

ARALUEN NEWS

EASTER 2024



Robyn LAMBLEY MLA *Member for ARALUEN*

Welcome

Dear Residents,

A few weeks ago the Federal Government announced a massive \$840m loan to Arafura Resources and their Nolan's Bore Rare Earth mine and refinery at Aileron 135km north of Alice Springs. This will be an absolute game-changer for our town. Nolan's Bore has been limping along for over 10 years, so this funding should really get things moving, together with enormous private investment.

Rare earths are used in the components of many modern devices we use every day such a smart phone screens, computers and flat screen TVs; computer drives; batteries of hybrid and electric cars; and new generation light bulbs.

I visited the Nolan's Bore mine site about 6 years ago and was bowled over by the scale of the operation they were planning. It will be the only rare earth refinery in Australia.

Yes, most of the workforce will probably be FIFO but Arafura Resources have always been committed to a substantial local workforce, including 20% Aboriginal employees. The boost to our economy and our quality of our life in Alice Springs will be huge.

Whilst at the moment the whole town is fixated on crime, reeling from one horrendous incident to the next, having a massive mine on our doorstep gives me hope that we do have a future beyond our social problems. More money flowing into the town will mean better services and better facilities. The town is tired and definitely needs an injection of life and investment.

Don't forget the Araluen Electorate Office is here to help you in any way we can.

Drop by or call us on:
89 51 5588



Easter in Araluen



Delivering Easter baskets to Schools & Community Groups in Araluen

Bottle Shop Crisis in Alice Springs

The most concerning change in Alice Springs over the past month has been the deepening crisis at our bottle shops. Not providing full Police coverage at our 9 Alice Springs bottle shops has been a disaster. Predictably we are seeing the damaging effects of a free fall in alcohol supply. The level of alcohol related violence, anti-social behaviour and crime has escalated again causing misery and pain for the whole community. How many times do we have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to this critical alcohol management strategy? During the March sittings of Parliament the local Alice Springs politicians raised multiple times the seriousness and urgency of taking Police away from bottle shops.

The rationale for stopping the full coverage of Police outside of bottle shops provided by the Police Minister and Min-

ister for Alcohol Policy, Brent Potter, is that the Police Auxiliary Liquor Inspectors are currently being trained as Police Constables in Darwin for 16 weeks, until June, and during this time they do not have the staff to provide full coverage. What is clear is that the current Labor Government leadership have absolutely no idea how critical it is having Police outside of bottle shops in Alice Springs. The Police Minister told Parliament numerous times that the value of training the Police Auxiliary Liquor Inspectors into Constables essentially outweighed the importance of full Police coverage at the bottle shops.

Once again we at the mercy of people that have no understanding of the severity of our problems in Alice Springs. Again we have seen law and order deteriorate and chaos reign as a result of bad alcohol policy.

Please follow my Facebook page **Robyn Lambley MLA**. You will see that I am reporting regularly on the Police presence outside the Alice Springs bottle shops.



Robyn Lambley MLA

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A check of the Police outside of Alice Springs bottle shops this afternoon from when they opened at 3pm. O... See more

Police and/or Police Auxiliary Liquor Inspectors (PALI) Attendance at Alice Springs Takeaway Liquor Outlets

Date: Friday 15 March 2024*

| OUTLET | Police Y/N | TIME |
|-----------------|------------|--------|
| Northside IGA | No | 3.04pm |
| Eastside IGA | No | 3.11pm |
| Todd Tavern | Yes | 3.16pm |
| Piggly's | No | 3.21pm |
| Gap View Hotel | Yes | 3.23pm |
| Flynn Drive IGA | No | 3.28pm |
| Milner Road | No | 3.32pm |
| Liquorland | Yes | 3.37pm |
| BWS | Yes | 3.40pm |

*Information researched and compiled by the Araluen Electorate Office



Time for a NEW Alice Springs Hospital

A recent tour of the Alice Springs Hospital (on 4th March 2024) reaffirmed my commitment to push for a new Alice Springs Hospital. My tour was the day after a major brawl broke out in the Emergency Department of the Hospital which led to people being harmed and many more people, including staff, being put at risk. A few days later it was revealed by the ABC that Alice Springs paramedics had been threatened with knives and other weapons as they attempt to deliver care to critically ill patients. This is a picture of an extremely violent and volatile workplace, where people attend who are sick, injured and at their most vulnerable.

Whilst a new Hospital will not solve the problems of people behaving badly in and around the Hospital, having a new Hospital located away from the centre of town with a modern design that helps to prevent crime and better protects staff and patients will go a long way.

The entrance of the Alice Springs Hospital has been the scene of multiple horrific and tragic crimes over the past few years. It is a vortex in which human and motor traffic is drawn. It is poorly designed and poorly lit. It is congested and dangerous. And this is just the entrance!

Although kept clean and well maintained the Alice Springs Hospital is well past its used-by-date. Like all old Hospitals it

has had bits and pieces tacked on plus endless refurbishments and reshuffles. But the core of the building remains a dinosaur that was never suited to our needs and lifestyles in Central Australia.

A new Renal Unit, to replace the Flynn Drive Renal Unit, is soon to be built in what is the staff carpark on the corner of Traeger Avenue and Gap Road. Another building squeezed into an already congested Hospital campus.

This development was originally funded by the Federal Government as a new Outpatient Department or Ambulatory Care Centre for the Hospital. The NT Labor Government have ripped off the Alice Springs community by instead using this funding for a new renal unit. The Flynn Drive Renal Unit is needing major upgrading so instead of finding new money they have allocated the new Outpatient Department money to that. This is a very bad decision. Non-acute renal dialysis should always take place in a community health setting, not in an acute hospital setting. This is not good for the patients or their families and it will significantly increase the overall congestion along Gap Road and within the hospital.

The Government has not done what I would call community consultation on the impact of this major development on traffic in and around that part of town. A

new Renal Unit should be built at Flynn Drive not at the Hospital.

Planning for a new Alice Springs Hospital must be put high on the agenda for our town. I have moved 5 motions in Parliament calling for a new Alice Springs Hospital since 2015. They have all been rejected. I am not deterred. It takes approximately 10 years to plan and build a new Hospital in the NT. We saw that with the Palmerston Regional Hospital that was completed in 2018.

We deserve a new Hospital in Alice Springs.



Big Changes Planned for Old Public Housing Complexes: Keith Lawrie Flats and Mokari Flats

There are two old public housing complexes in the Electorate of Araluen that have been the centre of high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour for decades: the Keith Lawrie Flats in Bloomfield Street and the Mokari Flats in Nickler Crescent, Gillen. After many years of my lobbying the NT Government, they are finally on the cusp of making significant decisions about the future of these sub-standard old complexes.

Keith Lawrie Flats Update

The NT Government is soon to hand over the management of the notorious Keith Lawrie Flats in Bloomfield Street Gillen to a local Community Housing group. In Alice Springs there is only one general Community Housing provider called Community Housing Central Australia (CHCA).

This company was set up in 2009 by Tangentyere Council. It remains an Aboriginal Corporation now managed by three Aboriginal organisations: Tangentyere, the Purple House and Centrecorp.

I met with the CEO of Community Housing Central Australia, Ms Frances Paterson-Fleider on 5th March 2024 to discuss the expansion of community housing in Alice Springs.

They currently have 37 tenancies which include a 17 unit complex at the northern end of Bloomfield Street. Their role is tenancy and property management. They currently have a staff of 17 mainly Aboriginal people who work with tenants to live peacefully and comfortably in their homes.

I look forward to CHCA taking over the management of the Keith Lawrie Flats. Their practical and supportive approach to working with tenants has been successful and I am confident that in time the living conditions in and around the Keith Lawrie Flats will improve.



The handover to CHCA should be soon, although the NT Government have been talking about it for several years.

Mokari Flats Update

The future of the Mokari Flats will be different. These flats were also flagged to be handed over to Community Housing more than 2 years ago. I am now informed by the NT Housing Minister that this is not the case. This property is now being designated for high density development and the NT Government is now planning to potentially demolish the Mokari Flats and make way for a new development.

This will obviously cost a huge amount of money to firstly demolish, then develop. For this reason I would not hold my breath. But it makes a lot of sense to go down this track. I have been calling for years on the NT Government to demolish the Mokari Flats. It is a rabbit warren of old units that have major safety and security issues.

The redevelopment of this property cannot come soon enough for the people living in and around the Mokari Flats.

Crime in Alice Springs

Where has the \$250 million gone?

This time last year we were all pretty excited about the \$250m the Prime Minister promised to address crime and safety in Central Australia, after the peak of our crime crisis in January 2023.

But exactly where has this money gone?

The graph below was reportedly how the funding was allocation in March 2023.

- The \$40m* for education or “on-country learning” has been allocated to Central Australian schools. It was not to be spent on Infrastructure or things. It had to be spent on teaching kids. I know the teacher shortage has made the spending of this money difficult for a lot of schools.
- The \$12m* for the Central Australia Health hub has

gone to Congress. Construction has begun on building their new medical centre on the site of the old Memorial Club.

- The \$2m* for the CCTV cameras was given to the Alice Springs Town Council. A few months ago the Federal Minister for Indigenous Australians had a go at the Council for not getting them up and running. A bit rich I thought. A few extra cameras doesn't stop crime.

As for the other areas this money has been allocated to, I am unaware.

It would be prudent to provide full transparency around where all public money allocated to Alice Springs is being spent, particularly when it comes to addressing our crime problem.

Breakdown of \$250 million Federal funding to address crime and safety in Central Australia - from March 2023

- \$50 million into communications and infrastructure
- \$10 million for digital and connectivity
- \$9.2 million to put towards community safety
- \$3.9 million for a youth services action plan
- \$7.5 million for governance
- \$12 million towards a Central Australian health hub in Alice Springs
- \$23.4 million for health
- \$40.4 million allocated for education
- \$2 million for CCTV
- \$5.6 million for housing

Artists interpretation of New Central Australian Health Hub



Anzac Oval Development Update

The demolition of Anzac Oval is one step closer with Notices of Proposed Development being put up at the oval. This process gives members of the community the chance to formally voice their objections or suggestions to the development of Anzac Oval and building the National Aboriginal Art Gallery on this site. Submissions or objections to this proposal are now open at Development Applications Online. Submissions close on **5 April 2024**, so I urge people to act quickly. Planning Reference: PA2024/0053
Email: das.ntg@nt.gov.au
Website: ntlis.nt.gov.au/planning

Changes to Police Stats

The NT Government introduced a new data collection system called NT Police SerPro in November 2023. When the Police crime statistics for December 2023 were put up on the Police Website in February it was quite a surprise to see that all crime statistics prior to December 2023 had been removed or dumped from their website.

This means that with the latest crime statistics we have no data to compare them to.

The timing of this change is not a coincidence. With an election looming and crime being the NT Labor Governments biggest failure, it is clear why they have chosen to hide the truth from Territorians. Suffice to say that crime is still a major problem for all of us in Alice Springs. If the Government choose to hide the truth from us then they will be judged for that.

Whilst crime throughout the NT is spiralling, in Alice Springs we still experience a level of crime far worse than most other centres. In March 2023 Alice Springs had more than 20% more incidents of crime than in Darwin – more than three times the size of Alice Springs.



Business is Booming in our Prisons

One of the few industries that is booming in the NT is Corrections. The Alice Springs Corrections Centre was allocated \$16m in the 2024 Budget to build an extra 96 beds. The purpose built, pre-fabricated prison “pods” are being supplied and installed by NSW Corrections.

With record numbers of prisoners in all detention centres across the Territory it seems that NT Labor's solution to this crime crisis is to build bigger prisons.

Sadly this maybe the only option we have in the short to medium term.

Whilst staffing levels are at a critically low level (estimated at 30% below quota) and Corrections staff are seriously over-worked, the demand for beds in the big house is ever increasing.



NOTICE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

SUBMISSIONS CLOSE: MIDNIGHT, 05/04/2024

APPLICATION REF: PA2024/0053

APPLICANT: MASTERPLAN SA PTY LTD

ADDRESS: Lot 00678 Town of Alice Springs (7 Wills Tce, Alice Springs), Lot 02683 Town of Alice Springs (26 Schwarz Cres, Alice Springs)

ZONE(S): CP (Community Purpose)

PROPOSAL: Exhibition Centre with Ancillary Place of Assembly

VIEW THE APPLICATION AND LODGE A SUBMISSION:

ONLINE:



www.ntlis.nt.gov.au/planning

EMAIL: das.ntg@nt.gov.au

ALICE SPRINGS

PHONE: 8951 9200

POST: PO Box 2130
Alice Springs NT 0871



Indicative image only.

The NT Parliament sat for 2 weeks in March 2024. The next sittings, the final sittings for this term of Parliament before the election are from 14th to 23rd May 2023. The 24/25 NT Budget will be delivered on Tuesday 14th May. Budget Estimates hearing will be held from Tuesday 11th to 20th June 2024. The Budget will be passed on 20th June 2024. And then Parliament does not sit until after the Election, usually in October.

The March sittings saw a few changes that are of interest:

Police, Firefighters and Emergency Services Part Company
Legislation passed on 13th March will structurally separate the NT Police Service (NTPF) from the

NT Fire Service (NTFRS) and Emergency Services (NTES). This is a historical move. These “tri-services” have always been in one agency in the NT. The separation has been fought for particularly by the Firefighters union for many years. They will now be two standalone Government agencies. The primary reason for this is clearly to appease the unions and the left faction in the Labor party. This move is completely inconsistent with how Labor have structured all other parts of the NT Public Service. Labor created and have sustained mega departments, for example Territory Families includes Housing, Child Protection and Arts & Culture. With any change like this the cost to tax payers of operating two separate agencies will be substantially more than one agen-

cy. The real question is, will this move make these services function better or just make some people feel better?

Children Commissioner

The NT Labor Government want the NT Children’s Commissioner to be Aboriginal and legislation was passed in Parliament on 14th March to this effect. The first NT Children’s Commissioner was Dr Howard Bath who was employed from 2008 to 2015, with a mandate to ensure the well-being of vulnerable children, a significant proportion of whom were Aboriginal children living in remote and disadvantaged areas. Whilst I have no doubt this position could be held by an Aboriginal person, it is vital we get the best person for the job.

It is time to think about enrolling to vote or updating your enrolment details if you need to.

Either go online to the NT Electoral Commission website or grab a NTEC Enrolment form from the Post Office. Early voting starts on Monday 12th August.

You can apply for a Postal Vote now. The Araluen Electorate Office can help. Call us on 89 515588 or drop in and see David or Joanne.

Jacana: A question of Customer Service

JACANA Energy is the biggest retailer of electricity in the NT. It is a Government Owned Corporation (or GOC) and has the market advantage through the resources and subsidies of Government. There is one other electricity retailer in the NT called RIMFIRE Energy, which holds approximately 10% of the market. Jacana Energy was created in 2015 when Power and Water was structurally separated into three entities: Power and Water, Territory Generation and Jacana. Quickly Jacana closed their shop fronts and moved to a 100% online and over the phone billing service. This has caused a lot of difficulty and confusion, particularly for our elderly people, who are less computer capable.

What we hear about Jacana

At the Araluen Electorate Office we get a constant flow of requests for help from people having problems with their electricity billing through Jacana Energy. Customer service, or lack thereof, is the main problem experienced by most people that talk to us. Jacana does not have

any face to face customer services. A few weeks ago I had a briefing with Jacana to seek clarification on some of the common problems we hear.

New Smart Meters



Changes in how our electricity is metered in the NT is being rolled out by Power and Water. Most of us have gone or will go from a Basic Meter to the new Smart meters (electronic interval meters) which can be read remotely. They send a digital reading of your electricity use to Power and Water. This will reduce the need for workers to enter your property and they can be programmed to suit your tariff requirements. We have been assisting a local man

who had his old meter for more than 40 years. After having a smart meter installed his electricity bill tripled. It turns out that his old basic meter may not have been metering his consumption accurately. But this staggering increase in the cost of his electricity was scary and an unwelcomed surprise.

Jacana Call Centres

Depending on the nature of your problem Jacana claims the average wait time for their call centre is 90 seconds to speak to someone in person and 8 minutes to be helped. They have 14-16 full time workers servicing the whole of the NT in the call-centre.

Still not satisfied

We were advised in the briefing that Jacana will only provide a face to face service in extreme circumstances. This must be organised through a referral to the Minister for Essential Services, who may then pass it onto to Jacana. Talk about an overkill. If you are having problems with Jacana try calling them on 1800 245 090