

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES — REFORMS

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

Today on radio the minister detailed significant changes underway in the Department of Corrective Services. Can the minister please outline to the house the nature of these changes?

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:**

I have always said that this government has two priorities when it comes to corrections—firstly, to protect the public from dangerous criminals, and, secondly, to get value for money for the taxpayers of Western Australia. Part of getting value for money is to ensure that we reduce the recidivism rate—that is, that we do everything we can to stop people from breaking the law again and landing in jail. I know that it is a tough game, but we are determined to do everything we can to address those issues.

**Mr F.M. Logan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Cockburn!

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** It is no secret that I have had concerns for some time about both —

**Mr F.M. Logan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Cockburn, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr F.M. Logan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I call you to order for the second time.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** It is no secret that I have had concerns for some time, almost since becoming minister, about cultural and structural issues with the Department of Corrective Services. We are moving to address those issues, starting with a new commissioner, who kicked off in that role just over a month ago. We are also bringing in tools that will give the commissioner the ability to get rid of prison officers who should perhaps not be employed in the service. We will address the cultural issues in the Department of Corrective Services with or without the support of the opposition; it is going to happen regardless. I do not really care whether the opposition supports it, but the fact that it does not says more about its principles than it does about ours.

Secondly, we are going to tackle the structural issues within the Department of Corrective Services. We are going to streamline things. An initial structural change under the new commissioner will be a rationalisation of 11 top-level positions that report to the commissioner. About half of those jobs will be redesigned and restructured so that we can streamline processes within the Department of Corrective Services, because at the end of the day it is ridiculous to have a doubling up of bureaucracy within a department. It is important that we have a single point of responsibility within a department for end-to-end service delivery—that is, for people starting their interaction with the Department of Corrective Services all the way through to being incarcerated, being reformed, being released, being given a job and being given help to get on with their lives so that they can make a meaningful contribution to society. This government is determined and committed to reforming the Department of Corrective Services.

Having said all that, I take this opportunity to wish all my colleagues all the best for the festive season. In a perfect world I would have bought every member a present; I cannot. The spirit is in the giving of a present. I am going to give one present to the member for Bassendean. It is my pleasure to give him the golden sneaker award for Labor leadership ambitions. This is from me to you, buddy; the golden sneaker. I think he will love it.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister for Corrective Services, did you not listen to my statement yesterday? I call you to order for the first time.