MEDIA RELEASE

HENDERSON'S NOT OFF THE HOOK

March 01st, 2012

The proposal to place an additional 100 Commonwealth funded police in Darwin shows the extent to which Territory police have been left exposed by the Henderson Government's inertia.

Opposition Leader, Terry Mills, said revelations surrounding the planned deployment show the Chief Minister has been down-playing issues relating to the impact of the detention centres on the capacity of police to maintain law and order in Darwin.

"The Chief Minister has been less than candid with Territorians on this matter," Mr Mills said.

"About 120 police responded to a break-out by detainees at the Northern Immigration Detention Centre in August 2010, in the process leaving Darwin households and businesses exposed.

"The primary responsibility of Territory police is to protect its citizens, not mop up a mess created by the Commonwealth's week border protection policies.

"A document obtained by the Country Liberals show SERCO, the company contracted to provide security at Darwin's two detention centres, has 'zero' capacity to deal with violent incidents among detainees.

"So while the Chief Minister continued to play down the risk of the detention centres, the Commonwealth was looking to increase police resourcing on our behalf.

"I questioned the Chief Minister and senior police during Estimates Committee hearings last June about the need for an increased police presence as a result of the detention centres and am surprised it has taken so long for the Memorandum of Understanding to be drafted.

"It would be misleading now for the Chief Minister to present this deployment
as additional police on the beat in Darwin.

“It’s about securing detention centres and the Chief Minister is not off the hook when it comes to providing the police resourcing to target the Territory’s high levels of crime.

“It is disappointing that once again the Commonwealth has been called in to perform a function that is the responsibility of Territory Labor.”

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594