

YOUNG ADULT CORRECTIONS FACILITY — PROGRESS

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

Given that the new young adult facility is such an innovative approach by the Liberal–National government to tackle the high rate of recidivism in our prison system, can the minister please update the house on the progress of this important project?

**Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:**

I thank the member for Jandakot for the question. Clearly he has a strong interest in this facility and a strong interest in a government that is putting a focus on turning around behaviours in this community to try to decrease the rate of recidivism. The announcement by the government to build a young adult facility at the site of the current Rangeview Remand Centre is a significant step forward in achieving those ends. The facility is certainly not designed for hardened criminals; it is designed for young men in minimum security who have perhaps made a mistake and done something stupid but who have done something that results in a term of incarceration. We also recognise that when we put people in jails that jails are full of criminals. In some cases, people are going into circumstances that can actually harden their resolve and do not help the goals that the state is trying to achieve for keeping people out of prisons. We also know that young men re-offend at a much higher rate than any other group in our community. Also, despite being adults legally, they perhaps lack maturity and can be impulsive, can take risks and can be easily led by others. It is our goal to try to break that cycle.

This facility, which I understand has not been repeated anywhere else in Australia, and certainly not in Western Australia, will target 18-year-olds to 24-year-olds, a group that has particular needs. The government acknowledges that a fairly high number of Indigenous prisoners are in that group who need specific education training and who have specific health issues in terms of government response. The facility will have a strong focus on employment and training. It will also address the issues of drug and alcohol abuse, learning difficulties, homelessness and social issues, all of which are effective barriers to rehabilitation.

The government announced yesterday that Serco Australia is the preferred tenderer as the group that will manage the facility. It is not new information that it was our intent to consider the private sector to manage that facility. I have every confidence that the work we have done so far on the contract negotiations and the contractual arrangements will provide a good outcome. Clearly there is work still to be done on due diligence and the contract negotiation phase that has been finalised. I think this facility is an absolute win-win for the state. It certainly targets a specific group of offenders whose behaviour we can make an extra effort to turn around, particularly the Indigenous offenders who finish up in the 18 to 24-year-old group of minimum-security prisoners who have made a couple of mistakes. This is a good outcome for Western Australia. It is certainly a good outcome to think outside the box and to use some innovation to get a reduced level of recidivism in this particular group of people who we know often return to our prison system.