It’s been a big year for our Centre

As 2015 draws to a close, it is an occasion to reflect on some of the plans achieved and delivered in Central Australia.

I’m encouraged by the people I’ve spoken with in the community about the general positivity that has returned to our town.

In reporting the progress of Government to you in this newsletter, I am always mindful that there is more to do.

But I truly believe that our town is showing encouraging signs of real growth, backed by pleasing reports that crime rates have reduced in many areas.

This also comes on top of some wonderful announcements in recent times that I believe will mark significant milestones for our region.

I am proud of my government’s achievement in Alice Springs including our tough action on crime.

Since coming into government in 2012, property offences in town are down 26%, alcohol-related offences down 17% and house break-ins down by an average 14% per year.

There’s no time to celebrate or rest on our laurels but we know that one key to having a better place to live is lower crime.

I also congratulate and thank NT Police on the success of point of sale interventions at bottle shops. With this initiative we are helping keeping the town secure and families safe.

As a consequence of our stand on crime, we are now seeing the town’s image for locals and visitors returning to a very positive one.

This is having an impact on tourism, with visitor numbers up, but also on how we feel about the town we live in.

There is no plan to relax our enforcement efforts and we will continue to address all crime issues in Alice Springs head on.

I wish your families a safe a happy Christmas and all the very best in 2016 and beyond.

2015-16 INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

$5.5M for Larapinta Child and Family Centre
$4.25M to upgrade Netball facilities
$34.2M in upgrades to Alice Springs Hospital
$25M to seal the Mereenie Inner Loop
$4M for new Braitling PreSchool
$4.5M for connector road linking Albrecht Dr and Mparntwe Drive
$2.7M to upgrade & develop Alice Springs Youth Centre
$1.85M upgrades to Drags, Speedway and Go-karts
$1.5M for new off-street school bus interchange

“2015 marks a number of significant milestones in Central Australia”

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This newsletter outlines some of the grand plans achieved and being delivered in Central Australia, including tourism, infrastructure, health, sport and law and order.

I wish your families a safe a happy Christmas and all the very best in 2016 and beyond.
February

**Parramatta Eels match**
Thousands of Alice Springs NRL fans were treated to a fantastic night of football when the Territory Eels took on the Wests Tigers at Anzac Oval.

> It was a fantastic trial match and a great night out. The Alice Springs crowd got behind the Territory Eels with plenty of gold and blue jerseys and flags around the ground.

**Central Australia Development Office**
A key part of unlocking the potential of Northern Australia lies in Central Australia and the opening of this office was the start to creating a hub for the Government’s campaign to bring more investment to the Red Centre.

March

**Virgin flys Adelaide - Alice - Darwin**
After hosting discussions with Virgin Australia about expanding their Territory footprint I was very pleased to see this become a reality. It was very exciting to welcome Virgin Australia to Alice Springs and congratulate them on their commitment to the Territory with this new route and two new lounges.

April

**Launch of Alice Art Trail**
Visitors to the Red Centre now have a guide to the region’s best art galleries and centres through the establishment of new tourist art trails. I was delighted to officially launch Tourism Central Australia’s Art Trail program and I congratulate those behind the concept.

> The extra significance of the Indigenous round, honouring the fantastic contributions to the game by many Indigenous players, made this match in Alice Springs extra special.

May

**Cabinet meeting at Yuendemu**
A Cabinet meeting was held at Yuendemu.

> This was also a chance to meet with Shire reps and Council reps in the Yuendumu Shire Hall and I also took time to inspect the new police station, art work at Warlukurlangu Artists and attend a community BBQ in the Basketball Stadium.

**Official opening of the lights at AS Inland Dragway**
The opening of the lights at the AS Inland Dragway is another example of the NT Government commitment to community development in Central Australia.

June/July

**Alice Springs Police move into Greatorex Building**
Alice Springs now has a 21st century police station with the completion of a $9 million revamp of the Greatorex Building that better accommodates staff and centralises police operations.

Not only did I get to turn on the lights but I also was treated to a race down the drag strip. I can highly recommend the experience!

**Demons back in Alice**
The Melbourne Demons returned to their second home, the Territory, in preparation for the AFL Indigenous Round against Port Adelaide.

> This project has been both an investment in the local economy and an investment in community safety in Alice Springs.
Alice Springs Black Spot gets Roundabout
It was my great pleasure to announce that due to my constant lobbying in Cabinet, motorists travelling through the intersection of Larapinta Drive and Lovegrove Drive will have a safer journey with fewer delays following the construction of a single lane roundabout. The project is due to be finished by early 2016.

August

Wauchope flats contract awarded
The Central Australian Affordable Housing Company was awarded the management rights of the Wauchope Flats on Dixon Road, consisting of 17 housing units. The Wauchope Flats are to be transitioned to an appealing village for seniors.

September

Red CentreNATS 2015
Red CentreNATS really caught the imagination of motoring enthusiasts around the country with many registrations coming from interstate. It was fantastic to see the huge crowds that turned out to enjoy the variety of events. My Government is committed to building the Territory’s reputation as a home for top class motorsport events with planning already underway for Red CentreNATS 02 from 1-4 Sept 2016. ENTRIES ARE NOW OPEN!

Office of Aboriginal Affairs opens
Economic development and job opportunities for Aboriginal communities will be the focus of the new Office of Aboriginal Affairs which officially opened in Alice Springs in September. The Office supports the vision for Aboriginal Territorians to be empowered to participate in the local economy, while maintaining strong connections to land and culture.

First Home owners move into Kilgariff
I have enjoyed watching the building progress at Kilgariff subdivision during the year and it was a pleasure to present a housewarming gift to the first couple to have their home completed at the new Kilgariff subdivision.

October

Netball Announcement
At a meeting of the Alice Springs Netball Association I announced an additional $2.25M for a long awaited indoor netball stadium for Alice Springs, bringing the total funding to $4.25M.

This is in addition to the 50 per cent increase to annual grant funding for peak sport and recreation organisations across the NT.

Mereenie Inner Loop tender opens
The Territory Government’s $25M commitment to seal the Mereenie Inner Loop is a step closer, with the tender let for the 43km upgrade. This project is another big stimulus to the local Alice Springs construction industry and boosting the local economy.

The Mereenie Inner Loop is a great self-drive or guided tour route, taking in both popular and little-explored destinations in some amazing desert country. This investment is part of the Government’s commitment to attract and keep more visitors in Central Australia.

New agreement for youth services
A co-ordinated after hours youth service between Alice Springs Town Council and Congress will deliver positive outcomes for young people in Alice Springs, fully funded by the Territory Government.

The inaugural Red CentreNATS delighted the organisers, participants, spectators and motor enthusiasts alike.
Airnorth ‘centre run’ takes flight

The Government is serious about connecting Territorians and developing Northern Australia and the new Airnorth ‘centre run’ service is just another sign of that commitment.

This route will open up tourism opportunities making it easier for visitors to get in and out of the region to visit our amazing natural attractions.

November

New Braitling Pre-school gets greenlight

I am very proud to have been part of delivering a Budget which invests in our children’s future. The new $4 million pre-school at Braitling Primary School will provide places for 44 children. The plans were displayed at a public meeting and the building of the Pre-School will commence in early 2016.

Tender open for Larapinta Child and Family Centre

The new $5.5 million child and family centre in Larapinta will help meet a growing need for childcare in Alice Springs.

Located on the Larapinta Primary School site, it will provide 70 new long day childcare places and high quality education programs and services for children and their families.

December

Territory posts record growth figure

The Northern Territory records 10.5% growth in Gross State Product (GSP) to a total of $22.5 billion in 2014-15, topping Australia and all other OECD nations - the highest since 1998-99.

The 2014-15 Treasurer’s Annual Financial Report also showed that net debt in the Northern Territory has reduced to $2.2 billion from a projected $5.5 billion.

CLEANING OUR STREETS OF ICE

Police now have the power to stop and search vehicles in order to halt the spread of dangerous drugs in the Territory.

After much controversy regarding the legislation being delayed, the Parliament passed the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Bill 2015 in the November sittings - unchanged.

The Bill provides Northern Territory Police with the ability to declare specific roads such as the Barkly Highway as ‘declared drug detection areas’, and provides expanded powers to search for drugs in cars.

“Across the nation we are watching the serious impacts of the drug ICE, this is one of the measures being introduced to tackle the complex issue we are facing in the Territory,” Attorney General John Elferink said.

“This is about enhancing the powers of Police and providing them with an additional tool for their frontline duties.

“The Government’s focus remains keeping the community safe and we are doing everything in our power to keep this drug off the streets.”

“With approximately 80% of methamphetamine seized in the Territory being imported from other jurisdictions it was absolutely necessary that this legislation was passed.”

Police Minister Peter Chandler said over 1.5kg of ICE has already been seized this year.

“We need to ensure our police officers are armed with the right resources to deal with this issue.”

Declared routes may be in place for up to 14 days, with police having greater powers to stop drivers and search cars without need for a warrant.