

EASTERN GOLDFIELDS REGIONAL PRISON — REDEVELOPMENT

Statement by Minister for Corrective Services

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot — Minister for Corrective Services) [12.05 pm]: Last week I had the opportunity to visit Kalgoorlie–Boulder to mark the official start of construction of the new \$232 million Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison redevelopment. This new prison facility will replace the current 100-bed Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison with a modern 350-bed facility and will be built on land adjacent to the existing facility. It is anticipated the project will take two years to complete. On completion of the new Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison, existing prison buildings will be demolished and the area converted into a market garden to provide fresh food for the prison. The new facility will enable regional prisoners from the area to be accommodated closer to their families and communities. The multi–security level prison will accommodate both genders in a mixture of traditional cell blocks and cottage-type accommodation. As Aboriginals are the predominant population, a design feature of the new facility is that it will provide accommodation and recreation spaces reflective of Aboriginal cultural values. One of the principal goals of the new prison will be the successful reintegration of prisoners into the community upon release. Providing offenders with education, skills development and rehabilitative programs is central to the prison’s function—the primary aim being to reduce reoffending.

This project will bring many long-term benefits to the eastern goldfields region. The construction workforce, including subcontractors, will be made up of about 200 people at its peak, with as many workers sourced locally as is possible. The Department of Corrective Services will engage in a local recruitment campaign closer to the prison’s completion date to assist in meeting the need for up to 150 additional staff in the new, larger prison. The Department of Corrective Services will also work closely with local community service providers to assess the additional resourcing required to service the much larger prison population. This substantial investment by the state government is part of an unprecedented \$655 million capital works spend on our prison system. It highlights the government’s continued commitment to public safety and offender rehabilitation through the delivery of this state-of-the-art prison facility. I look forward to visiting the facility again upon its completion. Having already visited the cell prototypes, I can inform the house that this new facility will be vastly different from the current one. It also reflects this government’s significant commitment to invest in local and regional communities.