MEDIA RELEASE

Natasha Fyles
Shadow Minister for Corrections

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35th Escape Plunges NT Justice System in Crisis

Shadow Corrections Minister, Natasha Fyles, labeled the 35th escape of prisoners from our Justice System since July last year as a crisis situation and called on the CLP’s John Elferink to take responsibility for his complete and utter failings of the Corrections portfolio.

"Since July last year there have been 35 escapes and one break-in of people detained in our justice system – this is no longer an issue, it’s a crisis and it’s clear the CLP Government can’t be trusted to keep Territorians safe," said Natasha Fyles.

"The recent Correctional Services Annual report also highlighted the CLP Government's complete failure to meet their own target numbers which continues to add to their list of problems.

"The $34 million budget deficit in the Territory’s correctional services annual report highlights the failure of the CLP to effectively run the system.

"The prisoner imprisonment rate has increased to 903.5 prisoners per 100,000 from 847 in 2013/14 – this is almost 5 times the national average. The proportion of Indigenous people in prison is 11 times the national average.

"It was budgeted that 75% of prisoners would participate in employment programs but only 48% of the 1,600 prisoners did.

"It was budgeted that 150 prisoners would participate in sentenced to a job but only 74 did.

"It was budgeted that 30% would participate in education but only 10% did.

"$3.8 million was allocated for youth justice diversion and rehabilitation grants. Only $2.85 million was expended and allocated to operational expenditure instead.

"The Family Responsibility Agreements program, hailed and highlighted in the Vita Review as a success, will not be monitored as an output from the 2015/16 budget.

"In 2014/15 - the budgeted for the delivery of 70 family responsibility agreements but only delivered 50.

"The CLP budgeted for 20 families case managed in Alice Springs but only case managed 14.

"They also budgeted for 40 families to be case managed in Darwin, but only delivered 22.

"The Youth Justice Framework was endorsed by the Government in May 2015 and is yet to be formally released – where is it? Why the delay?

"John Elferink and the CLP Government can’t be trusted to keep Territorians safe.”

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