PRISON HANGS OUT ‘FULL HOUSE’ SIGN

Reports that last night Berrimah jail was unable to accept prisoners from the Darwin watchhouse have highlighted this lazy Labor Government’s negligent approach to law and order in the Territory.

“It’s time for the Territory Government to abandon its wasteful plans to build a new prison near Darwin and adopt the Country Liberals proposal of establishing a prison farm near Katherine,” says Jodeen Carney, Leader of the Opposition.

“Given the site of the new prison is yet to be even identified, the Government needs to take this opportunity to recast its stalled plans and establish a prison farm.

“Berrimah is perfectly adequate as a medium to high security prison - it’s just overcrowded.

“Rather than wasting $300 million on a new prison in Darwin to house low security inmates, a prison farm offers greater opportunity for the rehabilitation of prisoners and better value for taxpayers.

“Many of the inmates in Berrimah present no risk of absconding and would benefit from being put to work rather than sitting around the cells smoking and playing cards.

“Putting low security prisoners into a system where they learn no useful skills perpetuates the cycle of crime.

“Its time we developed an intensive work farm system to accustom prisoners to the disciple needed to hold down a job.

“68pc of the Territory’s prisoners have been in jail before; that rate of re-offending is 30pc higher than the Australian average.

“The cost of keeping a prisoner in jail in the Territory is about $73,000 a year.

“Constructing a prison farm with a 200 inmate capacity near Katherine would end the overcrowding at Berrimah and give low security prisoners the opportunity of acquiring useful life skills at the same time.”

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