

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES — OFFENDER STRATEGY

76. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to the minister's sacking of the Commissioner of Corrective Services and the chaos and confusion the minister has brought to the corrective services portfolio in his five and a half weeks or so of tenure. Last week the minister said that every dollar spent keeping someone out of jail is better than \$10 spent keeping them in jail.

- (1) What is the minister's intention in relation to the prison population in Western Australia—to increase or decrease it, noting all the minister's other commentary on the subject?
- (2) Will the minister be reintroducing the intensive supervision program—otherwise known as the family intensive team program—which successfully reduced recidivism by between 25 and 70 per cent, in long-term overseas studies, and which is a program that the minister's government abolished in its second year of office?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

I thank the member for Warnbro for his question.

- (1)–(2) One of the things that has obviously come to my attention is the fact that perhaps in some circumstances it may be better to spend a little bit more to put a few more resources into stopping some juveniles, in particular, from crossing that line that will land them in jail. This government obviously has a very strong record on protecting the community—on locking up people who are a threat to the innocent people of Western Australia—and I will not, and I am sure the government will not, apologise for that stand. But I also think that we can do a little bit more to spend some money in helping to keep some of the at-risk juveniles, in particular, from crossing the line that will land them in jail in the first place. It is not one of those areas in which if we just had millions of dollars and could throw \$1 million at every single person in Western Australia, we would stop people from committing crimes. We are still going to have people in jail. What I am suggesting is that perhaps we should spend a bit more money and put a few more resources into trying to stop people going down that wrong path that will land them in jail, which will just create a waste of human capital by locking them up. If we can keep them from committing crimes in the first place, that will provide a better outcome for them, for the individuals who will not be the victims of the crime and for the taxpayers, because at the moment it costs somewhere around \$630 a day to keep a juvenile in detention in Western Australia. Does that answer the member's question?

Mr P. Papalia: Is this in Banksia or Hakea?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The member gets where I am coming from.

As far as the programs are concerned—I am sorry, member for Warnbro; I know what your second question was—as the member would have heard, at the moment I am doing what I call a stocktake. I am having a look at these programs that we spend about \$2 million a year on delivering for at-risk juveniles in Western Australia to find out whether there is a better way of doing this. We need to work out which programs get better value for money for the taxpayers than others. It is very hard to put consistent key performance indicators on this as well, and it is very hard to gauge this, but we need to try to work out how we can do this. We need to work out which ones are working well and perhaps those that are not working so well, and maybe direct taxpayers' money towards the programs that will help to keep juveniles from crossing that line that will land them in jail in the first place. We are reviewing all these programs, and we will see how we go with that, member for Warnbro.