ANOTHER HALF HEARTED MEASURE ON JUVENILE OFFENDERS

Territory Labor’s announcement today that juvenile offenders will only be placed in diversionary programs twice is yet another half hearted attempt to control crime and anti-social behaviour in the Territory.

“In 2006 gangs legislation was going to control the offenders but still they are running wild through Darwin and Palmerston,” says Terry Mills, Deputy Opposition Leader.

“Today’s announcement exposes the lack of options necessary to effectively deal with juvenile crime in the Territory.

“Either the kids go into diversionary programs, which hold no fear for most offenders, or Don Dale Detention Centre which works as a school of crime for less hardened offenders.

“We need to get to the kids before they reach the point of no return in their criminal behaviour, to give them a real wake up call.

“What is needed is a network of Wildman River style boot camps that sit between diversionary programs and Don Dale Detention Centre.

“Magistrates need the option of sending young offenders to tough, physically demanding boot camps that will make juvenile offenders think twice before offending again.

“Today I visited the Brahminy Youth Facility at Batchelor.

“It runs exactly the type of tough, no-nonsense program that young offenders need to get them thinking about what they done and where they are going.

“Unfortunately Brahminy Youth Facility doesn’t even take in offenders from the Territory due to a lack of NT Government support.

“Nor is Brahminy the only young offenders program up and running in the Territory that is ignored by the Territory Government. Balunu Foundation does an excellent job with at risk young urban Aborigines but receives no support from the NT Government.

“Putting young offenders through physically challenging and socially confronting programs will reduce the rate of re-offending amongst juveniles.

“The Henderson Government needs to bite the bullet and get really tough on these kids.”

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