



ARALUEN NEWS

September 2026

Robyn LAMBLEY MLA

Member for ARALUEN

Welcome

Dear Residents

At this time of year meteorologists, or weather experts, like to speculate on the summer ahead. Will it be a relatively mild summer or as hot as hell?

Delegates at a "Heat Resilience Summit" held recently in Alice Springs were told the Red Centre was in for a "supercharged" El Niño hot summer this year.

This sounds all too familiar. Prepare for the worst and expect the best. These warnings of extreme heat in the desert are nothing new.

Literally "sweating" on it or worrying about the prospect of a very hot summer in Alice Springs is like worrying if the sun will come up in the morning. We all know how hot it can be. Like our desert wildlife as Centralians we can deal with it.

Parliament sits for just three more weeks this year. During 2026 so far, the NT Legislative Assembly has passed 22 bills (or pieces of legislation). There has been one by-election, with another one due for the seat of Mulka (Nhulunbuy) on 12 September. My Independent colleague, Yingiya Guyula, resigned as the Member for Mulka on 19 August after serving for 10 years.

There has been just one leadership change – a new Deputy Opposition Leader. We lost our only Greens member. Labor now has 5 members. There has been no change in Ministers, and the CLP Government still has 17 members. This relative stability is not uncommon in the first term of any Government. The second term is when things often go awry with mounting pressure on the Government to deliver and perform.

Politics is all about change: tweaking and improving legislation and Government policy; advocating for and driving change; and debating and calling for change in Parliament.

Making the Territory a better place through change is the core business of all Members of Parliament.

Best wishes,

St. Mary's Housing Development: We do not need another Town Camp

The proposed St Mary's estate is a beautiful piece of NT Government (NTG) owned real estate fronting the Todd River and the South Stuart Highway. As a former home for Aboriginal children, it is steeped in history. The lovely Chapel is now heritage listed. The 8-hectare block is now ear-marked for a 60 dwelling community housing development, reduced from 120 after heritage status and flooding were considered. Total committed funding for the St. Mary's site is now \$26 million.

It is important Alice Springs people understand exactly what a community housing development means.

Community housing is a distinct type of social housing, separate from public or Government housing. Community housing providers (CHPs) around Australia are not-for-profits, including charities, church bodies, and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, that own and/or manage rental housing for people on low incomes.

Alice Springs has a few community housing providers, but one dominates: Community Housing Central Australia (CHCA). This Aboriginal-controlled provider already manages over 100 NT Government owned properties, including all the dwellings on 16 of the town camps.

Like the NTG Housing Department, CHCA is stretched thin. CHCA's Board includes founding member Tangentyere Council, along with Purple House and Central Land Council.

The Minister for Lands, Planning and

Environment, Josh Burgoyne, has confirmed the St Mary's estate will target "high needs individuals and families", including women escaping domestic violence, at-risk youth, and other vulnerable cohorts. Given a large proportion of "high needs" people in Alice Springs are Aboriginal this estate looks to become a suburb almost exclusively for Aboriginal people, not dissimilar to our town camps.

This prospect is very concerning. The Government needs to rethink this model. A housing estate serving one racial cohort almost exclusively risks repeating old mistakes. Concentrating disadvantaged people in one housing estate can trap residents in cycles of poverty by entrenching the very disadvantage the policy was meant to address.

I have told Minister Burgoyne I believe this path is socially irresponsible. St Mary's should be a genuine mix of private and public housing, so people from all backgrounds can live there together. I support the existing town camps staying in place, but with far better management, accountability and standards. But I am absolutely against new estates going down this same track. We must do better. Alice Springs does not need another town camp.

The Minister has alluded to progress on the St Mary's project gaining pace over the coming months. He's keen to see this expansion of affordable housing in the town, which is commendable, but not by lumping vulnerable people together into one location, like a town camp.

Spring the **Y!**

ACTION BREAK

Action pack your school holidays at The Y!
Take advantage of this all day fully supervised program and let us entertain the kids!

- ▶ Ages 5-12 years
- ▶ 8:30am-4:30pm
- ▶ \$68 per day

*Not on incursions and excursion days to cover costs

BOOK NOW

Monday 21 September	Monday 28 September
Tuesday 22 September	Tuesday 29 September
Wednesday 23 September	Wednesday 30 September
Thursday 24 September	Thursday 1 October
Friday 25 September	Friday 2 October

Bradshaw Revolution

Concert & Art Exhibition

4:30 - 6:30
17th September
Basketball Courts

Bring a picnic blanket, cushions or camping chairs & cash for the BBQ

desart PRESENTS

DESERTMOB

10 SEPT - 25 OCT

Territory Quilts Exhibition 2026

3 - 10 October 2026

Witchetty's Gallery
Araluen Art Centre
Larapinta Drive, Alice Springs

10am - 4pm
Free Entry

A significant and important part of my work as your local NT Member of Parliament involves public housing. Alice Springs has just under 800 public housing dwellings currently.

Keith Lawrie Flats (Bloomfield) Update

I have been lobbying the Government for many years to address the very long-term problems with the Keith Lawrie Flats on Bloomfield Street in Gillen. Community Housing Central Australia (CHCA) took over management of the flats from October 2024, as part of a broader transfer that saw the Government hand CHCA the property and tenancy management of 100 public housing properties in Alice Springs, while the Government retains ownership of the homes. Sadly, this change of management has not seen an improvement in the conditions and amenities of the Keith Lawrie Units. This is by no means an easy task. The 2026-27 NT Budget has allocated \$800k to support a Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) application for a "Musgrave Street project" in Gillen – the same precinct

as the Keith Lawrie Flats. This suggests the site may be moving toward a HAFF-funded redevelopment rather than simple refurbishment, though I have not yet had this formally confirmed by the Department and will keep pushing for clarity on the timeline.

Mokari Flats (Nicker) Update

Regarding the Mokari Flats on Nicker Crescent and Ashwin Street in Gillen, there is still no clear plan for the future of this old, sad complex.

In this part of Gillen, CHCA is building three new one-bedroom homes on Nicker Crescent and two two-bedroom homes on Ashwin Street, scheduled for completion this year with funding from the Commonwealth's Social Housing Accelerator Payment (SHAP). This is welcome additional stock for the area, but it does not resolve the long-term future of the existing Mokari complex. My view has always been that Mokari should be demolished. It was originally a lovely senior's complex 50 years ago. It is not fit for purpose for anyone in 2026.

Demolition of Old Housing Unit Complexes

The CLP Government won the August 2024 election and have not been clear on their intention in the management of these old complexes – sell, refurbish or demolish? Site preparation, demolition and remediation are already underway at the St Mary's site. I wish this could happen to the Keith Laurie and Mokari Units.

The wait lists for Public Housing as at January 2026 were reported to be up to 10 years for some Alice Springs residents, while properties sit vacant. The Government has pointed to \$17 million allocated to maintenance and repairs, including \$7 million specifically for vacant homes, but this is not enough. The turnover of public housing tenants has always been a slow process, no matter who is in Government. Empty public housing is invariably a sign they require extensive and expensive repairs and maintenance before they can be re-tenanted.

I continue to push for more and better public housing in Araluen.

UPDATE: National Road Transport Museum and Hall of Fame

The National Road Transport Museum and Hall of Fame has certainly been through its ups and downs over the last 10 years, but it remains an iconic facility and continues to attract huge interest and support from across the country. I recently met with Operations Manager Lee-Anne Matthews for a tour and update.

This incredible museum remains in statutory management until a new board is appointed early next year. A new General Manager is expected to be appointed by the end of 2026. The good news is the museum has "turned the corner" and has returned to financial stability through grants and improved processes.

A lot of work has been done to upgrade the grounds and outbuildings including the removal of all the "non-compliant" buildings in the precinct. New campground amenities were funded through a Community Benefit Fund Grant.

The museum now receives Department of Corrections support five days a week to assist volunteers in the work they do maintaining this enormous property and the many exhibits.

The museum offers discount admission to locals. They run twice-weekly tours of the museum. They are also partnering with tour companies and major events to boost visitation. This all seems to be working really well.

The museum recently held their 2026 Festival of Transport. Over 500 people attended this 4-day event and 64 people were inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The Museum and Hall of Fame are well worth a visit if you haven't been recently.



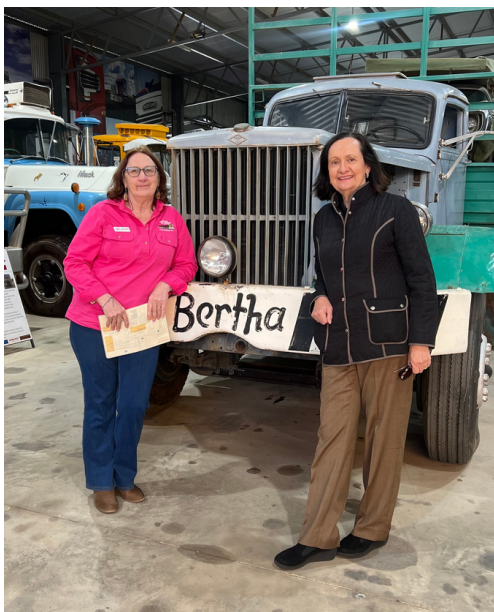
Ron Goodin Power Station to Remain on Standby

The Ron Goodin Power Station will remain on standby in Alice Springs until the new battery energy storage system is operational, currently expected in late 2028.

Ron Goodin opened in 1973 and was one of Alice Springs' main sources of electricity for decades before Owen Springs became the town's primary power station.

Territory Generation had previously planned to move Ron Goodin from hot standby to cold standby at the end of 2026. However, at Budget Estimates in June, it was confirmed that it will no longer occur and the station will instead be kept on standby until the new Alice Springs battery is operational. The new 12 MW battery is expected to come online in late 2028.

Territory Generation also confirmed that Ron Goodin has been in standby since April 2025 and is now only used infrequently. It remains available as additional capacity if needed, rather than being used for normal generation.



Tour of the National Road Transport Museum. With Lee-Anne Matthews, Operations Manager

At Estimates, Territory Generation explained that its current standby arrangements allow the station to be brought back into service relatively quickly, around 30 minutes, while moving to cold standby would require more preparation and around two hours to restart. In July, Electrical Trades Union NT (ETUNT) raised concerns following the transfer of staff from Ron Goodin to Owen Springs. These included ensuring the station continues to be properly maintained and that appropriate procedures are in place so it can be brought back into service when required. The ETUNT said Ron Goodin could still provide around 15 MW, potentially representing about 20% of generation at peak times.

Meanwhile, the way Alice Springs generates its electricity continues to change. In late August Territory Generation called for expressions of interest for a new 5 to 15 MW solar power plant, proposed for land near Owen Springs Power Station. The project is intended to reduce reliance on gas-fired generation and would add significantly to the town's existing commercial solar capacity.

It follows the awarding of a \$45.6 million contract for the new 12 MW battery at Owen Springs, which will provide four hours of storage and is expected to play an increasingly important role in supporting the Alice Springs grid.

The importance of maintaining reliable backup remains clear following the 2019 Alice Springs System Black, when the town and surrounding areas experienced an extended power outage and Ron Goodin was not immediately available to assist.

So, while Alice Springs is clearly moving towards more solar and battery storage, the immediate position for Ron Goodin is important: Owen Springs remains the primary generator, while Ron Goodin remains available as additional capacity during the transition to the new system.

Jacana Energy Billing Problems Continue

Since the rollout of smart meters in the Northern Territory, Jacana Energy has struggled to deliver accurate and timely bills - a problem I raised with the CEOs and Board Chairs of Jacana Energy and Power Water during Budget Estimates hearings in June.

I questioned why thousands of customers were still experiencing delays, data from smart meters was not being transmitted, and why the two government-owned entities seemed unable to coordinate effectively.

Months later, the same issues continue to surface. We are still fielding complaints from residents who insist they have done everything possible to ensure access to their meters - yet their bills remain wrong or missing. Eventually (even with the installation of new smart meters) receiving large bills or requiring ongoing corrections. A common theme emerges: Jacana blames missing data; PWC blames technical faults or access issues for meter readers; customers are left in the middle trying their best to do the right thing.

If you receive a large bill you need support to pay, or want to dispute the bill, contact Jacana immediately and ask to be referred to the Hardship or Resolutions Team.

If you remain unsatisfied after going through Jacana's internal process, you can escalate the matter externally to the Northern Territory Ombudsman.

I urge you to document times you contact Jacana, and steps you've taken to resolve the matter. Come and see our office for assistance for next steps. I will continue to raise any serious concerns brought to my attention with the Minister for Essential Services for further investigation.

Phone: 1800 522 262
or via email

customercare@jacanaenergy.com.au

Sharing What I do with Students

One of the most satisfying things I do each year is invite Year 6 students from schools in my electorate to visit the Araluen electorate office and talk about what I do. I encourage them to ask questions, see where I work, and learn what my role involves.

There is no better way to show young people what politics is about than to open your office to them. I invite the kids to walk around, sit at my desk, and see how the office functions. I tell them they could do my job one day, that this role is a bit like being on the SRC, and that anyone with passion for their community can become a member of parliament.

Their visits tie in with the Civics and Citizenship curriculum, where students learn about Australia's system of government and the roles of local, territory and federal levels. It's a great chance for them to see territory government in action and put a face to what they're learning in the classroom.

Some of the questions I get asked are gold. My main goal is to show them that anything is possible, and to encourage them to reach for the stars.

Another Reduction in Alice Springs Flights

Alice Springs will have around 300 fewer airline seats each week following Qantas' decision to suspend its direct Melbourne–Alice Springs service from November. The impact was confirmed during Question Time in July, when Minister for Trade, Business and Asian Relations, Hon. Robyn Cahill said:

"That route (MLB-ASP) provided 548 seats per week, and they have increased a flight to Sydney, so we have lost approximately 300 seats."

The loss follows a long line of reductions of direct services to Alice Springs, including the collapse of Bonza in 2024 and Virgin Australia's withdrawal from the Brisbane route.

There is some positive news, with Airnorth adding an extra weekly Perth–Alice Springs service from 22 September. However, this does not replace the direct Melbourne connection or the overall loss in available seats.

Earlier this year, I made a submission to the Senate inquiry into Australia's aviation sector, raising the particular challenges facing rural, regional and remote communities when it comes to the availability, reliability and affordability of air travel.

For Central Australians, reliable and affordable air services remain critical for health, tourism, business and simply staying connected with the rest of Australia.

OC Spray Trial

Since September 2025, the NT Government has allowed eligible Territorians to buy and carry OC spray for self-defence under a 12-month trial, now extended to 31 December 2026. In Alice Springs, four Declared Firearms Dealers supply the spray, but none operate from retail shopfronts - purchases are arranged by phone and collected from residential properties, sheds, shipping containers, or the local shooting club.

While buying OC spray is tightly controlled, it's still a fairly straightforward process: customers must be over 18, show valid ID, have no disqualifying history, read the prohibited-persons fact sheet, and sign a digital declaration. A 30ml canister costs \$55 and delivers roughly ten bursts. Eligible people may carry no more than two canisters in public, but must always bring the signed buyer declaration with them when carrying the OC spray.

NT Police conduct daily compliance checks on sales, and dealers say cooperation has been smooth. Sales have varied - some dealers sold out early and struggled for stock, while others worry about leftover supply if the trial ends. As of 30 July 2026, the Chief Minister reported 380 sales in Alice Springs.

Northern Territory OC SPRAY TRIAL TRIAL EXTENDED TO 31 DECEMBER 2026



FACT: Granted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1978, the NT Coat of Arms is the only Australian one to feature its official bird (wedge-tailed eagle), animal (red kangaroo), and floral emblem (Sturt's Desert Rose) all together.



Gap Youth Centre



Our fabulous new Skate Park

One of the greatest things to happen in the Electorate of Araluen in recent times is the new Newland Skate and Play Precinct.

Seeing so many children and families enjoying this park has been a great joy to us all. It has been a huge success, and I commend the Alice Springs Town Council for providing this facility to our community. The Newlandia Skate and Music Festival, held there on 10 July 2026, was also a great success.

I'll be honest - I had concerns that another skate park might bring problems to the suburb of Gillen, including crime and anti-social behaviour. But the positives have well and truly outweighed the negatives.

I hope this facility is well maintained and remains one we can all be proud of for years to come. The old skate park next to the Aquatic Centre, however, remains an eyesore. Perhaps the Council could finish the great work it has started here and provide a solution for its future.

