

Central Australia is the Territory's largest region, covering 42% of the total land area. The region is made up of small communities separated by long distances and is home to about 39,500 people, of whom 43.2% are Aboriginal. Alice Springs is the main centre in the region, with a population of about 26,500. Around 34.5% of the region's population are aged 24 years or under and about 8.6% are aged 65 years or older.



Major industries in the region include tourism, mining, oil and gas exploration, pastoral and construction. Tourism is an important contributor to economic activity with many natural attractions in the region including Kata Tjuta, Kings Canyon, Uluru and the West MacDonnell Ranges attracting a significant number of domestic and international visitors.

Alice Springs CBD revitalisation

The \$23 million Alice Springs central business district (CBD) revitalisation project continues to progress. In February 2022, the river activation space was completed and cooling and shading works throughout the CBD are expected to be complete in late 2022. Budget 2022 invests a further \$3 million to support the development of the \$5 million all-abilities Kwatja Water Play project.

The Kwatja Water Play project will be integrated into the National Aboriginal Art Gallery (NAAG) Precinct to seamlessly blend into the landscape and enhance the wider amenity around the precinct. The location will also form part of the entrance statement to the precinct and CBD.

The Kwatja Water Play project will also celebrate the unique landscape of Central Australia through strengthening the connection between Lhere Mparntwe (the Todd River) and the NAAG. Construction is expected to begin in early 2023.

Central Australia tourism roads

One of the priority imperatives identified in the Northern Territory Drive Tourism Strategy 2021-2030 is to complete sealing the Red Centre Way (Mereenie Loop) to enhance access to Kings Canyon and the West MacDonnell Ranges.

Budget 2022 includes \$1.25 million in 2022-23 to continue the upgrade and seal of the Mereenie Loop, with works expected to commence in late 2022. The Commonwealth, in conjunction with the Territory Government, has committed funding of \$165 million over the forward years to upgrade and fully seal the Red Centre Way, with estimated completion by late 2028.

The project will support tourism and provide a number of opportunities that target Aboriginal enterprises in the region to enable higher quality tourism product offerings through private investment. Enhanced access will increase visitation and drive demand which is key to growing the region's potential.

Kilgariff

Budget 2022 ensures Alice Springs has access to affordable land through the progressive release of residential lots in Kilgariff. Construction is underway on Kilgariff stage 2, incorporating 87 residential lots. Titles are expected to be issued on 54 lots around May 2022, with the remainder to be progressively released for sale from mid 2022, with titles expected to be issued mid 2023.

Budget 2022 also invests \$40 million for infrastructure to support the fast-tracked development of an additional 250 lots in the future stages of Kilgariff and ensure the supply of titled residential land is available to support population growth in Alice Springs.

This investment includes the construction of a new multipurpose community precinct within Kilgariff and a new home for the rugby codes in the Red Centre. The precinct will incorporate two playing surfaces and supporting infrastructure for use by rugby, other sports, and the general community. The Territory Government will work with rugby codes to build a precinct that creates a sustainable future for the sport in Kilgariff.

Investing in this precinct provides an opportunity for sports to expand into a new home with purpose built playing surfaces, while providing green community spaces for the residents of Kilgariff.

Alice Springs Airport and Brewer Estate

Budget 2022 commits \$33 million across 2023-24 and 2024-25 to support a program of industrial land release at the Alice Springs Airport and Brewer Estate.

This investment will support economic growth in Alice Springs by releasing additional land for light industrial and commercial uses at the Alice Springs Airport as well as heavy industrial uses at the Brewer Estate.

National Aboriginal Art Gallery Precinct

The Territory has committed \$50 million towards the \$150 million NAAG precinct and continues to work with the Commonwealth and other potential investors to secure the remaining investment required.

The precinct is expected to support hundreds of jobs, boost the local economy, and strengthen the Territory's position as the premier destination for Aboriginal art and cultural tourism experiences.

Construction is expected to commence in late 2023, with completion expected in 2025.

Tourism Central Australia (TCA)

To address issues with accessibility and more strategically position TCA, Budget 2022 provides \$5 million for a new purpose-built home for TCA on the Stuart Highway near Anzac Hill. This location will provide high visibility and be connected to the NAAG precinct by a short, landscaped walk. Large vehicle parking will also be provided.

To improve access to the precinct and new TCA home, Budget 2022 also provides \$7.6 million to continue upgrades to the intersection of Schwarz Crescent and the Stuart Highway.

Central Australia Regional Deal

Alice Springs Town Council (ASTC) has developed a regional deal proposal for Central Australia. The Territory Government is working alongside ASTC to progress the proposal with the Commonwealth, which includes a financial request of \$150 million for economic, social and environmental initiatives.

Major works overview

	Capital works
	\$000
Transport	181 609
Housing and community amenities	42 852
Economic affairs	5 000
Recreation, culture and religion	82 930
Health	30 212
Public order and safety	3 655
Environmental protection	10 000
Education	4 890
Total Central Australia	361 148