

JUVENILE DETAINEES — HAKEA PRISON

38. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to the government's ill-conceived decision to close the Rangeview Remand Centre, contributing to the riot at Banksia Hill and forcing the government to accommodate juveniles at Hakea Prison.

- (1) Is the minister aware that because juveniles are occupying the two new units at Hakea, 900 adult prisoners are crammed into the old units, which are designed to hold a total of only 617 prisoners?
- (2) Is the minister aware that WorkSafe has deemed the old units at Hakea Prison to pose a safety risk, with unstable asbestos in the ceilings requiring complete evacuation of each unit for asbestos removal with the appropriate safety standards?
- (3) Where does the minister plan to put the adult prisoners from the contaminated Hakea prison units while the asbestos is being removed, or does he even have a plan?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

I thank the member for Warnbro. I will provide some simple answers to some very simple questions.

- (1) I am aware of what has happened as a result of transferring prisoners from the old Rangeview, now Wandoo, site out to Banksia Hill Detention Centre. Rangeview, as it was then known, used to be in my electorate of Jandakot. I visited it when it was a facility used to hold juveniles who were awaiting trial. The reality is that it was an underused facility. As the member would know, it is now used as an adult prison; it is also used to help those aged between 18 and 24 years who have been convicted and sentenced for a lesser range of offences and who have the highest chance of being rehabilitated, get ready to be released back into society. The government does not, and I am sure the member does not, want those who have the best chance of rehabilitation mixing with the hardened mainstream prison population. It will not help them in any way. Rangeview has now obviously had its use changed.
- (2) As far as Hakea is concerned, I am under no illusion, as are neither the department nor the government, that a serious incident occurred on 20 January; that is, 61 young offenders basically rioted. They did substantial damage to that facility. At the end of the day, if the opposition's alternative is to relocate some of them back to Rangeview, it is unacceptable. It is unacceptable for a number of reasons. Wandoo holds only 80 people. If the member had his way and moved some of those juveniles back to Wandoo, he would essentially have juveniles held on three different campuses across the Western Australian prison system, and that will not work in any way.
- (3) I am aware that some of the ceilings in a number of old sections of Hakea Prison contain asbestos. I am informed that, like so many other buildings across government and the private sector in Western Australia at the moment, it is safe. I do not need anyone to lecture me about the risks of asbestosis; my father is dying from it. I know the risk involved in having this product —

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You know the product; do you have a plan?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Absolutely; we do have a plan. As I said last week, when it is safe to move the juveniles back into their facility, safely and sustainably as far as staffing and programs are concerned, we will start to move prisoners out of the cells in Hakea that need some work removing asbestos. They will gradually be moved into those units and basically rotated through. It is not rocket science. It can be done easily and safely without impacting on the prison population.