

GREENOUGH REGIONAL PRISON — CRITICAL INCIDENT REVIEW —
MINISTER FOR CORRECTIVE SERVICES

1003. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's comments in Parliament in 2013 that —

The failures in the corrective services portfolio are the government's failures.

And —

All of the incompetence around these things is on the shoulders of the government.

Does the Premier consider —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Water, I call you to order for the first time.

Mrs L.M. Harvey: Are you going to headbutt her this time?

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Water, I call you to order for the second time.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, we will not have any conversations across the chamber unless you are talking to me.

Withdrawal of Remark

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I ask the member for Scarborough to withdraw the comment she made across the chamber.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I withdraw.

The SPEAKER: I did not hear it.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Make a point of order.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The member for Scarborough interjected across the chamber at the member for Bassendean.

Mr V.A. Catania: Under what standing order?

The SPEAKER: Under the standing order, member for North West Central, that you are on three calls.

Mr M. McGOWAN: She interjected across the chamber, "Are you going to headbutt her again this time?" That is a comment worthy of expulsion from this chamber.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Could I have an indication of what standing order that was under?

The SPEAKER: Member, if there is something that is unparliamentary, I will take it without the standing order number. Member for Scarborough, did you say that across the chamber?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have withdrawn my comment, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I just want to know what it was that you said.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: That is what I said. Mr Speaker, I will draw your attention to members on that side accusing me of criminal conduct.

The SPEAKER: No, you cannot do that.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have withdrawn it.

The SPEAKER: I know you have withdrawn it, and if it had been mentioned to me when it was said, I would have ejected you from the chamber, because that sort of stuff is not —

Mr D.C. NALDER: You are setting a precedent, so when she is accused of criminal activity, would you say that that would also incite —

The SPEAKER: Sit down; it is not a point of order.

Ms Mia Davies; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mrs Liza Harvey; Speaker; Mr Mark McGowan; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Dean Nalder

Members, I just said that if I had heard what the member said when the motion was put up, I would have sent her out of the chamber, but I did not, so it is not going to happen. I have accepted the apology and now the Leader of the National Party has the call.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms M.J. DAVIES: My question is to the Premier. I refer to the Premier's comments in Parliament in 2013 that —
The failures in the corrective services portfolio are the government's failures.

And —

All of the incompetence around these things is on the shoulders of the government.

Does the Premier consider the largest prison break in WA history at Greenough Regional Prison to be a failure of his government?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

What I said back then was correct. At that point in time the government had been in office for five years. At the time of the breakout we had been in office for fewer than 18 months, and we know that the reason for the breakout was largely that the former government put the women's prison right there with a men's prison.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M. McGOWAN: When the former government did that, it created a powder keg.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville!

Ms M.J. Davies interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the National Party!

Mr M. McGOWAN: Anyone who has any knowledge of prisoners in their 20s would understand that, but that is what the former government did. It separated them by a tennis court fence. What were we to do? Somehow, within 18 months, we were supposed to have fixed the problem that the former government created.

I want to make this second point very clear. We have engaged in a very, very serious process of reform within the corrective services portfolio over the course of our time in office, which this minister has led. It has resulted in an additional 900 beds across the prison estate and 281 prison officers being employed in order to deal with some of the pressures we confronted when we came to office and to make sure we dealt with some of the overtime pressures as well. If more full-time prison officers are employed, we are able to deal with some of that very expensive overtime pressure on the prison budget and make sure we take the pressure off the prison officers who are already employed.

I note something else that is worth raising: in the debate that occurred before question time, the Leader of the Opposition made excuses for the prisoners escaping. He made excuses for them. He made excuses for their behaviour. As the minister has said, the adaptive regime that was put in place has been put in place in prisons all over Australia and all over the world to deal with shortfalls in staff on any given day—people who are sick, people who have taken long service leave or whatever it might be. On any given day, that is what occurs. Even if a prison is fully staffed, on occasion adaptive regimes are put in place because of a rise in the temperature. A rise in the temperature outside or a rise in the heat of the environment sometimes means adaptive regimes are put in place. It is not unusual for that to occur in a prison. As I have been advised, some of the prisoners' complaints were that they did not get to kick the football enough; therefore, they decided to riot and create mayhem. To me, that is not good enough. Those prisoners deserve a significantly longer prison sentence, and I look forward to them going before the courts to answer for their actions.