MINISTER FOR CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

PRISONERS PAYING DEBTS TO SOCIETY

14 May 2013

The Northern Territory Government has committed half a million dollars to create additional Prison Work Parties in Darwin and Alice Springs, ensuring offenders work while serving their sentence.

Minister for Correctional Services John Elferink said all low security prisoners will be required to work under the new policy reforms introduced by the Country Liberals Government.

"Offenders will no longer spend their days in prison being unproductive and instead will work in the community paying their debts to society for the offences they have committed," Mr Elferink said.

"Funding in the 2013-14 Budget will increase the number of Work Parties from seven to eight in Darwin and from five to six in Alice Springs.

"Last year, it was evident the Work Parties made an extremely positive contribution to the Northern Territory community with prisoners completing more than $3.5 million in projects and contributing almost 250,000 hours of labour.

"Work Parties will be used for a range of community organisations and events including the 2013 Garma Festival, Finke River Desert Race, Hidden Valley Drags and V8 events and the Henley on Todd Regatta.

"This program makes prisoners gain valuable skills to prepare them for their release from prison.

"Practical skills learned during this work will equip prisoners with the confidence and knowledge to gain employment in the future rather than return to a life of crime.

"The Northern Territory has the highest recidivist rate in the country and is 48.2 per cent above the national average, with half of offenders in prison returning to prison within two years of being released.

"This Government is committed to reducing the unacceptably high rate of repeat offending, thereby creating a safer community for all Territorians," Mr Elferink said.

Media Contact:
Danielle Lede 0404 515 414