Media Release

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LABOR’S CRIMINAL NEGLECT

The Territory Opposition will test the Henderson Government’s commitment to tougher sentencing of violent criminals when it introduces its Sentencing Amendment (Violent Offences) Bill into Parliament today.

“The 83% rise in violent crime since Labor was elected in 2001 was the single most influential factor in the massive swing away from the Henderson Government at the recent Territory election,” says Terry Mills, Leader of the Opposition.

“The Chief Minister claims he has heard the electorate’s message; whether Labor supports certainty in sentencing for violent offenders will tell the true story.”

Under the Opposition’s Bill a :

- first conviction for assault, where the assault causes serious harm; a minimum sentence of not less than six months will be imposed.

- second or subsequent conviction for assault, within ten years of the first conviction, minimum jail terms will be imposed as follows:
  - Where the second offence is any assault, a minimum sentence of one month;
  - Where the second offence is an aggravated assault, a minimum sentence of three months; and
  - Where the second offence causes serious harm, a minimum sentence of one year.

“These sentencing proposals were the central component of the Opposition’s popular law and order platform during the election campaign,” says Terry Mills.

The Henderson Government’s Sentencing (Violent Offences) Amendment Bill which passed last week still leaves sentencing to the discretion of the courts.

“The Bail Act which passed yesterday is equally soft on violent criminals.

“Labor’s bill merely reversed the presumption in favour of bail; the Opposition’s Bill ends the bail for violent offenders charged with another offence whilst on bail.”
“Labor has been full of hot air on tackling violent crime since 2001 and the electorate won’t tolerate it anymore.”

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