6 parked around my office on Gregory Terrace, in the various shopping centre carparks and taking up limited street carparks.

If you are in the market for a used vehicle, this might not seem like a problem. For everyone else, it has become a bit ridiculous.

It would appear the vehicles are being sold by one or two people using a range of different mobile numbers and a clever variation in signage, but the same people are seen parking them around town every day.

Clever and cunning is an understatement. Enthusiastic and entrepreneurial is another interpretation.

Some individuals and businesses have started to push back against this "street trade" of used cars.

Using privately owned shopping centre carparks to sell cars without the owners' permission is a potential problem. Placing vehicles for sale for hours, sometimes days, in limited parking bays is a Council issue.

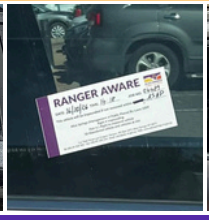
It also raises a licensing question. Are these people licensed car traders? Are their unorthodox sale techniques illegal, or just annoying? And who are these mysterious car traders? I observed a car with the identifiable "for sale" signage in white pen, being parked a few months ago in the Coles Carpark. This was done with lightning speed. These people are experts! There one minute - gone the next.

Questions about this "business" have been referred to the NT Government Department of Business, which is responsible for licensing, and to the Alice Springs Town Council.

For now, let's see who wins the battle of the unofficial CBD Used-Car Saleyard!!











20 Years of Service

On 10 October 2026 I marked 16 years as the Member for Araluen, the equivalent of four parliamentary terms. Add my four years as an Alice Springs Town Councillor and that makes 20 years, and six elections, as an elected representative of this town.

I'm not sure where the time has gone, but it has been an enormous privilege. I love my job and remain committed to serving the people of Alice Springs.



Memory Clinic - Update

The Central Australia Memory Service supports people with memory loss and dementia, and their families. A team of specialist dementia clinical nurse consultants, supported by a visiting geriatrician, runs memory clinics in Alice Springs and in remote communities as required, or by telehealth. The service is funded through the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP).

There have been serious concerns about the future of the clinic, with talk of it closing in Central Australia. That would be a disaster for local families.

The Federal Government has now announced that CHSP will remain a standalone program, with funding extended for another 2 years. This means funding for our Memory Service is secure for that period (2 years).

There is also good news on staffing. New Alice Springs Hospital Geriatrician Dr Megan Dunstan started in September, and neurologist Dr Antonia Clarke is also running memory clinics at ASH Outpatients.

The Memory Service has also joined a team of experts, including Dr Clarke and Professor Brodtmann, in applying for community research funding to establish brain health clinics in Alice Springs and Orange, NSW. The pilot grant application was recently submitted.

For more information on the Memory Clinic - call 08 8951 5248

Farewell to Dr Pat Miller AO

A state funeral has been arranged for our much-loved former NT Deputy Administrator, Dr Patricia Miller AO.

It will be held at the Alice Springs Convention Centre on Monday, 30th November 2026 at 10:30am. Guests are asked to wear a touch of lilac as a tribute.

My deepest sympathies go out to her family and friends in the community.



New Electronic Drivers Licences

Soon Territorians will have the option of a card drivers' licence or an electronic drivers license on their smart phone, or both. Legislation was passed in October for this to roll out in 'late 2026'.

Parliamentary Update

Bills Introduced

Private Hospitals Amendment Bill 2026

This Bill proposes changes that would allow the Northern Territory Government to require the new operator of Darwin Private Hospital to provide maternity services, following their closure in 2025. The Bill would allow specific services, including maternity care, to be made a condition of a private hospital's licence. It also provides for greater oversight of the services offered by private hospitals and measures to address concerns about patient safety.

Environment and Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2026

This Bill covers a range of changes affecting the environment, water use and mining in the Northern Territory. It proposes new requirements for dredging activities, changes to how pollution is monitored and managed, and greater oversight of environmental conditions applying to mining operations. The Bill would also require public consultation on water allocation plans, giving communities a formal opportunity to comment on how water resources are managed. Other changes would simplify arrangements for businesses participating in the Container Deposit Scheme.

Weapons Control Legislation Amendment (Legalising Controlled OC Spray) Bill 2026

This Bill proposes to make pepper spray legal for personal self-defence in the Northern Territory, following a trial that began in September 2025. People aged 16 and over would be able to purchase and carry approved pepper spray, provided they meet the eligibility requirements. Those aged 16 or 17 would need parental consent. There would be restrictions on where and how pepper spray could be used, including rules for workplaces and licensed premises. People subject to certain restrictions, including domestic violence orders, would not be permitted to possess it.

Racing and Wagering Amendment (Harm Prevention) Bill 2026

This Bill was introduced as a Private Members Bill by the Member for Johnston, Justine Davis, and was aimed at reducing gambling-related harm. It was proposed that the Bill would restrict gambling advertising and introduce monthly deposit limits to younger gamblers.

FACT: The NT's average age is about 33 - the youngest of any state or territory.
At the 2021 Census, the Territory had 232,605 people with a median age of 33, compared with roughly 38 nationally.

Bills Passed

Traffic Legislation Amendment (Drink and Drug Driving and Hooning) Bill - Passed 13 October 2026

Education Standards and Registration Board Bill - Passed 13 October 2026

Motor Vehicles Legislation Amendment (Digital Licences) Bill - Passed 15 October 2026

Liquor Amendment Bill - Passed 15 October 2026

Lands and Planning Legislation Amendment (Red Tape Reduction) Bill - Passed 20 October 2026

National Electricity (Northern Territory) (National Uniform Legislation) Legislation Amendment Bill - Passed 20 October 2026

Associations Legislation Amendment Bill - Passed 21 October 2026

Parliamentary Calendar

24 - 26 November 2026

9 - 11 February 2027
16 - 18 and 23 - 25 March 2027

Upcoming Elections

Australian Federal Election
The exact date is determined by the Prime Minister. For a standard simultaneous election of the *House of Representatives* and a *half-Senate election*, the constitutional constraints dictate the following timeframe:
- Earliest possible date: 7 August 2027
- Latest possible date: 20 May 2028

Northern Territory General Election
Saturday, 26 August 2028

Alice Springs Local Government Election
Saturday, 25 August 2029



Alice Springs Hospital visit with Mel Henwood, General Manager, and Rebecca Schultz, Regional Executive Director

Community Events

Rememberance Day
11 November 2026, Anzac Hill, 10:30am

Mparntwe Bush Christmas - Central Craft
14 November to 6 December, 10am - 2pm

Alice Springs Biggest Christmas Party,
Convention Centre, 5 December, 6:45pm

Todd Mall Christmas Market - Council Lawns, 6 December 2026, 9am - 1pm

ASTC Christmas Carnival Night Markets
11 December, Council Lawns, 5 - 9pm

School - End of Year Events

Clontarf Awards Night
4 November 2026 - 5:30pm - CMS

Gillen Primary School Concert and Fundraising BBQ - 5 November 2026, 6pm

St Philips College - Year 12 Graduation
19 November 2026 - 6pm

OLSH Graduation Mass and Assembly
20 November, Marian Centre - 9:30 am

Araluen Christian School - Celebration Evening, 24 November, 6:30pm

Centralian Senior College - Year 12 Awards and Presentations, 25 November, 6:30pm

Living Waters Lutheran School - Awards Assembly, 27 November, 8:30am

Gillen Primary School - Awards Night
30 November, 6:30pm

St Philips College - Academic Assembly
2 December 2026 - 8:45am

Bradshaw Primary School - Year 6 Graduation, 3 December 2026, 5:30pm

Centralian Middle School - Presentation Evening, 3 December 2026, 5:30pm

OLSH Awards Ceremony, 3 December 2026, Marian Centre - T-6, 9:30am, 7-12, 12noon

Bradshaw Primary School - Buddy Class Christmas Concert, 7 December 2026

Gillen Primary School - Yr 6 Graduation
8 December, 6 - 8pm

NT Government - School Holidays
Term 4 ends - Thursday 10 December 2026
Term 1 begins - Thursday 29 January 2027



2026 World Teachers' Day - NT Excellence Awards

Congratulations to the finalists from schools in the Araluen Electorate who have been nominated by their peers for the following awards:

Finalist - Inclusion Educator of the Year
Bronwyn Andrews - Bradshaw Primary School

Finalist - School Based Support Person of the Year
Barry Georgeopoulos - Centralian Middle School

Finalist - Early Childhood Educator of the Year & Leader in Education of the Year
Brooke McCallan - Gillen Primary School

Finalists - Primary Educator of the Year
Kym Lowson - Gillen Primary School and Maddilyn McGreggor - Bradshaw Primary School

Congratulations also to Lisa Morgan who has worked at Ida Standley Preschool for **20 years** and Gillen Primary School staff Kym Lowson and Rosie Bennett who recently celebrated **20 years of service** with the Northern Territory Department of Education.

Shop 1, Helm House | Crn of Bath Street and Gregory Terrace, Alice Springs | PO Box 2654, Alice Springs NT 0871
Tel: **08 8951 5588** Fax: 08 8953 8029 Email: **electorate.araluen@nt.gov.au**