[NOTE: On 21 August, 2014, juveniles confined in the Don Dale Behaviour Modification Units (BMUs) revolted against unbearable conditions and 6 youths were tear-gassed, including Josiah Binsaris. See report by Colleen Gwynne, Children's Commissioner, dated August 2015 and later ABC “4 Corners” TV investigative report shown on Monday 25th July, 2016]

YOUNG THUGS ON MOVE

NT News, Wednesday 6 August, 2014, page 4.

by Christopher Walsh

A new breed of youth criminals, who are more vicious and violent that anything seen before, can only be controlled by upgrades to the Territory's youth prison system, the Territory Government says.

This comes as a 14-year-old, one of the two remaining escapees from Don Dale Youth Detention Centre, was found and arrested at [the suburb of] Moulden without incident late yesterday.

Correctional Services Minister John Elferink announced $800,000 to move the current centre to the medium security wing of the Berrimah jail, after a daring escape over the weekend [Saturday] by five youths including the 14-year-old.

They allegedly threatened detention centre workers with gym equipment before fleeing.

Josiah Binsaris, 15, is still on the run.

“Recent events have demonstrated the necessity to spend that money,” Mr Elferink said.

“We'd already identified a number of shortcomings last year in the Don Dale facility and we realised that money would have to be set aside to improve the quality of the incarceration at Don Dale.”

Commissioner for Correctional Services Ken Middlebrook applauded the move of facilities and said the new breed of youth criminals was becoming more violent, as the escape proved.

“What's concerning about this is the definite change in the sorts of juveniles that are coming into custody,” he said.

“They have a propensity to show more violence and we need to be able to separate the various levels and ages.”

“I'm confident that moving from Don Dale across to Berrimah will certainly give us the tools to manage this change in that classification of young fellows that are coming into custody.”

The current Don Dale centre was lacking in certain areas, including no toilets in the cells and a wooden ceiling in the female section which could be a fire hazard,” Mr Elferink said.

The facility typically houses 30-40 inmates but has seen up to 70 or more at one time.

The $800,000 will be used to upgrade the current medium-security wing at Berrimah jail which will see separate sections for detainees based on age groups and behaviour.

Inmates from the Berrimah jail will be sent to the new Darwin Correctional Precinct [Holtz Prison] next month and it's expected the young offenders could be moved within the next year.