Correctional Services Minister, Gerry McCarthy, today announced a $20.2 million investment into 189 more prisoner beds, 10 diversion beds, 63 more staff and associated infrastructure in Budget 2012.

Mr McCarthy said the funding allocation had been strategically planned in line with the New Era in Corrections including prisoner work orders, the anticipated completion of the 800-bed Doug Owston Correctional Centre at Holtze in 2014, and a host of other initiatives.

“The Territory Government makes no apology for being tough on crime and having record prisoner numbers as a result,” he said.

“Budget 2012 continues our commitment to breaking the cycle of crime with a strong focus on boosting staff numbers and prisoner capacity, as well as offender education, rehabilitation and training under the New Era in Corrections.”

The new prisoner beds will include:

- $3.53 million to manage 95 more prisoner beds at the Darwin Correctional Centre
- $6.59 million for 50 more beds and associated support infrastructure at the Alice Springs Correctional Centre, including new education and training facilities.
- $1.55 million to manage 24 more beds at the Barkly Prisoner Work Camp near Tennant Creek
- $6.92 million for construction of a 20-bed treatment/training facility for driving offenders, and non-violent crime offenders, at the Alice Springs Correctional Centre site.
- Plus additional $1.61 million to provide 10 more alcohol and other drug treatment beds and associated programs in Darwin and Alice Springs as an alternative to imprisonment.

Mr McCarthy said the funding would also be used to recruit 63 more corrections staff across the Alice Springs, Darwin and Tenant Creek correctional facilities.

He said construction of the new 800-bed Doug Owston Correctional Centre, a 30-bed secure Mental Health and Behavioural Management Facility and a 48 bed Supported Accommodation and Program Centre at Holtze is due to be completed and operational in mid 2014.

“As part of the Henderson Government’s Territory 2030 strategy, the Territory government is expanding the availability of education and training in the prison system to create the opportunity for a better life outside prison,” Mr McCarthy said.

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