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Mr Steven Edgington
Mayor
Barkly Regional Council

Via email: steve.eddington@barkly.nt.gov.au

Dear Mr Edgington, Steve

Thank you for your letter to the Chief Minister concerning the public forum in Tennant Creek. Due to the nature of the issues you raised stem largely from a community crime forum, as Police Minister, I am responding to your correspondence.

All Territorians have the right to be safe. As a government we have listened and will continue to listen and act.

I am sure you recognise that the recently-signed Barkly Regional Deal addresses some of the concerns raised at the meeting.

Over the past 12 months the Government has delivered on programs and services to address long-standing issues affecting Tennant Creek. We intend to continue with this work because the safety of the children of Tennant Creek is an absolute priority for this government. But having said that, we also want to ensure that people who are doing the wrong thing in Tennant Creek are held to account for their actions.

As you would appreciate, alcohol restrictions and the full point-of-sale-intervention coverage at takeaway outlets in Tennant Creek have had a dramatic impact on alcohol-related violence and anti-social behaviour in Tennant Creek. There are currently four Police Auxiliary Liquor Inspectors in town and there will be more in the future.

Official monthly crime statistics for March show total offences in Tennant Creek were also encouraging with total offences down by 8 per cent. Offences against the person were down 22 per cent, while assault was down by 24 per cent. Theft and related offences were down 14 per cent, while commercial breaks fell by 28 per cent.

The implementation of alcohol restrictions in March 2018 have not only reduced crime but also Hospital admissions. Alcohol related Emergency Department presentations reduced from 86 admissions in February 2018 to 43 in March 2019 which is a fall of 50 per cent.

There was a spike in property crime in April and early May but Police advise this has, in the most part been addressed. Once these incidents were reported, additional resources (including detectives from Tennant Creek and Alice Springs) were allocated to the matter. The efforts of Police from both Tennant Creek Alice Springs led to 12 apprehensions in relation to unlawful entries. I am sure, like me, you would want to recognise the great work done by Police on these matters.

There are currently 52 sworn officers in Tennant Creek, which I am advised is more than adequate to support regular front-line duties. On 1 July 2016, just before Labor came to government there were 41 sworn officers in Tennant Creek. The Police response to the recent property crime series shows, additional officers can be, and will be, deployed to Tennant Creek if Police management considers it warranted. As you would appreciate, flexibility is essential to modern policing. Currently there are two vacancies due to recent staff departures that are in the process of being filled but are not impeding on the frontline service delivery.

The Northern Territory Police continue to work collaboratively with both government and non-government agencies, including regular inter-agency management meetings. This involves identifying youth at risk, which allows agencies to work in partnership to case-manage the young people and importantly, assist the families with appropriate services.

Tennant Creek Police continue to target young people who are at risk of offending while also working with Youth Patrol and Youth Link programs to address the issue of children on the street at night by providing supervision of a responsible adult.

The NT Police have a Victim of Crime Charter which includes the principals that victims should be treated with courtesy, compassion and respect; Victims should not be discriminated against on the basis of age, sex, race, ethnicity or cultural background; and Victims should be provided with appropriate information, advice and support assistance. The high professional service provided by NT police to victims is central around upholding these principals.

It is also worth noting existing victim counselling services are available locally through Catholic Care NT, as well as Territory-wide through a 24-hour phone support and crisis counselling service, which is operated by Victims of Crime NT. Victims of Crime also have a full-time support officer in Alice Springs, who services Tennant Creek.

Territory Families is developing more diversion programs and alternatives to detention to get young people from the Barkly who offend back on track. You will be aware of the announcement of $5.5m for the construction of the facility that will focus on skill development and pathways to employment for young offenders. Further announcements will be made shortly about other programs being developed under the NT Government's "*Back on Track*" initiative.

In addition, and as part of the Barkly Regional Deal, Government has agreed to provide a safe accommodation facility as an alternative to detention for those on bail, police-ordered diversion or court orders. The work to develop this project is being developed as a priority by Territory Families, including securing a provider to deliver the services. Other parts of

the Regional Deal include youth crisis accommodation, student boarding accommodation, trauma-informed care, community mediation and investment in sport and recreation.

As a government we also continue to assess social-service investment in the Barkly region which seeks to identify and address funding and delivery gaps, which have been overlooked for too long.

This work is starting to have an impact in a number of areas of social need and I am confident the current initiatives, combined with the Barkly Regional Deal will create long term benefits for Tennant Creek.

The Biz Secure program has been very successful in offering opportunities for businesses to improve security. To assist even more businesses, the Program has now been expanded and aligned with the Alcohol Secure Program. Businesses are now able to apply for up to $10,000 for security improvements, including a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design audit, without co-contribution. A further $10,000 is available with a co-contribution, so that businesses can now access up to a total of $20,000 in grant funding for security improvements, using Territory enterprises to do the work. Further details and contact information can be found on the website www.bizsecure.nt.gov.au.

Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Yours sincerely

NICOLE MANISON

- 2 JUL 2019