

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES — CORRUPT AND IMPROPER CONDUCT

**235. Mr P. ABETZ to the Minister for Corrective Services:**

Before I ask my question, I acknowledge the student leaders from Excelsior Primary School from my electorate in the Speaker's gallery, along with their teachers, Mrs Hooker and Mrs Williams.

Can the minister please outline to the house measures that this government is taking to stamp out corrupt and improper conduct in the Western Australian prison system?

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:**

I thank the member for Southern River for his question. I inform the house that last year the government approached Western Australia Police's Commissioner of Police for assistance to restore public confidence on issues involving the Department of Corrective Services that had been around for decades. The resultant Ulysses task force was staffed with officers from WA Police and the Department of Corrective Services and has been in operation for an initial six-month period. During its time in operation the task force has achieved significant results for both Western Australia Police and the Department of Corrective Services on behalf of the people of Western Australia. An increased flow of information intelligence between the two agencies now exists. It has opened new lines of inquiries into drug trafficking, money laundering, corruption, and serious and organised crime. Criminal prosecutions have commenced against members of the community and departmental officers, and the flow of drugs and other contraband into the Western Australian prison system has been substantially disrupted.

This government is getting on with the job of reforming the Department of Corrective Services. By opening the can of worms that was long overdue to be opened and owning up and saying that there are issues in the Department of Corrective Services, the government has had the courage to address those issues. It is disappointing that the opposition does not have the courage to address these issues. Two weeks ago the opposition was continuing to tug its forelock to the union movement by voting against a very important bill that would give the Commissioner of Corrective Services the ability to address a number of substantial issues with officers of the Department of Corrective Services. The government does not shy away from the task ahead of it. We do not shy away from the fact that the Department of Corrective Services needs to perform.

It is an absolute shame that the Labor Party does not have the political ticker to get on board with reform that is much overdue and much needed in the Department of Corrective Services. I look forward to the opposition changing its position in the coming weeks so that when the Custodial Legislation (Officers Discipline) Amendment Bill 2013 gets to the Legislative Council, the opposition will support it. Members of the Labor Party need to realise that the public of Western Australia believes that prison officers should be accountable and that there should be consequences for people who do not meet the high standards of behaviour that Western Australians expect from prison officers.