Willem Westra van Holthe  
Member for Katherine  
Media Release  

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OVER STIMULATING AN OLD PROBLEM  

Katherine police again have good reasons to rue the Rudd Government’s cash hand-outs and the Territory Government’s timid and ineffectual approach to the issue of alcohol abuse, says the Territory Opposition.

“The 100 drunks taken into protective custody in Katherine last night are but the latest dramatic example of an ongoing and untreated problem,” says Willem Westra van Holthe.

“Last night’s upsurge in public drunkenness was a re-run of what happened after the first round a cash hand-outs in December, when hundreds of people were taken into protective custody on successive weekends in Katherine.

“Yet despite the obvious detrimental effects of the first cash-hand outs, the Federal Government chose not to income manage the second round. It is a very poor decision on public health and safety grounds.

“On a deeper level, last night highlights the ongoing failure of the Henderson Government to act on the issue of alcohol abuse.

“I’ll bet London to a brick that a large number of the people taken into protective custody last night have enjoyed the hospitality of taxpayers many times before.

“The same people file in and out of protective custody in Katherine on a regular basis.

“Yet the Henderson Government makes no effort to put this hard core of street drunks into alcohol rehabilitation programs.

“The Territory Government’s failure to act condemns the street drunks to a life that is short, nasty and brutish.

“It also forces the people of Katherine to endure simply appalling behaviour on their streets on a daily basis.
“The Country Liberals took a strong but compassionate policy to deal with alcohol abuse to last the Territory election.

“I urge the Chief Minister to get one of the dozens of political advisers he employs to track down that policy and give it some long, hard thought.”

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