

PRISONS — REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

746. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Minister for Corrective Services:

Will the minister inform the house of any progress made by the Liberal-National government on rehabilitation programs for people in the Western Australian prison system?

Mr C.C. PORTER replied:

I thank the member for her question. There is no doubt in my mind that the delivery of offender programs is an absolutely critical component of any government efforts to provide rehabilitation. Upon taking office as Minister for Corrective Services, that was my first departmental organisation priority. In fact, I noted last week that the Leader of the Opposition said, during the second reading speech for his private member's bill, that —

... a policy that those serving longer sentences have priority for programs whilst in prison, which means the 43 per cent of the prison population that is Indigenous have considerably less access to programs while in prison because, by and large, they are serving shorter sentences.

I think what the Leader of the Opposition was quite correctly pointing out is that the delivery of offender-based programs to Indigenous prisoners is a critical plank in trying to achieve rehabilitation. It is the central mechanism for trying to decrease the prospect of reoffending and the likelihood of a return to prison by individual offenders, including Indigenous offenders.

I will make a couple of comments about the status of prison program delivery that I inherited from the previous government. I will provide a couple of examples. I will focus on Indigenous prisoners, because that was the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition. Indigenous prisoners completed 228 violence offending programs in 2000-01; and there were 17 completions in 2007-08, the last year of the previous government. The opposition might also think that drug offending programs are very important to the rehabilitation of Indigenous prisoners. There were 503 completions of these programs in 2000-01, and only 101 in 2007-08. I turn to overall offending program trends. There were 2 289 programs completed in 2000-01, when Labor came to power. In the last year of the Labor government, 2007-08, 768 programs were completed.

I will raise five quick points in relation to the Liberal-National government's year in office. Between 2007-08 and 2008-09, the provision of programs to offenders increased by 45 per cent to a total of 1 225 enrolments. During this time, total hours of program delivery increased by 66 per cent. Over the same period violence programs increased by 46 per cent, sex offending programs by 100 per cent, and addiction programs by 132 per cent. For 2009-10, the next year coming, 2 052 enrolments are projected. That will be a further increase of 68 per cent. That means that with the same funds, over two years, we will have managed to increase delivery to offenders by 143 per cent. I will finish by talking about Indigenous offenders because the Leader of the Opposition spoke about it and bemoaned the performance around delivery of programs, which, frankly, was dreadful. In the past year the provision of programs to Aboriginal offenders has increased by 61 per cent. This includes a 123 per cent increase in addictions programs, a 160 per cent increase in violence programs, and a 483 per cent increase in sex offending programs. With the same funding, that is a radical improvement by any measure on Labor's performance.

Tabling of Paper

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: The minister was quite clearly quoting from an official document and I request that he table the entire document that he was quoting from, which includes the entire file.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The Minister for Corrective Services was glancing at his paperwork.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will be the arbiter of the decision asked for by the member for Willagee. I am taking a point from the Leader of the House at the moment I do not want to hear from anyone else.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I was watching the Attorney General.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan interjected.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: What did you just say?

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: Let's check the camera.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Tell the truth. What did you just say?—something you should withdraw. You should be ashamed of yourself.

Extract from *Hansard*

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Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Christian Porter; Mr Alan Carpenter; Mr Rob Johnson; Speaker

The SPEAKER: Order! Members on both sides, if you want question time to continue, I suggest you desist interjecting or making cross-fire remarks across this chamber.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I will conclude. The point I was trying to make is that I do not think there is a point of order because the Minister for Corrective Services was obviously looking at his notes and quoting figures from them. They are his notes; they are not official documents; it is his own personal file.

The SPEAKER: Order! If they are official documents I will ask you to table them, minister. If they are your own notes, that is a matter for you to decide. If they are official documents they need to be tabled.

Mr C.C. PORTER: They are my own notes based on my reading of a range of documents that have come to me outlining our success in program delivery.