



# ARALUEN NEWS

June 2026

**Robyn LAMBLEY MLA** *Member for ARALUEN*

## Welcome

### Dear Residents,

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Finke Desert Race is one of the big headline events for Alice Springs in June. Even if you are no great enthusiast of the race, the annual excitement, anticipation and prosperity that Finke stirs in the town is unmatched. The ritual of heading out to the track to watch one of the most thrilling, one the most dangerous and the most dust-drenched (or mud soaked) motor races in Australia is a massive fixture in our lives. For many families, like ours, Finke was a top runner, above Christmas, as being the most fun and festive weekend of the year. This tradition lives on for many people that see it as the ultimate excuse to get out bush with family and friends. Just writing this, gives me goose bumps. Finke is special, an institution that has survived for 50 years. An incredible achievement for those who bust themselves every year to make it bigger and better, let alone the thousands of competitors that have invested their heart and soul into achieving the ultimate of finishing or even winning Finke.

Another BIG headline is the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (and possibly the last) Alice Springs Beanie Festival from 19-22 June 2026. Again, this has been an institution in our town attracting creatives and dedicated beanie lovers from across the world. An incredible story of community love and spirit.

So, for these two massive anniversary celebrations embrace the fact that you are witnessing a profound piece of history in Central Australia.

Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Finke & Happy 30<sup>th</sup> Beanie Festival



## Changes to Child Protection Laws: The Every Child Matters Bill

The NT Government introduced a Bill on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026 containing some significant changes to the placement of children in Out Of Home Care (OOHC). This Bill was highly controversial from the second it was tabled. The new legislation removes reference to the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle (ACPP) and instead uses the “universal” Child Placement Principle, which appears to be very similar to the ACPP. The Minister with carriage of this Bill, Robyn Cahill, told the media that the word “Aboriginal” is not mentioned in the Bill and that the policy was not race specific. This has enraged Aboriginal Child advocates, who clearly see this as a watering down of Aboriginal specific policy. Whilst 90% of the almost 900 children currently in care are Aboriginal, it is reasonable to question if this change is needed. The NT has the highest number of children in care per capita of anywhere in the country. My reading of this legislation is that the same child placement principle will still apply – children in OOHC will be placed first and foremost with family and kinship carers. One difference is that this principle will not operate indefinitely. If a permanent kinship carer cannot be found within a specific timeframe (2 years) then the child can be placed with a non-kinship carer. The Minister claims this change will better address the child’s need for

“permanency” and stability and prioritises long-term wellbeing over “prolonged, unstable and temporary arrangements.”

Again, this is highly contentious. This Bill reintroduces family responsibility orders which were removed from the *Youth Justice Act 2005* in 2021 to address antisocial behaviours among children and youth. It provides a clear escalation pathway to support compliance and accountability for parents.

Long overdue is the requirement within this Bill that all children will be afforded Independent legal representation in certain circumstances involving care and protection proceedings and orders.

The Bill also includes a clean-up of the Ochre Card system, ensuring that only people who work with children have an Ochre Card and that the system of issuing and renewing these cards is more efficiently managed by Screening Assessment for Employment Northern Territory (SAFE NT).

This Bill was referred to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee for review by 8<sup>th</sup> July 2026, allowing only a very tight timeframe for receiving submissions to this inquiry and conducting public hearings. This has also been highly criticised by stakeholders.

The Bill is likely to return to Parliament for debate in the July sittings (21,22 and 23<sup>rd</sup> July).

## A Game Changer for Alice Springs: Arafura Mine gets the Green Light.

After more than fifteen years of planning, setbacks, and slow-burn hope, Alice Springs has received the news it's been waiting for. On 20 May 2026, Arafura Rare Earths announced that the Nolans mine, located 135km northeast of town, has reached Final Investment Decision (FID). In plain terms: this project is no longer a plan. It's happening. Nolans will produce neodymium-praseodymium oxide (NdPr), a critical material used in the high-performance magnets that power electric vehicles, wind turbines, advanced manufacturing and defence technologies. Once operational, the project is projected to supply 4–5% of global rare earth demand, a significant contribution at a time when the world is urgently seeking alternatives to supply chains dominated by China. That global significance explains why the backing behind Nolans reads like a who's who

of serious money. Investors and lenders include the governments of Canada, the United States, Germany and South Korea, along with the Export-Import Bank of Korea, German export credit agency KfW, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, and private giants Hyundai, Kia and Siemens. In 2022, Gina Rinehart's Hancock Prospecting added \$60 million for a 10% stake. Most recently, the federal government confirmed Nolans will be eligible for funding under the \$1.2 billion Critical Minerals Strategic Reserve. This is not speculative capital. These are strategic investors who believe in this project. Construction is expected to create around 600 jobs, with a further 350 ongoing roles once mining is underway. First production is targeted for late 2029. Yes, many workers will be fly-in, fly-out, and it's worth being realistic about that. But the

350-plus permanent operational roles will grow local roots over time, and the flow-on effects, in housing, hospitality, retail, healthcare and services, will benefit the whole community regardless. Arafura has long expressed a commitment to building a local Alice Springs workforce, and with construction now imminent, that commitment will be put to the test. The economic future of Alice Springs and Central Australia has been tied to Nolans for a long time. Projects like this fail quietly all the time, so the fact that Arafura held this together through commodity cycles, financing rounds, and years of uncertainty is worth acknowledging. This is genuinely good news for our town. More people, more business, and more investment means better services and amenities for all of us.

Every year, usually in May, the NT Treasurer provides a new annual Budget for the entire NT Government. The media are invited to a “lock-up” prior to the Budget being released. This gives them the exclusive opportunity to get across the main changes in the Budget in preparation for the subsequent media coverage. The moment the Treasurer begins reading the budget speech in Parliament, the embargo officially lifts, communication devices are returned, and media outlets immediately publish their breaking analysis.

Upon the Treasurer delivering the Budget in Parliament all Members of the NT Legislative Assembly are provided hard copies of the Budget Papers. This includes a package of 5-6 separate budget papers ad-

ressing: the agency budgets, infrastructure program, The budget strategy, the economy, and regional highlights.

### The 2026 NT Budget was tabled in Parliament on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

The 2026-27 NT Budget was introduced by the Treasurer the Honourable Bill Yan, together with the Appropriation (2026-2027) Bill 2026 (Serial 63) and Treasury Legislation Amendment Bill 2026 (Serial 64). This Bill is to authorise an amount to be paid from the Central Holding Authority for the financial year ending 30 June 2027.

The Bill was then referred to the Estimates Committee and will be considered in detail by Parliament in a one-day sittings on 18 June 2026.



ARRCS has been given Commonwealth funding to create a new Specialist Dementia Care Unit at Old Timers.

They are planning to refurbish 10 beds in Flynn Lodge for this purpose.

This means 10 residents of Flynn Lodge will need to move to a different part of Old Timers.

The new Dementia Unit is welcomed in Alice Springs. However, the reshuffle and disruption is causing anguish for some residents and their families.

I wonder how this construction work will impact the wonderful Old Timers Fete.

## What happens after the Budget is delivered?

After the Budget is delivered by the Treasurer in the Legislative Assembly, together with the Appropriation Bill, a **Budget Estimates** process is triggered.

A Budget Estimates Committee was created by a motion of Parliament, moved by the Leader of Government Business, in the May 2026 sittings. This committee operates in a similar fashion to all Parliamentary Committees. This year the Budget Estimates Committee will consist of five Members: three Government Members, one Opposition Member and one Independent Member. Other Members, not on the Budget Estimates Committee, can also participate if they choose.

Hearings of the Budget Estimates committee will take place in Parliament House and will be spread across 7 days for no more than 60 hours in total.

During these hearings the Budget Estimates Committee will ask Ministers and their Government officials on all matters relating to the Budget and operations of the agencies.

Budget Estimates is when the real secrets, struggles and problems within Government are revealed. It can be a particularly gruelling process for Ministers and their officials in the firing line. For a politician it is one of the

most exciting times of the year when you can ask questions that there has not been an opportunity to ask. It is the ultimate scrutiny opportunity in the Parliamentary calendar. No area of Government is technically off limits.

Members can place questions on notice during hearings, requiring written responses to be tabled within a set timeframe. This is important when detailed data isn't available.

Proceedings are recorded by *Hansard* and published publicly, ensuring transparency and a permanent record.

### What happens after the Budget Estimates process with the Budget?

Following the conclusion of the Estimates hearings, the Estimates Committee holds a brief formal meeting to consider and adopt its Committee Report. In the 2026 Budget cycle, this will occur on Thursday 18 June, immediately after the hearings conclude at 1.30pm.

At 2pm on the same day, the Legislative Assembly or Parliament convenes. The primary purpose of this sitting is to debate and pass the **Appropriation (2026-2027) Bill 2026**. This is typically completed within a couple of hours. Occasionally other “urgent” business

is dealt with on the same sitting day, but that is the exception rather than the rule.

Once the Assembly passes the Appropriation Bill, it is presented to the Administrator of the Northern Territory for Royal Assent. This is the critical final legal step — it is the Administrator's assent, not the Assembly vote alone, that gives the Bill full legal force and converts it into the Appropriation (2026-2027) Act 2026.

Upon Royal Assent, the Budget comes into full legal effect. The Central Holding Authority — the NT Government's central fund from which all appropriated money is drawn — is then authorised to release funds to agencies in accordance with the amounts and purposes specified in the Act, enabling the Government to legally meet its Budget commitments for the financial year ending 30 June 2027.

### Budget Estimates Hearings

9<sup>th</sup> June to 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026

15<sup>th</sup> June to 18<sup>th</sup> June 2026

You can stream these hearings live:  
[Broadcast – Northern Territory Government – Legislative Assembly](#)

## Seven Years On: where is our new Hospital Outpatient Dept?

This is one of those stories of abject failure by Government, not dissimilar to the dumped National Aboriginal Art Gallery.

In 2019 the Federal Government allocated \$25.7 million for a new Ambulatory Care Centre at the Alice Springs Hospital — an outpatient department that would deliver a broad range of services including oncology, obstetrics and gynaecology, midwifery, and renal dialysis. In 2021 the NT Government confirmed in Budget Papers that construction would begin in late 2022 and be completed by late 2023.

Neither of those things happened!

Not a single sod was turned. And in the 2024–25 Budget the facility was cut from the list entirely, with the \$25.7 million quietly redirected by the former Labor Government to

build a new renal unit on the hospital campus instead — replacing the Flynn Drive Community Health Centre facility that has served Alice Springs for more than thirty years. This was done without meaningful community consultation and without any public acknowledgment that the original promise had been abandoned.

Now, in the 2026 NT Budget, the Ambulatory Care Centre has reappeared — with \$2.35 million allocated for design. I welcome this. After years of broken promises, any genuine movement is better than none. But having watched this project be announced, delayed, redirected, and cut, I am not prepared to simply accept a design allocation as a commitment. Design must lead to construction, and construction must deliver the full outpa-

tient facility this community was promised in 2019 — not another scaled-back substitute.

Are we to expect a new Hospital renal unit or are we getting what was originally proposed a new “broad ranging” Outpatient Department?

The NT Government needs to be transparent about the full expected cost of construction and the timeline to complete. Is the Federal Government \$25.7 million from 2019 still on the table (plus CPI)?

I will continue to hold both governments to account on this. And I will continue to push for what Central Australia needs most: a new Alice Springs Hospital. I started this campaign in 2015. The current core Alice Springs Hospital building is no longer fit for purpose. We deserve a modern new Hospital.

## A “Boring” but Responsible 2026 NT BUDGET

When it comes to spending public money, there is nothing wrong with taking a conservative or “boring” approach. There is nothing wrong with being careful and responsible with other people’s money. Governments are legally bound to spend public money responsibly. Every dollar that they spend should be measured to ensure that we get “bang for our buck”. We all know of Government funded projects, services and initiatives that seem to fail in delivering what they are meant to. The obscene waste of Government funds we sometimes see in Alice Springs is simply wrong. Governments and Government-funded entities need to be reminded that it is not their money they are spending. Accountability should not be optional, it must be mandatory.

Overspending by Governments has led us to where we are now Federally. Big new taxes affecting almost everyone, announced in the May 2026 Federal Budget, have been crafted as the solution to stemming our almost \$600 billion dollars national debt.

In the NT, over-spending has delivered us a crippling \$13 billion of debt in 2026, completely unsustainable for a tiny population of around 260,000 people.

Like all of us, Governments must borrow money to pay for their over-spends or their budget deficits. In the NT we are paying approx. \$1.6 million dollars per day to service our debt. This will rise to a

projected total of \$679m in 2026/27. The NT has the highest per capita debt burdens of any jurisdiction or Government in Australia.

The daily cost of servicing the Federal Government debt is approximately \$74m per day. To put it in perspective, the federal government spends more on debt interest than it does on childcare or infrastructure annually. It's a significant and rising cost that constrains future spending capacity. This is fundamentally wrong.

So, the NT Government delivering a fairly “boring” budget on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026 indicates to me that that there has been some restraint in spending, and that is a good thing. There appears to be no big “cash splashes” or “sweeteners”. There was very little in the way of “new spending”. They are honouring most of the big spending commitments that Labor made before the 2024 election and continuing to spend money on their primary commitments of reducing crime: policing and prisons. Most Government departments received their approx. 10% annual increase in budgets to cover the usual year-on-year increase in operational costs.

### FACT

The NT Government leases 166 separate properties in Alice Springs – comprising 237,000m<sup>2</sup>. The largest leased NTG property in Alice Springs is in the Alice Plaza.

## In the wake of the loss of Kumanjaya Little Baby

The town is still suffering the loss of Kumanjaya, the devastating impacts of the search for an innocent little girl ending so tragically, and the extreme social disruption that followed. After spending two weeks in Darwin for Parliament in May, I was shocked to come home and see the Shell service station across from the Alice Springs Hospital still closed and in a state of disrepair after several weeks. The night that Kumanjaya was found and the man charged with her murder was taken into custody (Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026), a riot erupted in the Hospital carpark. This was the biggest riot Alice Springs has seen in decades, possibly ever. The cost of the extensive damage and disruption to trade of the Shell Service Station, plus Piggly Wiggly's, must surely now run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The question people are asking is: what happens now?

The positive from this tragedy is that people came together. A greater sense of connection and loyalty to each other was forged through pain and adversity — something none of us are likely to forget.

People across social and racial divides now see each other in more open and positive light, I am positive of it.

The downside is the evidence that dangerous riots can so easily erupt from anger and frustration in this town. We are unlikely to see the last of this extreme anti-social behaviour. One can only hope it remains infrequent and is universally rejected by the entire community. Any indication that this sort of behaviour is in anyway acceptable is a major threat to the safety, security and liveability of Alice Springs. Extreme circumstances can evoke extreme reactions, but reactions must be within civil and respectable bounds — otherwise our safety is truly compromised in a way none of us ever thought possible.

The Hospital carpark riot on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026 was a dark chapter in our history as a reaction to our absolute darkest chapter, the loss of Kumanjaya Little Baby. But two wrongs don't make a right. The only acceptable outcome is that life must improve for all of us.

## NT Budget 2026/27—Infrastructure Projects

Government infrastructure spending is critical to keeping our local NT economies ticking over. In 2026 /27 will see little in the way of new money for infrastructure for Alice Springs, however existing projects will be progressed.

### Existing Infrastructure Projects

Project	2025/26	2026/27
Flood Mitigation	\$9.4M	Not Clear
Subdivision Works Kilgariff Estate	\$11M	\$11M
Tourism Central Australia and Info Centre	\$4.8M	\$4.8M
Schwarz Cres & Stuart Hwy Upgrade	\$8.9M	\$8.2M
Multicultural Centre	\$8.9M	\$9.8M
St. Mary's Social Housing Development	\$14.8M	\$12M
Multi-Sports Precinct—Gillen	\$14.1M	\$14.5M
Alice Springs Library	\$14.8M	\$14.96M

### New Infrastructure Projects

Musgrave St. Project	N/A	\$0.8M
Alice Springs Correctional Facility	N/A	\$12M

ALICE SPRINGS TOWN COUNCIL  
NIGHT MARKETS FT. FINKE DESERT RACE

# GIG GUIDE

**TODD STREET & COUNCIL LAWS**

5:00PM-9:00PM FOOD COURT  
5:45PM, 7:00PM, 8:15PM AIRTIME FMX SHOWS  
6:00PM-7:30PM FINKE TALENT SIGNING TABLES

**TODD MALL**

5:00PM-9:00PM AMUSEMENT PARK & MARKET STALLS  
6:00PM & 7:30PM SCREENING FINKE: THERE & BACK

**SOUTH HARTLEY STREET CARPARK**

5:00PM-9:00PM MARKET STALLS & FINKE ACTIVATIONS

**THURS 4 JUNE 5-9PM**

Last year the NT Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment, Josh Burgoyne, approved the rezoning of the former **Alice Springs Apartments** on the corner of Gap Road and Gnoilya Street to allow the Salvation Army to establish an accommodation facility for women and children escaping domestic violence.

The property — a 1970s-era former motel that has operated as a 25-unit apartment block for several decades — was purchased by the Salvation Army in 2024 for \$2.4 million. The rezoning changes the classification of the site from Tourist Commercial (TC) to Community Purpose (CP). The Salvation Army has received \$7.8 million in Federal Government funding to establish and operate the service.

The proposal has attracted significant community opposition, particularly from residents of the adjacent Gap neighbourhood. The intent behind the facility is commendable, but the chosen location is deeply problematic.

The site sits directly across from Piggly Wiggly's and within close proximity to the Gapview Hotel — an area already associated with alcohol-fuelled violence and anti-social behaviour. It is probably the

single worst place you could locate such a facility in town given that Alice Springs carries the highest rates of domestic violence and alcohol-fuelled violence in the country.

We were kindly provided an update on the accommodation facility by the State Manager for Family Violence Programs for the Salvation Army in NT / Qld.

*A development Permit was issued for the proposed development in December 2025. Then a Building Permit was issued on 7 April 2026. The project is currently out to tender for the construction works. While it depends on the outcome of the tender, we hope to commence work towards the end of July 2026. The expected completion date is June 2027 subject to contractor availability*

So, it seems that despite the objections to this project, it is well on track to be up and running by the end of 2027.

**FACT**

The NT Government increased the Public Sector (NTPS) by 884 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, since the September quarter of 2024. The Government said this is an increase in teachers, nurses and police.

The latest NT Police Crime Statistics (March 2026) show a significant decline in Alice Springs crime compared to the same period in 2025. While this is encouraging, the figures don't capture the full picture — crime severity and underreporting remain concerns. Still, the trend is moving in the right direction.

**Alice Springs Crime Statistics**

Year Ending March 2025 compared to Year Ending March 2026

Crime	Year end Mar 2025	Year end Mar 2026	↑/↓
<b>Crime Against the Person</b>			
Homicide & Related Offences	3	0	100% ↓
Assault - Total	2356	1844	22% ↓
Assault - Sexual	133	117	12% ↓
Other acts endangering persons	297	300	1% ↑
<b>Crime against the person totals</b>	<b>2789</b>	<b>2261</b>	<b>19% ↓</b>
<b>Crime Against Property</b>			
Domestic Break Ins (including attempted)	1092	741	32% ↓
Commercial Break Ins (including attempted)	357	199	44% ↓
Motor Vehicle Theft	179	92	49% ↓
Theft other than MV	1768	1296	27% ↓
Property Damage	2770	2106	24% ↓
<b>Crime against property totals</b>	<b>6166</b>	<b>4434</b>	<b>28% ↓</b>

**GOVIES' MUSTER**  
Going the distance for outback kids  
**July 3, 2026**

**The RED CENTRE WRINGER**  
LAST ONE STANDING  
BACKYARD ULTRA  
ALICE SPRINGS, NT  
6.7 KM LOOPS  
**1 August 2026**

**JOIN HIPPY!**  
IF YOUR CHILD IS 3 YEARS OLD OR BEFORE 30TH JUNE 2026  
FREE  
HIPPY is a play-based learning program with fun activity packs to complete at home with your child. You will be supported by a HIPPY Guide along the way.  
SCAN HERE!  
To express your interest in the HIPPY Program, scan the code and fill out the form!  
HIPPY  
Email: mica.fleming@stangentyne.org.au  
Phone: 08 8955 4835

**Stronger Together**  
—WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY  
ENDING OLDER PERSON ABUSE IN THE NT  
Join us for a free morning tea this World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and be part of the conversations that inspire action to drive change across the NT.  
Darwin - 15th June  
Alice Springs - 17th June  
Tennant Creek - 18th June  
Katherine - 23rd June  
each event will feature guest speakers, entertainment and refreshments  
For more information, call 1800 812 953  
Seniors' Rights Service  
COTA  
NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

**CELEBRATING 50 NAIDOC WEEK**  
**NAIDOC WEEK 50 YEARS DEADLY**  
5-12 JULY 2026

**old timers FETE**  
Alice Springs | Est. 1967  
**August 8, 2026**  
10am—3pm  
Old Timers Village

**Upcoming Events**

- 50th Finke Desert Race**
- 4 June—Night Markets 5pm—9pm
- 5 June — Scrutineering 4pm—9pm
- 6 June — Prologue: 8am
- 7 June — Race to Finke: 7:30am
- 8 June — Return from Finke: 7:15am
- Alice Springs Beanie Festival**
- 19—22 June - Araluen Arts Centre
- Territory Day**
- 1 July — 4 pm ANZAC Oval
- The Govies Muster**
- 3 July—the Gillen Club 5:30—9:00pm
- Alice Springs Show**
- 3—4 July Blatherskite Park 9:00am
- Naidoc Week**
- 5 July—12 July
- Alice Springs Running Festival**
- 19 July— Simpsons Gap

**Community Notices**

**ALICE SPRINGS RUNNING FESTIVAL**  
19TH JULY, 2026  
**4th & 5th June!**  
**Swan Lake**  
Duprada Dance Company  
**THE ALICE SPRINGS SHOW**  
JULY 3<sup>RD</sup> & 4<sup>TH</sup>

**Alice Springs Beanie Festival**  
Thankyou! Thankyou! Beanies of Gratitude!  
30th anniversary and final festival  
19-22 June 2026  
Araluen Arts Centre  
www.beaniefest.org