NEW YOUTH JUSTICE CELLS FOR ALICE SPRINGS COURT HOUSE

14 August 2013

Alice Springs is set to receive an upgrade for youth justice with $350,000 committed to build new holding cells for juvenile offenders at the Court House.

Attorney-General John Elferink said today’s announcement will ensure that youth and adult offenders are separated from one another, and will bring the cells up to similar standards seen across the country.

“The cells will be used to detain youth that are waiting to appear before the court, providing them with a safe environment which complies with the principles outlined in the Youth Justice Act,” Mr Elferink said.

“Youth offenders will be led through the underground tunnel from the police watch house to the court cells, creating a more secure route that will also reduce the ability for offenders to abscond.

“Standard cells will be constructed from prefabricated materials to include a toilet and bench, and will be visible by security staff through poly carbonate doors and an integrated CCTV system.

“It is essential that youth who go through the justice system are housed in the appropriate infrastructure to ensure their well being is protected.”

Mr Elferink said various stakeholders were consulted about the announcement with legal and justice organisations showing strong support for the project.

“The new youth justice cells are part of the Country Liberals Government broad review of youth justice court facilities in Alice Springs and Darwin,” Mr Elferink said.

“For too long the former Labor Government ignored the inadequate facilities for youth justice in Alice Springs and relied instead on band-aid solutions which were universally criticised.

“While I am confident that the new youth cells in Alice Springs will be welcomed by employees at the court, police, corrections staff and criminal lawyers, youth crime rates remain a large problem which the Giles Government is working diligently to address.

“The Northern Territory Government aims to address this issue through the Youth Boot Camp initiative which aims to target and change the causes of the offending behaviour for at risk youth.

“The first Youth Boot Camp pilot commenced last week and is being run by the South Australian charitable organisation Operation Flinders.
“A second pilot will be completed by Alice Springs-based Tangentyere Council with its first trial expected to begin later this month,” Mr Elferink said.

The construction of the new cells will commence shortly.

**Media Contact:** Danielle Lede 0404 515 414