Crisis in youth detention

The crisis is real and the reports are disturbing – youth detention in the Northern Territory is at tipping point.

The latest report about incidents mentioned in Parliament last week by the Opposition prove Labor’s approach to the issue is pathetic.

“Territorians have had enough – the pendulum has swung way to far (left) and we not only have a rising tide of youth crime, the violent episodes at the Don Dale and Alice Springs detention centres are escalating,” Deputy Opposition Leader Lia Finocchiaro said.

“We have continually raised the issues of crime, youth justice and youth detention in parliament, the media, in the community – and we have called on the government to hand back youth detention to the experts, Correctional Services.

“As we’ve discovered through questioning, since 1 July 2018 there have been a total of six incidents where police have been called to detention centres, four incidents at Don Dale and two at Alice Springs.

“And as reported today, at least two of these incidents have endangered lives of detainees and youth justice workers. Staff have been hospitalised – in one instance a guard was hit with a fire extinguisher.

“When we brought these matters up in Parliament last week, the Territory Families Minister talked about ‘moving forward’ and ‘mentor programs’ and all manner of hand wringing.

“Chief Minister – remove the responsibility from the Minister. Hand youth detention back to Corrections and resource them properly. Keep Territory Families involved through rehabilitation and programs.

“How many catastrophic events have to happen before this Government does anything?”

Media Contact: Lorelei Fong Lim, 0429 601 069