

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE AND UNIT 18, CASUARINA PRISON

**820. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Corrective Services:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to improving our state's youth justice system without risking community safety.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house what steps this government is taking to enhance the management of Banksia Hill Detention Centre and unit 18 at Casuarina Prison while maintaining the security of these facilities?
- (2) Can the minister inform the house whether he is aware of any other proposals in our state's youth custodial system?

**Mr P. PAPALIA replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for his question. I want to bring to the house's attention some of the content of the debate yesterday during the matter of public interest that may have escaped some people. I also want to bring the Western Australian public's attention to some of the information that was revealed or confirmed during that debate.

With respect to what we are doing to improve juvenile detention and outcomes in juvenile detention, as I said yesterday, the Premier and I announced a range of measures in June that are being implemented. Primarily, we are conducting an infrastructure review of all the juvenile estate. We are increasing the number of youth custodial officers in both Banksia Hill and unit 18 detention facilities and, in the near term, we are employing additional prison officers at those sites to assist with the provision of security and achieve better outcomes.

We are working with Derbal Yerrigan Health Service to get an Aboriginal health provider in the system to assist in enhancing additional health measures and provision. We are working to get the Telethon Kids Institute back into the place to resume its own research and primarily focus on helping us get refined measures for individuals. We are creating an Aboriginal mentor scheme involving elders and others who can assist in mentoring staff and juveniles.

Beyond that, we have requested that the agency cease the rapid shuttling of juveniles between Banksia Hill and unit 18 and give some stability. There is a process by which juveniles can come back from unit 18, but they are essentially the most complex, challenging and very often dangerous and violent individuals so they are housed in the most suitable accommodation that we have at the moment. The only place that is suitable at the moment is unit 18. They can return subject to a multidisciplinary team analysis and assessment. That is all going on.

Banksia Hill is far improved to the extent that the opposition, after only six months ago demanding that we shut Banksia Hill immediately, is demanding that we shift everyone from unit 18 to Banksia Hill. That is an unspoken compliment and recognition of the success in improving Banksia Hill. As I said, people like the President of the Children's Court have acknowledged Banksia Hill is far improved. Unit 18 is not yet what we want. However, it is the only place suitable for housing that difficult and very complex and challenging cohort, which is only small; I think 10 today or perhaps 11. That is the only suitable accommodation.

I wanted to bring to the attention of the public that during the debate yesterday, the Liberal Party made clear what it will do in the event that it becomes the government. It is calling on us to immediately shut unit 18 and move the detainees. That demand represents only two options. One is that we let them out back into the community. These juveniles have been deemed too unsafe to be in the community by the courts. That is one option. The only other option is to return them to Banksia Hill. We know the Liberal Party's plan for that is to house them in demountables, as stated by the Liberal Party's spokesperson. On 23 October, he said, according to my notes —

You can develop a temporary facility at Banksia Hill at the moment—you can—and segregate the cohort of juveniles.

He said that to Channel Nine news. He also spoke on the same day to James Carmody of the ABC and Anne-Maree Leonard of Network 10. He held a press conference down in the fern garden and said on a couple of occasions, "You can return unit 18 juveniles to Banksia Hill Detention Centre, segregating them by using demountables." That is the Liberal Party spokesperson. That is the Liberal Party's proposal. In the event that the Liberal Party becomes the government at the next election, it will immediately close unit 18 and let the most dangerous and threatening juveniles into the community or let them back into Banksia Hill and destroy any progress that has been made to provide a safe environment, better rehabilitation and better outcomes for youth as they return to the community.