

WEST KIMBERLEY REGIONAL PRISON

5564. Hon Giz Watson to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Corrective Services

- (1) Regarding the answers given to my question on notice No. 5118 on 1 May 2012 about the West Kimberley Regional Prison, particularly the answers given to (14) and (15), I ask —
- (a) What advice and guidance was given by the — Kimberley Aboriginal Reference Group;
- (b) Kimberley Cultural Advisory Group; and
- (c) Derby Community Reference Group?
- (2) What was the response by the Department of Corrective Services?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

- (1) (a) An independent Kimberley Aboriginal Reference Group (KARG), appointed by the then Minister for Justice, the Hon. John D'Orazio in 2005, developed a State Government Kimberley Custodial Plan (KCP). The KCP is a summary of the KARG's initial recommendations on custodial facilities reflecting the opinions of more than 400 people, mainly Aboriginal people, consulted from June to September 2005, and presents their preferences for custodial facilities for the Kimberley region.

The KCP supported the following five philosophical statements:

- Custodial proximity to land and family — new custodial facilities must guarantee the location of Aboriginal prisoners close to their supports of land and family.
- Cultural responsibilities — Aboriginal people will be empowered to maintain cultural obligations and responsibilities. There is recognition of traditional law and obligations.
- Spiritual relationship to land, sea and waterways — there is recognition of the cultural and spiritual significance of the land, as well as the recognition of custodianship rights and responsibilities.
- Kinship and family responsibilities — these are central to the fabric of Aboriginal society and critical to its well-being. There is recognition of kinship ties and reciprocal obligations, which is demonstrated through flexible programs to support kinship and families, in particular children, and will target symptoms of community dysfunction.
- Community responsibilities — responsibility to address issues identified by Aboriginal people such as alcohol and solvent abuse, and the development of skills to assist communities after release to promote economic independence.

The above five statements have been incorporated in the development and operational framework of the West Kimberley Regional Prison (WGRP) and in the overall provision for custodial services in the Kimberley.

- (b) The Kimberley Cultural Advisory Group (KCAG) was established to advise on the planning and conceptualisation of the WGRP and to facilitate a managed dialogue with community stakeholders. The KCAG held discussions on a range of matters such as the purpose of the cultural centre and types of training and employment programs among others. The KCAG also provided the Department of Corrective Services (the Department) with an opportunity to engage with Aboriginal elders.
- (c) The Derby Community Reference Group (DCRG) was established for the same purpose as the KCAG. The DCRG is made up of a range of community representatives, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and is chaired by the President of the Shire of Derby–West Kimberley. The Department and the DCRG have met regularly since the initial planning stages of the WGRP, with the most recent meeting held in May 2012. The DCRG meet monthly and act as an advisory to the WGRP. Since 2008, the DCRG has provided the Department with advice and guidance on a broad range of matters. The main role of the DCRG is:
- To provide two-way communication between the Department and the community;
 - To raise issues affecting its members, the local community or specific stakeholders;
 - To facilitate avenues for community interaction;
 - To provide an exchange of information;

- To provide a link between the Department and community members and organisations which have an interest in the development and implementation of the proposed services;
- To provide an opportunity for the opinions and comments of community groups and individuals to be formally addressed;
- To provide input on aspects of the development of WKRP such as Employment opportunities, Visual Impact and Community safety.

The DCRG recently recommended to the Department that they advise businesses on the tender process and business opportunities for local providers. To facilitate this, the Department worked with the Derby Small Business Centre and presented to a number of businesses in relation to:

- Procurement policy;
- Tendering advice;
- Short term business opportunities; and
- Longer term business opportunities.

The DCRG also recommended that the Commissioner, Mr Ian Johnson, should meet Derby Health Service representatives to discuss the provision of Health Services at the facility. The Department progressed this and both parties met in December 2011. Subsequent to that meeting, representatives from the Department visited Derby in February 2012 and gave a general presentation on the role of the Health Services Directorate and an overview of prison medical services.

- (2) The Department commenced planning for the development of the WKRP based directly on the recommendations made in the KCP by the KARG, as well as the Mahoney Inquiry report and the Inspector of Custodial Services directed review. Community engagement has been a central philosophy of the WKRP since its conception and through to the design and operational framework of the facility. This community engagement has continued primarily through the liaison with the DCRG with specific examples provided above.