Major sport hub in green estate

By NIGEL ADAM

A NEW Alice Springs suburb could be an eco-friendly showcase – and include a sporting complex. Mayor Damien Ryan will lobby for both when the Azri site near the airport is developed. He said the suburb should be solar-powered and environmentally friendly.

And he wants a sports centre. “We’ve got 1500 girls who play netball and they need indoor courts,” he said.

Mr Ryan said two things could make Azri “a very desirable” place to live.

“Public submissions on the Azri proposal close on January 22. The Territory Government has called on the Federal Government to release land at Alice Springs Airport for residential development. Ms Lawrie has written to federal Infrastructure Minister Anthony Albanese.

“The Alice Springs Airport sits on a large tract of Commonwealth land, much of which isn’t restricted due to aviation activities,” she said.

“This would allow large sections of the land to be developed for non-aviation use. Any proposed residential development at the Alice Springs Airport would complement the Territory Government’s new suburb at the Azri site.”

Ms Lawrie said the Government had negotiated an indigenous land use agreement with the Lilur Artepe Aboriginal Corporation for residential development on 14ha of land in Mt Johns Valley.

A similar agreement led to the release of land at Larrakia – 40 blocks in stage one and 39 in stage two, including six for first-homebuyers and one multiple dwelling block for seniors’ public housing.

A developer has applied to build 116 apartments on the old Melanka backpackers’ hostel site in Todd Street, 500m from the CBD.

Students learning skills of the trade

By CAMERON BOON

SCHOOL students seeking apprenticeships in 2010 recently began a four-week introduction to Trades course in Alice Springs.

Fifteen students are being taught theory and learning practical skills in four traditional trade areas – automotive, engineering, construction and electrical – at Charles Darwin University.

After three weeks in the classroom, the students will undertake a week-long work placement in the trade they are interested in pursuing.

The course is being funded by Group Training Australia with YouthInfo arranging the work placements.

All students taking part in the introduction to Trades course are hoping to begin either a full-time or school-based apprenticeship in the new year.

Employers are being encouraged to host one of the students in their workplace for a week.

There is no cost.

For more information, contact Alisha Hurn at Group Training on 8953 2622.

Alice surviving global crisis

THE bubble economy of Alice Springs is one of the reasons the town continues to have a high employment rate, despite the global financial woes rattling East Coast job markets.

Chamber of Commerce Central Australia’s executive officer Kay Eade (pictured) said she recently returned from Cairns, which has lost about 2000 tradespeople in a year.

“It didn’t hit you until you go over there and see how bad it is for them,” she said.

Ms Eade was speaking after the Australian Bureau of Statistics released its latest labour force data, which shows a 4.2 per cent increase of people employed in the NT, compared with a 0.4 per cent increase nationally.

“This data is very promising for our economy, but we could still see a lot more people employed in Central Australia if we could house them,” she said.

Ms Eade said initiatives to attract people to Alice, such as the Azri Get a Life campaign, would help.

“Can’t see any reason why the eastern states wouldn’t be losing people to Alice for a year or so to have an adventure and get a job while they are here.”

Treasurer Delia Lawrie said the latest ABS labour force figures showed there was a 3.5 per cent increase in the trend number of people employed in the Territory during the past year.

She said there were 3970 more Territorians employed than the same time last year.

“Territorians are building applications for positions and are engaging in new career paths in order to respond to the needs of the community,” Ms Lawrie said.

Centre linked to Isa

DIRECT flights to Mount Isa from Alice Springs began yesterday.

Regional Pacific Airlines chief executive officer Anthony Sanford said the service would be weekly.

The flight would take one hour.

“Mount Isa to Alice Springs is a natural market for Regional Pacific, as the two centres are only linked by a 34-hour one-way bus trip,” he said.

One-way fares start at $259.

There are connections from Mt Isa to Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns.

Voyages offloads

VOYAGES has sold its second resort to two of Central Australia’s largest investment companies and a government organisation.

The 139-room Alice Springs Resort has been bought by Indigenous Business Australia, Centrexco and the Stieger family.

It will be managed by Chifley Hotels Australia and will be one of 70 hotels operated by Constellation Hotels.

The hotel groups director of asset and marketing Bruce Holliday said the recent acquisition was in private ownership, as part of Constellation’s aggressive acquisition program.

He said the group has bought up 50 of its hotels in the past four years, but needed a property in Central Australia.

“We’ve had a few good acquisitions this past year, and it is part of a bigger growth strategy, but all our feedback from clients showed us that we need a quality resort in the Red Centre,” he said.

“As part of our national network, the good feedback we get about Alice Springs Resort helped us decide it was the right place.”

General manager Jeff Huylen said staffing levels would stay the same at 55 and 60 employees and the management team would remain.

Voyages last month sold Kings Canyon Resort to an Australian subsidiary of American catering giant Delaware North.