

RANGEVIEW JUVENILE DETENTION CENTRE

448. Mr J.M. FRANCIS to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer the minister to the announcements in last week's budget about the future of the Rangeview Juvenile Detention Centre in my electorate of Jandakot. How will this initiative break the cycle of re-offending among juvenile offenders?

Mr C.C. PORTER replied:

I thank the member for his question. Of course, this project dates back to a program and election promise that emanated from the now Minister for Police. It is a very innovative program and project. It will be an 80-bed juvenile male-only prison for 18 to 22-year-olds. It is the first of its type anywhere in Australia. We have targeted that group to be placed in a facility of this type because, first of all, they are among the highest re-offenders of any group in the community. We have also seen from statistics and anecdotal evidence that it is the group that programs can have the greatest effect upon. When a 19-year-old offender goes into the general prison population, his likelihood of recidivism is incremented due to the people he associates with in the prison system.

Mr P. Papalia: Will they be first-time offenders?

Mr C.C. PORTER: They will be all sorts of offenders, but not only first-time offenders. I want to cast the net relatively widely —

Mr P. Papalia: What will be the age group?

Mr C.C. PORTER: It will be 18 to 22-year-olds. I can say that the mix of offences that these 18 to 22-year-olds will have committed will be lesser offences than those committed by juveniles in Rangeview at the moment, by nature of the fact that Rangeview has everything from ultra-maximum homicide cases down to smaller matters. Generally, they will be offences at the lower end of the scale, but it will be a wide range. We tried to cast that net widely because we want to build a purpose-built facility that will run all the programs we can use to break cycles of re-offending. These are the people who are most at risk of developing the pattern of re-offending that will turn them into hard-core offenders. We will focus on young male offenders who re-offend at the higher rate and on preparing for employment with structured days, training, offence-specific programs and health programs, among other interventions, designed specifically for this group. No doubt there will be a high percentage of Indigenous prisoners, and programs will be tailored for Indigenous prisoners in that group. There will be a focus on Aboriginal-specific education, training and health issues. We will look specifically at issues such as homelessness, which we know to be, statistically, a great cause of imprisonment for young male juveniles of this type. One of its innovative aspects is that we are using the existing Rangeview facility. While there has been a very large growth in prisoner numbers, we have been undermustered in juvenile facilities. Banksia Hill will be retrofitted to accommodate all juvenile offenders. We can deliver an 80-bed purpose-built facility, the first of its type anywhere in Australia, before the end of 2011. It used to be in my old electorate, now the member for Jandakot's new electorate. It is a wonderful thing for his electorate and for the community at large.