

COUNTRY LIBERALS

MEDIA RELEASE

TOURISM BODY BLOW

Willem Westra van Holthe MLA

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Shadow Tourism Minister, Willem Westra van Holthe, said the Henderson Government's failure to secure Alice Springs from violent criminals will damage tourism and hurt the Territory's reputation in Australia and abroad.

"The recent stabbing and bashing assaults of international tourists in Alice Springs will undoubtedly make headlines overseas and paint a damaging picture of the town," Mr Westra van Holthe said.

"My thoughts are with the victims of this unprovoked attack who no doubt came to the town hoping to experience desert life first-hand.

"The Government spent \$400,000 getting Oprah Winfrey to promote the Centre – but incidents' like the stabbing and assaults will soon become common knowledge among travellers.

"The tourism industry in Alice Springs is highly dependent on the back-packer market and it is time the Government tackled the issue of violent assaults in the town by increasing the police presence in the town.

"Meanwhile, I notice the Tourism Minister, Malandirri McCarthy, has remained silent following the assaults.

"The Minister needs to outline what she's done to convince the Chief Minister that a substantial increase in resources is needed to tackle this on-going issue.

"Rather than basking in the glory of Oprah's recent visit, she should be trying to bring about change to the town.

"The Chief Minister's comments in Parliament today that the Opposition should remain silent about crime in Alice Springs so as not to 'over inflate' the problems in the Town are patronising, paternalistic and are further proof Labor wants to sweep the Town's problems under the carpet."

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