

INCARCERATION RATES — KIMBERLEY AND PILBARA

4199. Hon Giz Watson to the Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Corrective Services

In a power point presentation 'Two and a Half Views on Criminal Justice' to the John Curtin Institute of Public Policy on 29 June 2010, the Hon Christian Porter identified the following —

Kimberley, Pilbara-Central- South East Regions —

- (a) 10% of the State's population;
- (b) 15% of Reported Offending; and
- (c) 24% of the Prison Population.

I ask —

- (1) Having identified the high incarceration rates of these areas, what strategies has the Minister implemented with regard to these areas to reduce these figures?
- (2) What programs have been initiated in these specific areas?
- (3) What are the rates for reported offending and prison population currently?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

- (1) There are a high percentage of offenders from these respective regions who are currently incarcerated in, or close, to the metropolitan area therefore strategies to reduce offending by this group is not just restricted to regions from where they originate. It is the philosophy of the Department of Corrective Services 'To make a positive difference' to the lives of offenders and that individual offender management plans require an appropriate mix of interventions based on the assessment of the individuals needs, including their level of risk to the community, other individuals and themselves.

These intervention strategies — employment, structured day, education and training, health, supervision and reporting, life-skills, cognitive skills, offence specific programs, counselling and re-settlement services are a critical component of the Department's strategies to reduce the level of re-offending and the numbers returning to custody, however, there are many other factors beyond the control of Corrective Services that influence their behaviour and level of offending.

Other strategies include the Department of Corrective Services (DCS) establishing, in 2008, Regional Youth Justice Services (RYJS) in the Goldfields (Kalgoorlie — South East region) and the Mid West Gascoyne (Geraldton) to address the high rates of incarceration of young people from these regions. RYJS aim to provide services to young people and their families primarily to divert young people's involvement in the youth justice system and prevent their remand in custody in Perth.

Due to the success of RYJS in reducing the amount of young people admitted to remand from these regions, DCS has since been allocated \$43.86million through Royalties for Regions funding to expand RYJS to the Kimberley and Pilbara regions. The West Kimberley RYJS commenced 4 January 2011 and the East Kimberley RYJS commenced 4 April 2011. Pilbara RYJS will commence August 2011.

- (2) Over the past three years the Department has implemented several strategies to improve the quantity and quality of program delivery. These strategies, while not specific to any one region outlined above, aim to facilitate further reductions in reoffending through the improved delivery of therapeutic and psycho-educational programs in custodial and community settings. The key strategies include:
 - Establishment of the Aboriginal Program Facilitation Unit (APFU) and continued improvements in program delivery to Aboriginal offenders in prison and the community;
 - The continued development and delivery of Aboriginal-specific programs;
 - The strengthening of partnerships with external service providers to enhance program delivery in the prisons and community; and
 - Continuous monitoring and reviewing of staffing levels for program provision.

The implementation of the new offender programs business model commenced in 2009/10. In February 2011 the model rolled out in the Programs Unit North Region. As of 1 July 2011 the model rolled out in three additional sites, comprising the Programs Unit Central Metro, the Programs Unit South Metro, and the Programs Unit South West Region. When fully operational the new model will include eight service delivery teams with sites established throughout Western Australia. Each centre will have a sustainable team capable of delivering intervention programs to custodial and community settings. With the roll-out of the new model in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions an expansion of program delivery in custodial and community settings is anticipated.

Many regional offenders are Aboriginal which presents significant service delivery challenges given the size of Western Australia and the geographical spread and heterogeneity of the Aboriginal population in regional WA. In DCS all programs adhere to the 'What Works' principles, which require programs to address risk, need and responsivity factors. Responsivity factors include culture, language and learning styles. Thus, programs are designed with the foundation that they should be flexible enough to accommodate cultural factors.

More specifically to Aboriginal client service delivery, a number of programs have been designed for Aboriginal people from more remote regions. These include the Indigenous Sex Offender Program, the Indigenous Family Violence Program and the Going Home Program (Ngurrakutu), which will be rolled out in 2012. Other programs are designed specifically for Aboriginal people or have been adapted for use with Aboriginal people such as the Indigenous Mens' Managing Anger and Substance Use Program (IMMASU) and Pathways Addictions and Criminal Conduct Program (currently under redevelopment by an Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Service).

Career and Employment Services and Education and Vocational Training

The Department provides a range of Career and Employment Services (CES) to support prisoners and ex-prisoners into sustainable employment options. These include but are not limited to, career counselling, job preparedness skills, employability skills, post placement support and career and employment expos. The Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) is one such strategy to assist in sustainable employment options.

Since its introduction on 1 September 2008, the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) has evolved from assisting a limited group of prisoners gain employment, education and training prior to release from prison, into a program that is offering the same services to all prisoners upon release. PEP was used as the platform to expose to prisoners the benefits of employment and training together with the realisation that employers were very open to look at prisoners to employ, particularly with the high skill levels the prisoners had gained in prison. This is undertaken through Career and Employment Expos held at each prison once or twice per year.

Employment Coordinators in each of the prisons are now working not only with their PEP prisoners but all other prisoners due for release who require employment assistance. Both Broome and Roebourne Regional Prisons have an Employment Coordinator based in these prisons. Each has developed extensive links with outside organisations and industry to allow smoother transition from prison to community. Programs and vocational training are being delivered both inside and outside the prisons which are tailored to the needs of the local industry. These programs have a strong focus on preparing prisoners for employment by delivering both employability skills and vocational skills training. Linkages with major employers, particularly the mining sector, have seen vocational training developed specifically for the prisoners to meet the needs of the employer.

The Department's 'Decca Project' is delivered in partnership with Pilbara Iron, a subsidiary of Rio Tinto. Rio Tinto provides a work readiness program for Roebourne Regional Prison offenders at Decca Station, preparing prisoners for employment both with local mining companies and associated industries in and around Roebourne.

Broome- Kimberley TAFE-Dept. of Housing Training Project

Prisoners are enrolled in a training program that instruct prisoners in construction by refurbishing dilapidated DoH homes that require maintenance and renovation so homeless people in the community can acquire much needed housing.

RYJS provides the following services:

- Juvenile Justice Teams who assist young people in the early stages of offending and provide diversion from the formal justice system;
- Education and counselling support services;
- Emergency short-stay accommodation for young people given bail but who lack appropriate accommodation;
- Extended-hours bail service;
- Extended-hours family support services for young people at risk of offending and those who commit minor offences;
- Management of young people on community orders.

Programs are sourced locally by RYJS management in consultation with non-government organisations depending on identified requirements for young people.

- (3) DCS cannot provide offending rates. DCS can provide rates of imprisonment by Statistical Division of Prisoners' last known address as a proportion of the overall Western Australian Adult prison population. Breakdown of Resident Adult Population by Statistical Division is not readily available. The Estimated Imprisonment Rate for the regions has been based on the following assumptions:
- That the Estimated Resident Population in the Regions increased by the same percentage as the overall percentage increase for the total Western Australian Estimated Resident Population between 2004 and 2010.
 - That the percentage of residents aged 18 and over in the regions as a proportion of the overall population in the regions is the same as the percentage of residents aged 18 and over in the whole of Western Australia as a proportion of the total Western Australian population.

On that basis, the attached table is provided. [See paper 3491.]