Media Release

John Elferink, Member for Port Darwin
Minister for Correctional Services

Independent Youth Detention Review to improve corrections system

2 October 2014

The Northern Territory Government today announced it would conduct an independent review into the youth justice system to determine areas in need of improvement.

Minister for Correctional Services John Elferink said recent incidences at a Territory youth detention centre has highlighted the need to have a close look at the way the youth justice system operates and identify improvements.

“We are always looking at ways to better our youth justice system and the Review will inform future directions and operations,” Mr Elferink said.

A youth justice expert with more than 15 years experience of managing youth detention centers’ has been identified to conduct the Youth Detention Review.

Recent incidences including violence, attempted escapes, escapes and damage to property makes it timely to review the current practices and procedures in our youth detention centres.

In August it was announced that the 22 year old Don Dale Youth Detention Centre would be closed down and the juvenile prisoners will move to a larger and safer facility.

An upgraded section of the Berrimah Correctional Centre will provide a suitable and safe location to house juvenile offenders in the Top End.

A commitment of $800,000 to upgrade the existing Berrimah Correctional Centre will allow youth detainees to be better managed and create a facility which will focus on rehabilitation.

“The upgraded facility will allow the Northern Territory Government to continue to deliver programs which focus on changing and challenging the behavior of young offenders,” Mr Elferink said.

“I believe that with the Northern Territory Government’s policy direction of reducing youth offending and the expertise of the Reviewer, we will be able to create an improved youth justice system.
“I look forward to carefully considering the Youth Detention Review’s recommendations and moving our justice system into the future.”

The Review will begin this month and is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

Danielle Lede 0404 515 414