

**WOMEN'S REMAND AND REINTEGRATION FACILITY — REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**

*Statement by Minister for Corrective Services*

**MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot — Minister for Corrective Services)** [9.11 am]: In June, I advised the house that the Department of Corrective Services would release an expression-of-interest document to identify private sector options for operating the new women's remand and reintegration facility. The expression-of-interest process has now been completed and confirmed market interest in operating the facility. The responses received outlined innovative approaches to service delivery that more effectively meet the complex needs of women prisoners, especially their mental health and substance abuse needs. Most women are held on remand or serve short sentences for non-violent crimes. Many have themselves been victims of serious crime and sustained abuse. When women are sentenced to custody, it has a profound impact on their family life. Without in any way diminishing the seriousness of their crimes, this government is focused on implementing activities that help vulnerable women out of trouble by tackling costly intergenerational crime and creating a safer community for all Western Australians. Our efforts to divert women from custody when it is appropriate to do so also continue.

The department has set gender-specific, culturally appropriate standards for custodial services for women prisoners that will be evaluated. These standards will underpin operations at the women's remand and rehabilitation facility, and over time will lead to a safer community. The department will issue a request for proposal to short-listed proponents shortly, and it will then consider fully costed proposals that prepare women prisoners for release, assist women who are remanded for a short period, focus on the specific needs of Aboriginal women, and are based on international best practice in the treatment of women prisoners. An internal cost model has been developed and, in conjunction with the qualitative and non-qualitative criteria, will be used to assess all proposals. I take this opportunity to thank delegates and members of the Western Australian Prison Officers' Union for contributing to the development of the custodial aspects of this model. The procurement process will give the government options for the operation of the new facility. It will give greater flexibility and choice in determining how services are delivered, which will drive performance and innovation. This process will lead to greater value for money and services that enable women to lead productive lives. This process has incorporated service specifications that are informed by empirical evidence about what works for female offenders. Rehabilitation is a key objective of the prison system. Service specifications will measure rehabilitation outcomes that can engender accountability and transparency. This new approach to managing women offenders will enhance the quality and performance of the female estate.