



Petition

Registration No.	57
Title	Unsuitable prisoners in Datjala Work Camp
Presented on	19 November 2015
Presented by	Ms Lynne Walker MLA
Referred to	Minister for Corrections (Hon John Elferink MLA)
Date referred	19 November 2015
Response due	21 April 2016
Response received	22 December 2015
Response to be presented	9 February 2016

Petition

On 10th November 2015, convicted rapist and murderer Edward Horrell escaped from Datjala Work Camp in Nhulunbuy, 200 metres from a local primary school.

The government assures Nhulunbuy residents that "no sex offenders or prisoners of public interest are considered for placement" in the Datjala Camp. This promise has been badly broken, resulting in a murderer being on the run in Nhulunbuy for 24 hours.

Placement of sex offenders and murderers in the camp is simply unacceptable, considering its low level security.

We, the undersigned, immediately demand the following from the NT Government:

1. That Nhulunbuy residents are never endangered like this again.
2. That the NT government commit to never again housing unsuitable prisoners in Datjala Work Camp.
3. That all person/s responsible for the decision to house Edward Horrell at Datjala Work Camp be immediately and permanently sacked from the public service.

Response

Firstly I would like to convey my sheerest apologies to the petitioners regarding any anxiety generated following the escape of prisoner Edward Horrell. As Minister for Correctional Services the safety of all communities is my paramount focus.

Regrettably, the Department of Correctional Services (NTDCS) did not follow government policy surrounding the 'Sentenced to a Job' program. I initiated an immediate internal

investigation following the escape which resulted in the follow directions:

- Prisoners ever convicted of a sex offence or murder can never achieve an open security rating and therefore cannot be placed at facilities such as Datj'ala Work Camp (DWC); and
- All prisoners at DWC will be fitted with an Electronic Monitoring bracelet.

The company installing electronic monitoring at DWC has completed the preliminary works and all prisoners will have the devices fitted as a priority.

A serious error in the use of discretion has been made by NTDCS; however, everything is being done by my Office and NTDCS to ensure that such matters will not occur again.

A town meeting was held on 26 November 2015, in Nhulunbuy to provide a forum for the community to engage in open discussion regarding their concerns. The forum was attended by Mr Mark Payne, Commissioner, NTDCS and Mr Kevin Raby, Superintendent Regional Operations. The Town meeting was attended by 40 - 50 people and the concerns raised were listened to closely with a commitment by the Commissioner to engage further with key stakeholders and the DWC Community Consultative Committee.

In relation to your concern "3. That all person/s responsible for the decision to house Edward Horrell at Datjala Work Camp be immediately and permanently sacked from the public service"; the then Commissioner, NTDCS accepted full responsibility for the placement of Edward Horrell at DWC and as you are aware has subsequently resigned. His replacement, Mr Payne has been tasked to undertake a comprehensive 'root and branch' review of NTDCS.

I can assure the Nhulunbuy community that everything is being done by my Office and NTDCS to rebuild and earn the trust from the Nhulunbuy community.