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REAL ACTION FOR TACKLING DRUNKS

If elected August 9th a Country Liberals Government will implement a promise made by Paul Henderson in the 2005 campaign and broken as soon as Labor was returned to office.

“I will introduce legislation to remove the hard core of public drunks from the Territory’s streets and put them into rehabilitation,” says Terry Mills Leader of the Country Liberals.

“The only difference between my promise today and Paul Henderson’s in 2005 is that I would keep my commitment.

“Whilst official figures show 26,000 people were taken into protective custody last year the fact is a relatively small number of street drunks – perhaps 300 or so - are responsible for the bulk of that figure.

“Dealing with the hard core of street drunks will vastly reduce the current waste of resources and reduce the level of street crime that flows out of public drunkenness.

“Currently we have a merry-go-round where the same drunks are picked up taken into protective custody before being released to get drunk again.

“Under my plan a three stage process would be implemented:

1. Anyone picked up for public drunkenness three times in six months may be declared a “habitual drunk” by a tribunal
2. A declared habitual drunk will be subject to a control order requiring they undergo alcohol rehabilitation treatment.
3. Breaching a control order would trigger an automatic prison sentence.
“It’s time to recognise that forcing hard core street alcoholics into treatment is in the community’s interests and the interests of the individuals addicted to alcohol.

“Nobody enjoys dodging through a crowd of drunks on the way to the shops or walking past unconscious bodies in the local park.

“Equally a life lived on the street with an alcohol addiction is no life.

“Unless we intervene to break the cycle of alcohol addiction nothing will change, these lives will be totally wasted and ordinary Territorians will continue to run the gauntlet on a daily basis.

“Having promised to deal with this problem at the last election the Labor Government has adopted the totally ineffective ‘alcohol courts’ in place of direct intervention.

“In the alcohol courts’ first 18 months of operation, a mere 99 people across the Territory were referred to these courts – and of those a paltry 27 completed a court-ordered treatment program.

Further comment : Greg Charter 04000 14059