Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says the NT Government should be building Work Camps similar to those operating in WA and re-establishing a prison farm similar to the old Gunn Point Prison Farm.

Gerry says that many prisoners in our jails are indigenous (approx 80% of total) and have low to medium security classification. He says that work camps have been used successfully in WA for a number of years and are a way of not only allowing prisoners to pay society back for their crimes but also getting prisoners ready for integration into society.

Gerry says that the re-establishment of a prison farm also has a number of benefits. The CAYA report on NT Prisons recommended a prison farm but for some reason the Government did not support the recommendation. Gerry says that a prison farm not only provides a place for prisoners to be involved in meaningful work but also gain skills useful for when they leave prison. Produce grown on the farm can be used to supply food not only to the prison but also other Government facilities such as the hospital or aged care.

Gerry says that educational facilities should be built in any new facilities so that prisoners have an opportunity to leave with improved educational levels.

Gerry says the Government might say that having to build a new prison shows that their law and order strategies are working but Gerry says it possibly more of a case that the Government hasn’t had any real success in reducing recidivism in our existing prisons.

Gerry says that to do that we need to change existing failed strategies and get away from the concrete prison model and build facilities such as work camps and a prison farm or two.