

MELALEUCA WOMEN'S PRISON

Statement by Minister for Corrective Services

MR F.M. LOGAN (Cockburn — Minister for Corrective Services) [9.03 am]: I rise to inform the house that on 4 April 2020, the Melaleuca Remand and Reintegration Facility was returned to the management and control of the state public sector. Renamed the Melaleuca Women's Prison—MWP—the facility remains committed to delivering dedicated support for adult female prisoners on remand. From 1 July, health services at MWP will also move away from the existing contractor to return to state management. This will provide increased access to a dedicated female-centred mental health and alcohol or other drug counselling service, and includes a strengthened focus on cultural responsiveness for Aboriginal women. Security services and operations have significantly increased post transition, with emergency management exercises conducted regularly to embed response and procedural capacity. Prison officers are engaging with prisoners to maintain dynamic security with additional support in the form of satellite trainers, two Aboriginal visiting officers, court services support officers and an intelligence officer. The department has also changed unit management procedures at MWP to ensure that those who are held in crisis care or those monitored on the at-risk management system continue to receive therapeutic care, out-of-cell time, education and recreation. The department has also converted existing multipurpose rooms for programs and education that has significantly expanded the services provided at MWP by allowing for the scheduling of tutors and courses. MWP has delivered 71 units of competence in a five-week period, a significant increase for the facility and a tremendous achievement for the prisoners.

For the first time, Melaleuca has a fully functional library that includes legal library stations and resources. The library itself offers employment for four prisoners. Previously, less than 50 per cent of women in prison were engaged in paid prison employment. MWP now offers employment positions to cater for all women at the site over a seven-day working week. The scope of opportunity to work has expanded and now has a focus on linking to employment and training opportunities. The department remains committed to improving the futures of women in custody by ensuring appropriate security, safety of our staff and safety for those in our care. I want to thank Department of Justice employees for their work in managing the transition of Melaleuca Women's Prison back into public hands. I also want to thank Superintendent Anika Smith for her hard work in managing the transition and her dedication to the prisoners and staff as superintendent of the facility.