The Henderson Government’s commitment to an additional short-term police presence in Alice Springs must be more than just window dressing for this month’s Parliamentary sittings.

Shadow Minister for Central Australia, Matt Conlan, said the law and order problems devastating Alice Springs require much more than a quick fix – and the Government must commit to a long-term strategy to secure the town.

“As well, the Government must clarify how many additional officers will be posted in Alice Springs, with reports varying from 20 to eight, depending on who you listen to,” Mr Conlan said.

“While the Henderson Government has been shamed into responding to the community’s call to respond to the growing lawlessness the town’s been experiencing, it’s hard not to be cynical about this Government’s real intentions.

“Years of policy neglect have hardened the community against this Government’s cynical attempts to placate criticism from within the town.

“Over the past few years the Government has launched the ‘City Safe’ initiative, the so-called ‘Social Order Taskforce’, hosted a failed anti-social behaviour summit, and introduced Closed Circuit Television.

“Labor’s rhetoric hasn’t been matched by a long-term commitment.

“In April 2007, former Chief Minister Clare Martin claimed: ‘We treat violence in Alice Springs seriously…’ but that ‘… there is no doubt more needs to be done’.

“A year later former Deputy Chief Minister, Marion Scrymgour, said the Government wanted to ‘minimise the impact this type of unacceptable behaviour has on business, households, families and community groups’.

“When it comes to Labor promises, Alice Springs has heard it all before and while the community fought and won the battle for additional police, I’m concerned the commitment does not extend beyond the next four weeks.

“The Chief Minister and the Labor Party is deluding itself if it believes the problems in Alice Springs can be resolved by the time Parliament sits.

“The Government has shown it’s prepared to adopt Country Liberals policies that it had previously condemned – such as the use of police dogs to help tackle crime.

“It should continue to listen to the Country Liberals and commit to putting an additional 20 police on the beat in Alice Springs, introduce a curfew and introduce mandatory rehabilitation for problem drunks.

“The issues causing the crime problems in Alice Springs aren’t temporary – and the solution shouldn’t be either.”

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