“Digging a big hole for himself” by Ben Smee, 28 July 2016.

from “CROCS IN THE CABINET”, page 275.

In in 2020, Adam Giles openly stated he'd like to break UN human rights conventions and throw criminals in a giant hole.

Six years later, loathed and facing an election wipe-out, the CLP's final desperate bid to remain in power has been a similar dog whistle to the Territory's “tough on crime” crowd.

Giles cannot back away from his drastic plans to lock more impressionable kids up in the Don Dale hell hole.

He has no credibility to blame Labor for the shocking treatment of young prisoners, though the former Government is partly to blame and has accepted some. Michael Gunner's acknowledgment of responsibility on Tuesday was a display of leadership that stood in stark contrast to his rival, who is fast losing the plot and even faster looking a fool on the national stage.

In 2012, the Country Liberal Partly campaigned by claiming Don Dale was a place where kids played “video games” and needed tougher love.

Here's what Giles said, in Parliament, in 2010: “I would love to be the Corrections Minister, I would build a big concrete hole and put all the bad criminals in there: 'Right you are in the hole you are not coming out, start learning about it'. I might break every United Nations convention of the right of the prisoner, but 'get in the hole'”.

Giles simply cannot walk from the hole comment to the high ground. His crocodile tears at the Tuesday press conference were remarkable. They were the tears of a man who would resile from offering true leadership and seek to blame everyone else at a time of crisis to buy a few cheap votes.

True leadership would not have dodged the key question about the treatment of kids in Don Dale. Every report, every piece of video footage, describes a system gone wrong. A system that is hardening petty criminals, doubling down on their violent upbringings.

He can no longer talk tough on crime. The party's election platform is fast becoming a farce, and Giles is now marking time until voters chase him from office.