**SKIES** over Central Australia were illuminated with the bright colours of fireworks as Territorians celebrated 39 years of self governance on Saturday night.

Thousands of people descended on Anzac Oval, at the base of Anzac Hill in Alice Springs, to join in the official festivities.

Mayor Damien Ryan said it was great to see residents of Alice Springs come together, “It was great — Deputy Mayor Jamie de Brenni, Councillor Eli Melky and I cooked about 600 sausages for the terrific crowd down at the oval,” Mr Ryan said.

“When these funded events are on, it’s great to see people taking part,” Organiser Dale McIver said there was a real sense of community.

“Just walking around the crowd and talking to people, they all really enjoyed the entertainment,” she said. “Three of the food stalls sold out so they were pretty happy with that.”

Ipswich local Marion Sadler is currently travelling around Australia with her husband. The couple decided to stay in Alice Springs an extra day to help celebrate Territory Day. “We wanted to participate in the celebrations — it’s an important day for the Northern Territory,” she said.

Children took advantage of the face-painting, as families settled in for the official fireworks show.

Many people in town turned out to see Triple J favourite Kingswood take the stage, supported by local band The Boney Maronies.

**“There was a real sense of community at the event”**

But one thing was agreed upon by everyone in attendance. Territory Day is about coming together to celebrate. Alice Springs local Terri McKey said the day is about celebrating and spending time with family. “We’ve bought some fire crackers which we’ll let off when the concert finishes,” she said.

Cassandra Laverty said she loves seeing everyone come together in great community spirit.

Ronan Bloomfield agreed. “Territory Day is a day where everyone can come together and celebrate,” he said. “It’s about sitting down, listening to music and watching fireworks.”

Although the night’s festivities were a huge success, Mayor Ryan had a sombre message the next day about the mess left behind by revelers all over town. “I don’t mind people celebrating with fireworks, but it’s just disappointing to see what has been left behind,” he said. “People seem to just expect someone to come behind them and clean it up.”

Mr Ryan said the clean up will now be done by council workers, who could be using that time to do other work.