Federal cutbacks to road funding

The Federal Labor Government is playing politics with the lives of Territorians by failing to fund new works/upgrades and look after its roads.

The Federal Government, has cut funding by nearly 50% from $474 million to $244 million. And the little money Federal Labor has allocated is not available until the final years of the program.

Alice Springs to suffer

This means the following works won’t be able to start until 2016/17 which is two Federal Elections away.

- No $5m for commencing sealing of the Santa Teresa Road; and
- No $5m to continue sealing the Tanami Road

In a massive blow to the NT’s road infrastructure, there is no Federal money for the following works:

- No $70m for safety and fatigue management including truck parking bays, intersection improvements, safety treatments, strengthening the Katherine River Bridge, upgrading the Stuart Highway from Dixon Road to the MVR in Alice Springs; and
- No $125m for strengthening and widening of National Highways (Stuart/Barkly/Victoria Highways)

These cutbacks will lead to a deterioration in roads which are already rated as poor by the AusRAP Australian Automobiles Association report.

New school bus for special needs students

An important new school bus for special needs students will make a huge difference to those most in need in our community.

The Country Liberals Government understands the importance of a special needs school bus in Alice Springs, and will spend $158,000 on the new special needs vehicle for Centrational Middle School this financial year.

Children with physical and/or intellectual disabilities often have trouble getting to school and the new bus provides a safe means of travel for our most vulnerable students.

The Country Liberals Government provides special needs bus services to approximately 283 students across Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Nhulunbuy every day at an annual cost of $3.386 million.
Positive results from first boot camp trial

The first phase of the Territory Government's first Youth Boot Camp trial has finished with the return of 10 youths from South Australia's Flinders Ranges.

The group had been identified as being at risk of offending in the future. Over the past eight days, the group completed a challenging 100 kilometre trek through the harsh South Australian outback.

Those involved were challenged as individuals, and as part of a team, in a range of skills including bushcraft, navigation and abseiling. It hasn’t been an easy experience for these young people. The program is designed to confront them with difficult mental and physical situations and to make them take a good, hard look at themselves and their futures.

The next phase of the trial involves working with families to transfer the lessons learned by their children into their daily lives.

A second Boot Camp trial will be undertaken by the Alice Springs-based Tangentyere Council later this month.

More police resources to keep our community safe

Fourteen new members of the Northern Territory Police Force have graduated from Auxiliary Squad 47 and Aboriginal Community Police Officer (ACPO) Squad 19.

The auxiliaries have received training in a range of areas including legislation and procedures, weapons and firearms offences, dealing with dishonesty and property offences, radio dispatch, mental health and suicide prevention.

The graduates will improve call centre capabilities, dispatch patrol cars and keep the community safe.

Auxiliaries play an important role in call centres, providing vital support to police on the beat and keeping our streets safer.

The six ACPO graduates have received training in areas of road safety, domestic violence, offences against the person, operational safety tactical training and ethics and conduct.

APCOs act as a conduit between police and indigenous community members. They help instil confidence and trust in police and their duties by providing a vital cultural link.

ACPO graduates will begin work immediately with postings to Alice Springs, Katherine and Darwin.

Two Police Recruit Squads are currently training at the College with Recruit Squad 120 expected to graduate in September this year and Recruit Squad 122 expected to graduate in January 2014.

Henley-On-Todd Regatta

I had the pleasure of officially opening the 52nd annual Henley-On-Todd Regatta recently.

This is an amazing and fun-filled event that has been running since December 1962 and raises money for various charities.

If you have not been to a Henley-On-Todd, do yourself a favour and get along next year on Saturday 16 August.
Mountain bike trail network for Alice

The Country Liberals Government has allocated $150,000 in the recent 2013 Budget to help formalise and upgrade trails at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station for beginners, intermediate and advanced riders.

Mountain biking is a recreational pursuit that families can enjoy together. With careful planning these trails can have long-lasting economic, social and health benefits for the entire community.

The Country Liberals Government is working closely with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA), the local mountain biking community and Central Australian Rough Riders on the development and management of the trail network.

These trails will vary in degrees of difficulty and length, catering to a broad range of interest, experience and skill level.

The IMBA plan will help guide the development of the new trails at the Telegraph Station and ensure they are not only sustainable well into the future, but also some of the best mountain bike trails in Australia.

The development of the trail network will occur over the coming months and will consider factors such as environmental impacts and sacred sites. The project will also involve consultation with the community, traditional owners, local business and tourist operators.

The Country Liberals Government has also allocated $300,000 for sealing and upgrading of the Riverside Walk along the Todd River to ensure cyclists of all levels can easily access the new tracks at the Telegraph Station from town.

The Territory Government recognises that mountain biking is growing in popularity in the Centre and has significant benefits to the community.

With the Country Liberals Government focused on growing tourism in Central Australia, this new mountain bike trail network will become a valuable asset to the town, attracting more visitors to the region and providing a boost for local businesses.

Alice property crime down, down, down

A zero-tolerance approach to crime in Alice Springs has seen more than 4,000 arrests and a 9% per cent reduction in total property offences for the year ending June 2013. The statistics show there are almost 500 less property offences in Alice Springs in the June 2013 quarter than in the June 2012 quarter, with:

- A 40 per cent reduction in total house break-ins
- A 50 per cent reduction in total commercial break-ins
- A 43 per cent reduction in motor vehicle theft and related offences
- A 30 per cent reduction in theft and other related offences
- A 30 per cent reduction in property damage

To deter offending behaviour, police have focused on conducting high visibility foot, motorbike and pushbike patrols in the town, while also developing strong relationships with business owners and other stakeholders.

The substantial decrease in property-related crime in Alice Springs reflects the Country Liberals Government’s commitment to get tough on crime. The government is committed to reducing crime in Alice Springs and will continue to develop proactive strategies to tackle property-related crime.

In line with the Northern Territory Government’s commitment to be transparent and accountable, Territory crime statistics will soon be published online each month on a user-friendly interactive website.

The Todd Mall Markets are a great place to catch up with friends
Local MLA's Robyn Lambley, Matt Conlan and myself hosted a lunch for seniors as part of the Seniors Month activities. They were joined by the Minister for Seniors, Peter Styles. The lunch was well attended with approximately 120 seniors and everyone enjoyed the Hawaiian theme.

Tourists now have a new, modern way to get around the streets of Alice Springs. A new pilot program has been approved to allow Segways to be used for commercial tour operations. Segways are great fun and an easy way for tourists to enjoy the sights and sounds of the Territory as part of organised tour group activities.

The two-wheeled, electrically powered chariots use dynamic stabilisation, allowing a person to stand on the platform and control motion by shifting their body weight.

I urge all tourist operators to have a look at how Segways could enhance existing tour operations, or whether they could use them to branch out in a new direction.

Tourism picks up pace with segways

New office phone number

The Braitling Electorate office number has changed.

Our new number is

8951 5463