ALICE Springs’ motorists are being gouged over diesel prices by fuel companies, with hours yesterday charging nearly 20 cents per litre more than the national average.

Monday morning prices in Alice Springs reached as high as 140.9 cents per litre, while the cheapest was listed at 138.9 cents per litre.

For comparison, the diesel price in the regional town of Emerald, Queensland, averaged 131.8 cents per litre in December 2015.

The Australian Institute of Petroleum reported the Territory average was 136.8 cents on January 10 – 14.6 cents higher than the national average of 122.2 cents per litre.

Chief Minister Adam Giles has asked for a “please explain” from fuel companies over the price of diesel across the Northern Territory.

“I am concerned about returns to historic behaviours by fuel retailers,” Chief Minister Adam Giles.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission’s November 2015 report into the fuel market showed Darwin fuel retailers in 2013-14 had net profits which were 10 times the Adelaide average.

The movement of fuel price, Alice Springs’ petrol prices was similar to Darwin.

Territorians are still being slapped at the bowser despite diesel prices dropping more than 2.5 cents per litre over the past few days. The small reduction still allowed retailers to make upwards of 33 cents per litre profit.

AANT chief executive Byron Henderson said a profit margin of 15 cents per litre and lower was considered acceptable. He said there was no justifiable reason for retailers not passing on the price cut.

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“Australia's lack of competition has traditionally been blamed for Central Australia’s expensive fuel prices.”

Tom Velling

AUSIEE member Chris Hemsworth’s experience on an outback cattle station has given him top credentials to promote tourism in the Northern Territory.

“Aussie actor Chris Hemsworth’s experience on an outback cattle station has given him top credentials to promote tourism in the Northern Territory.”

“But the new Australian arrivals were well up for the challenge.”

From natural hot springs, to swimming in waterfalls, fishing, air boating on wetlands, jumping crocodile cruises or swimming at Australia’s most central beach at Ormiston Gorge, the NT punch-es above its weight.”

Mr Giles has asked Tourism NT in its discussions with Tourism Australia to ensure Mr Hemsworth visits the Territory as soon as it fits into his schedule.

Chris Hemsworth will be promoting the NT.

**Excitement builds for Eels clash**

Tom Velling

LOCAL rugby league fans have the only ones lacking in their lips ahead of next month’s Parramatta Eels match.

“The game is expected to give Alice Springs business a much-needed boost.”

Players, support staff, officials and board members from the Eels will arrive in town on Wednesday, February 10 – three days before the game.

The Chamber of Commerce will host a cocktail function at the Convention Centre on Friday night before the game.

An NT Department of Sport and Recreation spokesman said local sport stores, contractors, hotels, caterers, restaurants and transport companies would all benefit.

SportsPower manager Anton Konaridis believed he sold more than 20 tickets since they were made available last week.

“A majority sell the last few days before the game. Everyone floods in,” he said.

Rugby league fan Shahel Lal said it was good to see NRL in Alice Springs.

“I am very excited, definitely,” he said, after admitting he was an avid Broncos supporter.

The Parramatta Eels take on the Gold Coast Titans on Saturday, February 13, at Anzac Oval in Alice Springs.

**Hemsworth to be appealing face of tourism**

Tom Velling

AUSIEE member Chris Hemsworth’s experience on an outback cattle station has given him top credentials to promote tourism in the Northern Territory.

“Chris Hemsworth is a perfect choice from the Northern Territory’s perspective as he knows what it’s like to live in the outback,” said Chief Minister Adam Giles.

“I am sure he will hammer home the message that the Northern Territory is an iconic destination full of spectacular landscapes and unique experiences.”

Although the new campaign focuses on Australia’s world-class aquatic and coastal experiences, Mr Giles said Central Australia’s attractions were well up for the challenge.

“From natural hot springs, to swimming in waterfalls, fishing, air boating on wetlands, jumping crocodile cruises or swimming at Australia’s most central beach at Ormiston Gorge, the NT punches above its weight.”

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**Aussies not too lucky**

MORE than a quarter of a million Australians tried their luck in last Thursday’s record-breaking $131.6 billion ($2.3 billion) draw, and all are back at work.

The huge US jackpot, which was shared by three US winners, caused a gambling frenzy in Australia, with more than 250,000 people registering on, and crashing, the website where they could buy tickets.

It was the first time Australian players have been able to take part in an offshore lottery after online lottery business Lotteries was granted an Australian licence.

Lottoland said none of its players won the jackpot but 14,000 Australians won prizes worth a total of $52,430.


Lotteries apologised to customers who faced problems after the big demand caused the Australian website to crash.

**Tom Velling**

Tom Velling

Ashey Manicaros

‘Please explain’ of fuel pricing

**Visual arts centre a hit but cinema down**

EXHIBITION visitor numbers at the Araluen Arts Centre in Alice Springs exceeded expectations in the year gone by.

The Department of Arts and Museums 2014-15 annual report revealed there were 27,836 visitors to the visual arts centre — 836 more than the estimate.

However attendance to the cinema and performances was lower than expected at 23,339.

“Visitor numbers to art house cinema screenings and performances are slightly lower than forecast, due to a three-month period where the Araluen Arts Centre could not be hired out or used for events due to renovation,” the report read.

The Araluen Arts Centre also took over historic house museum last year. The Residency, with 15,100 visitors.

**Charlotte, Jack tops**

PARENTS have stuck with the classics when naming their children, with Charlotte and Jack, the Territory’s most popular for 2015.

“According to the NT Births, Deaths and Marriages Registry, Charlotte was most popular for girls for the third year running while Jack jumped up from third place — the first time in five years.”

Second place was more closely tied for girls with Ava, Ella, Emily, Lucy, and Olivia each being used for 14 babies.

For boys, 22 were named James, 19 William and 18 Thomas.

For one family, the top two boys’ names fitted their new arrival.

For the first time in four years, William fell from the top of the list.

Charlotte was also popular internationally with the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge naming their second child Charlotte Elizabeth Diana.