Jodeen Carney
Shadow Attorney-General,
Shadow Minister for Justice, and Women's Policy

Jail a 'Drug House' but Government limits searches of prisoners!

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Strip searches of prisoners in Darwin Prison should be increased, not reduced, CLP Shadow Minister for Justice Jodeen Carney said today.

Ms Carney said the fact that prisoners are failing drug tests at the Darwin prison must have been known by Government when the Review of Correctional Services was delivered 2 weeks ago.

“The Minister accepted all of the Review’s recommendations, one of which was that ‘strip searches be used on a random basis’. Prisoners are searched everyday, but the Review states that ‘the security justification for this is not compelling’. This is madness given that drugs are a problem at the jail and prisoners failing drug tests. Why has the Minister agreed to limit searches?” Ms Carney said.

“Prison Officers advise me that at the Alice Springs prison, drugs are hardly a problem and that’s because maximum and medium security prisoners are strip-searched in and out of all private visits. In Darwin, on the other hand, only maximum security prisoners are strip-searched”, she said.

Ms. Carney said that the Minister should explain to Territorians why he does not see the security justification for strip-searching prisoners.

“Strip searches should be increased, not reduced,” Ms Carney said.

“This is but one of many problems that arise from the Review and Government's haste in accepting all of its recommendations. We know that the Prison Officers are in talks with Government about a number of matters, and remain deeply troubled by many recommendations. The Minister would have Territorians believe that everyone is happy with the Review, but it's simply not true.”

Ms. Carney said that the Prison Officers Association who continues to meet with Government in relation to on-going concerns is keeping her advised of developments. “

“I will let the negotiations run their course, but in the meantime, the Minister must explain why he thinks it's appropriate to limit strip-searches in our jails”, she said.

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