

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES — ABORIGINAL VISITOR SCHEME

946. Hon GIZ WATSON to the minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to report 72 of the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services entitled “Report of an Announced Inspection of Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison”; to the Department of Corrective Services’ response to recommendation 7 and the footnote to it on page 67; and also to the contents of “The Inspector’s Overview” at pages v and vi under the heading “Aboriginal Visitor Scheme”, and ask —

- (a) Will the minister please clarify the role of the Aboriginal visitor scheme; and
- (b) the reasons for rejection of the recommendation for introduction of an elders program?

Hon SIMON O’BRIEN replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (a) The AVS provides support and counselling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees and prisoners in custody including police lockups throughout Western Australia. Visitors are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people committed to assist and support detainees and prisoners in their local areas. The aim of the scheme is to reduce the likelihood of deaths and/or self-harm, and to improve the conditions and circumstances of those in custody through consultation, advice and information to decision makers. It also provides a mechanism for Aboriginal community groups to be properly informed of conditions of custody.
- (b) Recommendation 7 in the report was not rejected by the Department of Corrective Services; it was supported in part.