The Henderson Government should explain why it has begun preparatory work on the new Darwin prison before proper planning processes have been completed.

Deputy Opposition Leader, Kezia Purick, said a number of survey tracks have been forged through the bush near Holtze leading into the proposed site, despite clearing guidelines not being made public.

“Obviously somebody has been busy with a grader. The trails are about 3 metres wide and a fair bit of bush has been removed,” Ms Purick said.

“The Government has made up its mind this is where the new prison is going and after three years of delays is making up for lost time.

“Unfortunately they’re steaming ahead with the project even before the Development Consent Authority has heard the re-zoning application.

“The authorities would take a dim view if a private landholder took to his property with a grader without proper approvals. Why should Government be treated differently?

“It makes a mockery of the Labor’s assertions it will observe proper processes in relation to the prison and treats with contempt the residents concerned about the proposed development.

“Lands and Planning Minister, Gerry McCarthy, should also ensure the rezoning application is put on public exhibition.

“So far, only an advertisement has appeared in the local newspaper and this falls way short of the transparency required for such a costly and high-impact development.”

Further comment: Kezia Purick 0407 035 976