

PRISONS — INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION — BUNBURY

919. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Corrective Services:

My question is to the very hardworking Minister for Corrective Services. I refer to the McGowan Labor government's \$310 million funding commitment to increase the number of prison beds, specifically the opening of the new \$23.7 million 160-bed facility in Bunbury. Can the minister outline to the house how the construction of this project is an important step towards solving the overcrowding crisis created by the previous government at the same time as creating local jobs?

Mr F.M. LOGAN replied:

Thank you very much indeed, member for Bunbury, for that question. What a wonderful preamble as well!

I believe that everyone in this house is well aware of the mess the McGowan government inherited in the area of corrections. It was an absolute disaster. We literally had more prisoners than beds when we took over in March 2017. We have embarked on a major \$310 million expansion program of the prison estate, which will deliver 1 228 beds. The Bunbury facility is the first of those projects. I promised this house that it would be delivered at this time of the year. It has been delivered on time and we opened it on Friday. It was a great announcement and very welcomed by the locals, who did a fantastic job of reporting on the opening and what it contributed to the economy of the south west and Bunbury, in addition to what it will do to assist with the overcrowding issue within the prison estate. Over and above addressing the inherited problems from the previous Liberal–National government, this project is also the first of the Western Australian participation projects, as announced by the Premier. Those projects concentrate on using Western Australian taxpayers' money to get as many jobs as possible out of that expenditure. Can I inform the house of what we have created, as part of the Western Australian industry participation project in the south west, with the Bunbury Regional Prison expansion program. There were 25 local contractors working on the project and that in turn created 847 local jobs. On top of that, over the last 12 months, 48 new apprenticeships were created as a result of that. In terms of the Western Australian participation project, it being the first, this is absolutely outstanding. It was nearly a 98 per cent local content in the contribution to that build program. It was a fantastic outcome. Over and above the building of the project and over and above the local jobs that it created, of course we have employed more people to ensure that we have the right staffing numbers down there. There are 65 new permanent jobs—all of them are local, member for Bunbury—that will be in that prison. As the member knows, we had a local training program for the prison officers down there, which is the first in many, many years. That in itself, over and above the build program, is another major contribution to job creation in Bunbury. It is really a very, very good outcome.

Finally, can I just say that, unlike the previous projects that were put together by the previous Liberal–National government—I point to the expansion of Greenough Regional Prison, by the member for Warren–Blackwood—what we have done is to ensure that all of the necessary support mechanisms, when we actually put more beds into a prison system, are there as well. All the previous government did was build beds; Greenough was a classic example. It did not address all the other support mechanisms that need to be in place when it did the expansion program.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: In Bunbury—it just shows members how thin-skinned he is—we have expanded the kitchens, we have expanded the dining rooms and we have expanded the visitors' centres. All those things are critically necessary when one goes through these prison expansion programs, and they are things that the previous Liberal–National government did not deliver, and, consequently, we ended up with problems that we inherited in March 2017.