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New Commissioner Starts Work

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The new Commissioner of the Northern Territory’s Corrective Services has started the job of transforming our prison service.

Denmark’s Jens Tolstrup (pron: Yens Tholstrup) visited the Alice Springs Correctional Centre today as the Territory’s Corrective Services head into an exciting new phase.

Mr Tolstrup is one of the world’s most respected and experienced prison officials and beat an elite field of candidates to be named as the new Commissioner.

The worldwide search to fill the position has provided the Territory with an exemplary appointment – Mr Tolstrup a proven performer on the national and international scene.

Over nearly 4 decades, Mr Tolstrup has managed prisons, has helped governments from several countries to reform existing correction systems and establish new ones.

Mr Tolstrup is considered one of the preeminent experts in his field and has been used as a consultant in a number of countries including Israel, South Africa and Azerbaijan, and has as well provided expert advice on correctional reform to the Council of Europe.

Mr Tolstrup said he was excited about the opportunity and looks forward to turning the Northern Territory Correction Service into one of the best of its type in the world.

“This is what I’ve been working toward my whole career, everything I’ve done until now will be able to be utilised in the Northern Territory,” Mr Tolstrup said.

“The Territory offers unique opportunities and unique challenges.”

“I’ve already met some prison officers during a visit to the Alice Springs and Darwin Correctional Centres and I can’t wait to work with them to establish a world class Corrections Service, Mr Tolstrup said.

Minister for Justice Dr Peter Toyne said the start of work by Mr Tolstrup marks a new era in Corrections in the Territory.

“Mr Tolstrup has all the credentials and the proven ability to make a real difference in the Territory,” Dr Toyne said.

“The timing couldn’t be better – Mr Tolstrup has helped to implement changes for the better in corrections centre around the world – the Territory is about to undergo its own transformation.”
“The Northern Territory will have the most progressive Correctional Centres in the country following the adoption of the *Path to Good Corrections*.”

“The Government will provide $18.5 million over four years to implement the reforms and another $8 million for the upgrade of facilities.”

“Programs will be implemented to reduce the number of inmates who re-offend once released to cut the population of our correction centres.”

“These prison programs will be linked to justice initiatives out in the community.”

“Prison officers will play an important role in achieving that goal by playing an active role in rehabilitating inmates.”

“We will also give prison officers the opportunity to follow a career path by reshaping corrections and giving greater recognition to the job as a profession.”

“This will be achieved by supporting training – an additional 10 prison officer will be employed to facilitate this improvement of skills and qualifications.

“This should help to recruit more prison officers and just as importantly retain them.”

The review of adult custodial services was conducted by one of the most respected experts on correction centres, Dr Ole Ingstrup (President of the International Corrections and Prisons Association).