

PRISON MUSTER

**680. Hon HELEN BULLOCK to the minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:**

I ask this question on behalf of Hon Adele Farina, who is not in the chamber. Can the minister provide the model of projected increases in prisoner numbers as a result of —

- (a) changes to Prisoners Review Board of Western Australia policies;
- (b) changes in growth as a result of the Sentencing Legislation (Transitional Provisions) Amendment Bill 2008;
- (c) changes in growth as a result of the Criminal Code Amendment Bill 2008; and
- (d) average annual growth outside all the above factors?

**Hon PETER COLLIER replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Corrective Services, I provide the following response —

- (a) Pursuant to the relevant Western Australian legislation that relates to sentencing, the chair of the Prisoners Review Board, in making parole decisions, exercises complete statutory independence. The relevant changes have not been to policy. However, to the extent that the present chair of the PRB is exercising discretion in a different manner from her predecessor, statistics show that since the commencement of the new chair, there has been an observable statistical change. That is indicated in the attached document, which I will seek leave to table. Given the statutory independence of the exercise of the chair's discretion, it is not possible to affect or predict future exercises of the PRB chair's discretion so as to allow for any accurate projection of prisoner numbers based on the PRB chair's decision making.
- (b) I seek leave to table the attached document.

Leave granted. [See paper 909.]

**Hon PETER COLLIER:** This document is the most recent modelling of prison population growth upon which present planning has been based, and was considered during budget estimates. This included consideration of natural growth, the impact of truth-in-sentencing legislation and the impact of expected police numbers. It did not take into account differentials in granting of parole over time.

- (c) The Criminal Code Bill 2008 has not yet come into effect and hence has no impact on the prison population at present. Because of the way in which offences under the code are recorded, it is not possible to predict using previously recorded data, with an acceptable degree of certainty, the number of offenders who would receive a prison sentence under these laws who would not otherwise have been imprisoned. Specifically, the number of assaults on the overall number of public officers is recorded, but court statistics do not differentiate between all classes of officers and the degree of harm that those officers suffer. Further, it is not possible to definitively model the deterrent effect these laws will achieve.
- (d) See tabled document referred to in the response to (b).