

ABORIGINAL PRISON POPULATION

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

I have a supplementary question. What action is the minister taking to reduce the number of adult Aboriginals in Western Australian prisons?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

We cannot solve these problems overnight, but the government is committed to solving them. The Premier made that commitment and we are looking at a number of different options, but, as I have tried to say, these are issues that need to be resolved way before people are sentenced. Some of these issues have gone on for many, many generations, and that is something that as a state neither side of politics should be proud about. When people are born with foetal alcohol spectrum disorders and do not have the ability to reason right from wrong as well as other people do, and issues are triggered by the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people that lead them to commit crimes, we are —

Mr J.R. Quigley interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Butler, I call you to order for the third time.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: As the Premier has discussed publicly in recent times, we are looking at a range of options as ways to address Aboriginal incarceration and we are committed to doing it.