

CORONAVIRUS — PRISON INDUSTRIES — FACE MASKS

Statement by Minister for Corrective Services

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Corrective Services) [12.15 pm]: I rise to update the house on the work of prison industries to expand the production of re-usable face masks, as part of the state government's preparedness for COVID-19 outbreaks in Western Australia. Establishing a local supply of masks will provide Western Australia with a rapid response capability regardless of the pressure on global stocks. Phase 1 of the project is well underway with the production of face masks being initially rolled out in six prisons. Bandyup Women's Prison has been established as the centralised ordering and delivery centre, with the face mask material pre-cut at Bandyup for completion by the prisons participating in the project.

Our prison industries are currently producing 2 000 re-usable cloth masks a week to stockpile for prisoners' use, which are manufactured to the Australian health department's recommended standard. Additional sewing machines have been purchased to increase production capacity, and consultation is ongoing to identify opportunities for expansion of workshops at prisons across the estate. Initial production capability has been estimated to increase up to 7 000 face masks a week, with production increasing over time as capability is further expanded with the addition of equipment, labour and repurposing of infrastructure. This initiative has provided prisoners with another project to provide a meaningful contribution to pay back to society during these uncertain times. Production and stockpiling of masks for the Department of Health is a precautionary measure and another way the McGowan government is keeping Western Australia safe and strong.