

CORRECTIVE SERVICES — WHISTLEBLOWER

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

I refer to the story in *The West Australian* of 6 July this year about a whistleblower in the Department of Corrective Services being forced to go on indefinite leave despite her role in bringing corruption and misconduct to the minister's attention—a fact the minister made much of in the state's media over a period of months.

- (1) Did the minister meet with this whistleblower in July, as he indicated he would do in the newspaper article?
- (2) Did the minister, as he indicated he would, initiate an investigation by the Public Sector Commissioner of matters surrounding the treatment of the whistleblower; and, if so, what was the outcome?
- (3) Is it true that not only is the whistleblower still on enforced leave with no pay, but also the department is contesting her claim for workers' compensation over health issues arising from her mistreatment in the department?

The SPEAKER: Minister for Corrective Services.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr J.R. Quigley: Are you going to show us your graph with last night's escape on it?

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

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I would love to, actually; I will just add one more to it.

The SPEAKER: Minister! The question was about whistleblowers. You are not to bring any graphs into this chamber without coming and asking me first whether you can bring graphs into the chamber. I do not think we want to see the graph, so carry on.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Absolutely, Mr Speaker. Let me add one more to that tally. Let me put on the record that our government's worst year's record for escapes—a total of 11—is fewer than half of Labor's best year, with 28 escapes.

The SPEAKER: Just hold on a minute. This question is not on escapees; it is about a whistleblower. Can you please answer the question on the whistleblower.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Absolutely.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Sorry; no. A question was asked. If you want to ask a supplementary question, ask a supplementary. Minister, answer the question on the whistleblower.

Mr P. Papalia: He might be interested to know that she's watching on live stream.

The SPEAKER: Thank you, member. I do not want to call you; do not interrupt again. Minister.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

- (1)–(2) Going to the member for Warnbro's questions, if he is referring to a particular person, whose name I am not going to mention in *Hansard*, then, yes, I did meet that person. Yes, I did refer that issue and a number of issues to the Public Sector Commissioner. Under the Public Sector Management Act, it is illegal and inappropriate for me to involve myself in issues relating to circumstances such as those confronted by that staff member of the Department of Corrective Services. I did what a decent, honest person would do; that is, I referred all those matters to the Public Sector Commissioner for him to investigate and consider appropriately.

Mr P. Papalia: Do you know what he has done?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Not with that particular one, so far. I can tell the member that when those stories came out in the media, a significant number of people—both previous and current employees of the Department of Corrective Services—approached me with concerns about the way in which they were treated within the department. I referred every one of them to the Public Sector Commissioner. What was the last point?

Mr P. Papalia: Are you aware that she is still on enforced leave but that she now receives no pay, and that your department is challenging her claim for compensation for her health issues that arose from the matters she approached you about?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will answer that question.

- (3) No. That is a matter for the Department of Corrective Services and the Public Sector Commissioner. I am not going to involve myself in those matters.