

POLICY STATEMENT

SKILLS FOR A BETTER FUTURE – “SENTENCED TO A SKILL” BOOT CAMP FOR ALICE SPRINGS

A Country Liberal Party Government is focussed on community safety. The social and economic impact of crime is immense, driving some businesses to close their doors and families to feel fearful in their own homes. Concerns of declining tourism numbers and the local population are real, and should not be ignored.

Alice Springs has been negatively impacted by youth crime. New, innovative and results driven solutions are needed to help youth succeed and to keep the Alice Springs community safe.

The CLP is committed to addressing the significant shortfalls in Labor’s approach to youth crime, which has been slow, ineffective and permissive.

Labor has failed to deliver meaningful change, to reduce crime, or to provide a pathway for youth to succeed and avoid offending into adulthood.

A new Country Liberal Party Government is committed to addressing youth crime with a number of strategies, one of which will be a new, **purpose built “Sentenced to a Skill” Boot Camp** for Alice Springs.

The “Sentenced to a Skill” Boot Camp for Alice Springs would be an alternative sentencing option for the courts and include:

- Vocational Education and Training and/or work experience to give youth skills for a better future
- Secure residential facilities
- Long term programs
- Strong assessment and monitoring
- Appropriate drug and alcohol programs
- Family support
- Post-release pathways

The rates of youth detention in the Northern Territory remain well above the Australian average (10.7 vs 3.3 per 10,000). The “Sentenced to a Skill” Boot Camp provides an alternative to detention for the courts that protects the community and sets youth on a better path. A sentence to the camp would target repeat offenders as part of an escalating suite of consequences which would include community service at one end of the spectrum, and detention at the other.

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Research indicates that participation in educational programs, including vocational training, showed a reduction in offending up to 43 percent¹, and that educational and vocational training is the single most effective way to prevent recidivism and increases the prospect of employment by 28 percent². Drug treatment and aftercare have also been shown to significantly lower rates of arrest³.

A location for the “Sentenced to a Skill” Boot Camp will be determined through consultation with the people of Alice Springs, Non-Government Organisations, Traditional Owners and Aboriginal Organisations, and placed strategically to ensure access and essential services such as healthcare and emergency services.

Registered Training Organisations and Aboriginal Organisations will be sought to operate the training and therapeutic aspects of the camp, supported by Corrections. It is expected that the cost of a two year pilot program will be approximately \$5 million.

The Camp will require a level of security. Youth in the camp will be closely monitored, it will be fenced, and supported by innovative solutions such as electronic monitoring.

The CLP believes in a vibrant, prosperous Alice Springs, and that starts with a safe community where youth will face immediate, appropriate and predictable consequences when they do the wrong thing, and will be given the tools and support to do the right thing in the future.

¹ Davis et al., *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs that Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults* (Rand 2013) xvi.

² Davis et al., *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs that Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults* (Rand 2013) 58.

³ Chandler et al. *Treating drug abuse and addiction in the criminal justice system: improving public health and safety*. JAMA vol. 301,2 (2009): 183-90.