CRIME IN KATHERINE

The recent official crime statistics also show there has been no improvement in the rate of crime in Katherine.

"In the last 12 months there were 501 violent assaults recorded in Katherine, a 4% increase on the previous 12 month period," says Willem Westra van Holthe.

"In the same time the number of property offences rose from 960 to 1049, which included a sharp increase in the number of commercial premises broken into.

"The fact crime in Katherine is getting worse despite the introduction of the dry town is just one more reason for a complete re-think on law and order in Katherine and the rest of the Territory.

"The figures for the rest of the Territory roughly correspond with what is happening in Katherine.

"Rather than singling out particular towns for special restrictions, the Territory Government needs to confront the spiralling crime problems in a consistent manner.

"I’ve no doubt that building a prison farm in Katherine and teaching low security prisoners job skills would be far more effective than dry town restrictions.

"The fact is the Territory has a rate of re-offending that is 30% higher than the national average.

"A large percentage of the crime plaguing Katherine is committed by people who have already done time.

"Let’s stop the revolving door between our prisons and courts.

"Proper sentencing and genuine rehabilitation to improve prisoners work skills are critical if we are to reduce the level of crime in Katherine and the Territory.

"Teaching prisoners work skills won’t be easy and it won’t be welcome by some of the prisoners.

"Prisoners will need to get used to getting up first thing in the morning and working during the day. They will also need to be taught the basic skills employers want.

"But if we don’t change direction there will be no improvement to the law and order problems plaguing the Territory.”

Further comment : Willem Westra van Holthe 0414 778 430