

CLP Opposition Spokesperson
BILL YAN MLA

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For immediate circulation

Labor mismanagement of Corrections putting Territorians at risk

The CLP Opposition is extremely concerned for the safety of Correctional Officers, Territorians, prisoners and prison infrastructure in the event of impending strike action.

CLP Spokesperson Bill Yan MLA said: "Territory prisons are dangerously over capacity. We have been told there are almost 1,200 prisoners at Holtze (capacity of 1,048) and 650 at Alice Springs (capacity of 476)."

"Prisoner numbers are increasing, but staffing is not keeping pace—meaning that the ratio of officers to prisoners has decreased to hazardous lows.

"Under normal circumstances, these alarming numbers would pose a severe risk. With the prospect of a strike looming, the risk increases exponentially.

"We have already started seeing the results of understaffing and Labor's neglect—with three prisoners escaping the Darwin Correctional Precinct last week. Territorians already do not feel safe in their own homes as a result of the crime crisis, now due to Labor's mismanagement they need to worry about offenders escaping as well.

In 2020, a riot at the Holtze Facility caused an estimated \$20 to \$30 million worth of damage.

"While the Labor Government has refused to disclose the cause of the Holtze riot, there were only 16 Correctional Officers on duty that night and the low guard-to-prisoner ratio undoubtedly played a role.

"Like Police, Correctional Officers are a victim of the ongoing crime crisis and should not have to worry about their safety or being able to feed their families when they go to work to protect Territorians.

"The bottom line is that we are facing a set of conditions that could lead to more escapes or another riot without immediate intervention by the Labor Government—including finalizing negotiations with the Correctional Officers before a strike makes matters much worse," said Mr Yan.

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