

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE RIOT — INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES REPORT

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

I refer to yesterday's report by the Inspector of Custodial Services into the Banksia Hill Detention Centre fiasco, specifically the findings in relation to juveniles, many of whom have been victims of sexual abuse and are being routinely strip searched unnecessarily.

- (1) Why are juveniles routinely strip searched four times a day when they are transferred from Hakea to Banksia Hill on the way to a court appearance and on their return, despite the fact they remain within a secure environment the entire time?
- (2) Why has the minister allowed the practice of routine strip searching on every occasion a juvenile is transferred between Hakea and Banksia Hill, despite a June 2008 Inspector of Custodial Services report saying that it could not be justified and more recently on 27 March this year the President of the Children's Court telling the Supreme Court that, in his view, it is totally unacceptable?
- (3) Why was a juvenile who had been incarcerated for only four months between 21 January and 28 June this year strip searched 62 times—an average of 15 times per month?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(3) As I said yesterday, there are 35 recommendations in this report. In the next couple of weeks the government will consider all of them and will respond to them accordingly. On the issue of strip searching of juveniles —

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: This is essentially —

Ms M.M. Quirk: Why didn't you front on 6PR this morning?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I did.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I do not need a running commentary on everything that happens here.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am pretty sure I was on 6PR this morning about 11 o'clock, if the member had opened her ears.

Let me get back to the issue of strip searching. It is essentially an operational matter. The decisions on strip searching juveniles are made by the risk that is determined by the youth custodial officers in charge of them. Having said that, I will not cop out of it; it is alarming that it seems to be a little bit excessive. The department is reviewing that procedure. We have had conversations with the commissioner and the executive team already on the issue of strip searching juveniles and they will review the practice. Certainly, from my personal point of view, if a juvenile does not leave the custody of the detainees, of course, we have to question whether there is a need. If they have had no interaction with anyone else other than the youth custodial officers and the people who are guarding at the time, we will look at this. As I said, we will look at all the recommendations in this report and report to Parliament in the coming weeks on many of the issues that have been referred to in this report. It is a significant report; there are 35 recommendations in it that the government will give due and proper consideration to in the coming weeks.