

PRISONERS — EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

2453. Mr P. Papalia to the Minister for Corrective Services

I refer to the Minister's claim that the Government has focused on providing appropriate work skills, education and rehabilitative programs to offenders within the prison system – increasing program delivery by 45 per cent in the 2008–09 financial year alone, and I ask:

- (a) what total number of prisoners eligible for programs were provided with programs during each of the financial years 2007–2008, 2008–2009 and to date in 2009–2010 (expressed numerically not as a percentage);
- (b) what total number of prisoners eligible for programs were not provided with programs during 2007–2008, 2008–2009 and to date in 2009–2010;
- (c) what type of programs (listed by name) were provided in 2007–2008, 2008–2009 and to date in 2009–2010; and
- (d) what total number of prisoners attended each type of program that was delivered in 2007–2008, 2008–2009 and to date in 2009–2010; that is, how many individual prisoners attended each type of program in each of the listed financial years?

Mr C.C. PORTER replied:

- (a) In 2007/08, 844 program places were provided.
In 2008/09, 1237 program places were provided.
In the first six months of 2009/10, 1075 places have been provided.
- (b) At any given point in time there is a measure kept by the Department of Corrective Services (DCS) of the overall demand pool for programs offered in the WA prison system for summary that can be described as a point in time demand list. Consequently, the relevant figure is measured at a point in time rather than over a quarter. At the end of the first quarter of 2009-10 there were 3,544 prisoners who were assessed as eligible for a program and who were awaiting a program at that point in time.

This figure is a point in time figure that represents program demand at the end of the first quarter of 2009/10. It does not indicate a number of prisoners who will not in due course receive a program. Prioritisation from the pool of prisoners who are assessed as eligible for a program is undertaken according to a range of factors including sentence length. Attempts are made to take into account those prisoners assessed as suitable for a program but who have a short sentence length, i.e. have a shorter period of time in which to complete an eligible program than those prisoners who are assessed as eligible for a program but because they are serving a longer sentence have more time in which to complete a program for which they have been assessed as eligible.

Included within the 3,544 prisoners who were assessed as eligible for a program at the end of the 2009-10 quarter are prisoners already booked to take part in a program that has not yet commenced as well as others who will be booked and complete a program before they are released. It should be additionally noted that some offenders will be removed from the demand list as it existed at the end of the 2009-10 quarter and before program commencement for reasons including refusal, poor motivation or security and health considerations.

Data on overall program demand has not historically been collected or analysed. This is a new initiative that commenced under the Liberal national Government in the last quarter of the 2008/09 financial year. As such comparison across previous years is not possible.

- (c)-(d) [See paper 1988.]