

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

### WRITTEN QUESTION

Ms Fyles to the Minister for Correctional Services:

#### **Sentenced to a Job**

1. Why did only 50% of targeted participants enlist in the Sentenced to a Job program according to your benchmarks set in the Department of Correctional Services 2014/15 Annual Report?

#### **Answer:**

The Department of Correctional Service (NTDCS) 2014-2015 Annual Report notes under the key deliverable data for prisoners participating in Sentence to a Job (STAJ) program:

*"Participation in employment programs: In Darwin, there were major disruptions to employment programs during the transition to the new Darwin Correctional Centre. The slow business economy in Alice Springs resulted in low numbers participation in employment programs."*

Additionally, the number of eligible prisoners participating in the STAJ depends on a number of variables, which make up the assessment criterion. The prisoners participating in the STAJ must have reached an open rating classification.

Prisoners are required to meet all criteria relating to behaviour, sentence length, sentenced type and completion of clinical programs before they can be considered eligible. In addition NTDCS also takes into account community safety, which is paramount.

Sex offenders, high profile prisoners, prisoners not cleared by correctional centre intelligence to work offsite or are medically unfit are not considered for STAJ.

The quantity of prisoners able to work in the community also depends on the number of employers willing to provide employment opportunities for prisoners. While there may be prisoners available to work in the STAJ there may not be enough employers to accommodate the numbers. Another factor is the skill set of the prisoners available to work on STAJ may not match what the employer is seeking e.g. carpentry, brick laying.

As at 4 November 2015, out of the 421 male and female open rated prisoners 293 were engaged in paid, volunteer and Community Support Work Program in the community throughout the Northern Territory.