WITCHHUNT FOR ROSTER WHISTLEBLOWER

The Territory Opposition has criticised the decision to pursue details of the release of the Palmerston police roster that detailed just how few police were on the beat in Palmerston during last Saturday’s spate of violent assaults.

"It is ironic that the Chief Minister, who is also the Police Minister, now sanctions persecution for the release of information about the appalling state of policing in Palmerston," says John Elferink, Shadow Minister for Public Employment.

"Given he was ignorant of the fact that just 6 general duties police officers were on the beat for Palmerston and the entire rural area at the height of the violence, the Chief Minister should be thankful.

"Individual police officers have repeatedly come to the Opposition with their concerns about the chronic shortage of police on the beat.

"They have chosen to keep their concerns private precisely because of the type of reaction we have seen.

"This has resulted in a situation where the Police Minister - and the public - are in a state of abject ignorance regarding the most basic issues of police staffing levels.

"Rather than threatening criminal sanction, the Chief Minister should recognise this was a courageous act in the public interest and move to increase police numbers in order to make Territory communities safer.

"We need a Government more interested in getting on top of the law and order issues plaguing the Territory - and less concerned about its political image."

Further comment: John Elferink 0418 406 400