

MELALEUCA REMAND AND REINTEGRATION FACILITY — SODEXO

578. Mrs G.J. GODFREY to the Minister for Corrective Services:

On behalf of the member for Forrestfield, I acknowledge the student leaders and staff from Maida Vale Primary School in the public gallery.

I note that the minister recently tabled the operator contract for the Melaleuca women's remand and reintegration prison. Can the minister please update the house on the benefits of engaging a private service provider for this facility?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

I thank the member for Belmont for her question on a very, very important issue for the state of Western Australia.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Albany.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Of course, as I have announced previously, some \$24.3 million was spent on a new women's remand and reintegration facility to change the previous facility into a new one out at the old Hakea Prison site. As I have conceded previously, the part of the prison estate with the most population pressures on it is obviously the women's estate. It is important that we get these things right. It is important that we do everything we can to try to rehabilitate our vulnerable prisoners, particularly in this circumstance, female prisoners, who have been both remanded and are being prepared for reintegration into society. Following a very, very detailed and exhaustive tender process that involved putting together an internal cost model, I would like to acknowledge the Western Australian Prison Officers' Union's contribution in being part of that process. The government has decided to provide that contract to Sodexo. Interestingly, the cost per prisoner per day will come in at \$206. That is 42 per cent cheaper per prisoner per day than we are currently experiencing in running Bandyup Women's Prison—42 per cent cheaper per prisoner per day.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, I call you to order for the third time. Minister, continue.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I know that the Labor Party does not like the idea of us doing things that will save taxpayers' dollars—get better value for money for Western Australian taxpayers—but it is not just about the cost.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Mr Speaker, it is not just —

Mr J.R. Quigley interjected.

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

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It is not just about the cost. It is also about the services it will provide. It means that we will get better services for drug and alcohol rehabilitation for female prisoners.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It means that we will get better services when it comes to providing bail options. It means that we will get better services out of this contract for accommodation support once prisoners have been released. It means that we will get better services to provide post-release support so those prisoners who may be more likely to reoffend will be able to be kept on the straight and narrow and we will see a reduction in the recidivism rate of female prisoners. These are all very noble things to achieve, which could not be done if it was kept within the private sector, regardless of the cost. This is in line with the recommendations of the Economic Regulation Authority and we are getting on and doing the job that needs to be done, regardless of the politics. I know that the Labor Party hates it.

Several members interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I know that I do not have to go too far into the WA Labor Party's platform to realise that if it ever made it to this side of the house, it would rip up these contracts. WA Labor will ensure that public services such as prisons, juvenile detention centres, prisoner transport and community justice are not further privatised. Where they have been, they will be brought back into the government's control and operation. The bottom line of that —

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Members opposite all go "Hear, hear!" but they cannot stand in here and say that they have a plan to address issues in the economy and government spending when they would rip up these contracts and cost the taxpayers of this state hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars—tens of millions of dollars alone

within just the Department of Corrective Services. It is a disgrace. If members opposite ever did that, they would jeopardise the rehabilitation of vulnerable prisoners. They would cost the taxpayers so much more money! The greatest risk to the taxpayers of Western Australia is the Labor Party in this house.