

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE — DETAINEE MANAGEMENT

913. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer the minister to his government's poor decision to shut the Rangeview Juvenile Remand Centre in 2012 and cram all juvenile detainees into Banksia Hill, compromising juvenile detention, which led to the 2013 riot and a string of recent serious incidents.

- (1) On how many occasions has the special operations group been deployed to Banksia Hill this year?
- (2) Is it not true that a 10-year-old child was held hostage during the incident and needed to be rescued by a youth custodial officer?
- (3) When will the minister accept that closing one of only two facilities was a bad decision, and take action to fix this mess?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:

- (1)–(3) What a great opportunity to set the record straight because the Labor Party just does not get juvenile justice at all. When the Labor Party lost government, member for Warnbro, there were 174 juveniles in Banksia Hill alone.

Mr P. Papalia: Are you sure about that?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Absolutely. The question on notice that I just signed had today's date on it, not the date of the August election. He cannot even get members in the upper house to ask the right questions. There were 174 juveniles there at the time of the election, give or take one or two. Today there are about 130, both sentenced and on-remand juveniles, so we have significantly fewer juveniles in detention under our government than there were under the Labor government, even though the population has increased. Even though the adult prison population has increased, what we have done with juvenile detention has bucked the trend because we have invested money in trying to reform the kids. We have looked at the recidivism rate of juveniles in the last two years, and it has decreased from around 80 to around 50 per cent. A lot fewer kids are going back to jail than we saw when members opposite were in government. I am happy to talk about this all day long because I am exceptionally proud of what is happening. I will tell the member for Warnbro what else he should do every now and then. If he thinks there is an issue out at Banksia, he should go out there and do some ground truthing. He knows the term. I have been out to Banksia Hill twice in the last two weeks —

Mr P. Papalia: Why?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Because I heard that some of the youth justice workers and youth custodial workers were not feeling safe. I am happy to walk around there any time with 50 kids on a football field not being escorted —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The member for Bassendean was not there two weeks ago. He was not there last week when I took the Tasmanian Attorney General; Minister for Corrections, Dr Goodwin, to Banksia Hill with about five minutes' notice—unescorted other than by one staff member.

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is enough!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That is because the member for Bassendean cannot be trusted.

The SPEAKER: You were asked three questions: whether Rangeview was shut in 2012; how many times special ops went in; and about a 10-year-old child held and whether the shutting of Rangeview was a bad decision, so answer those please.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I can only take it that if members opposite win the next election in March, they will reopen Rangeview—anything to rip up a private contract in line with the little red doctrine. I am guessing they would separate remand from sentence again. Is that their policy? They go on about it time and time again. If that is the opposition's policy, I will add another \$60 million to the Labor Party's election commitments because that is what it would cost to build a standalone remand facility for a handful of juveniles in Western Australia—a complete and utter waste of money. From time to time the SOG goes in there. Let me tell members opposite why. Unlike the member for Warnbro and his union mates, I refuse to allow youth custodial officers to walk around with batons and pepper spray. I do not want to see what happened in the Northern Territory happen in Western Australia, and it has not happened here simply because I have had the guts to stand up to the Community and Public Sector Union—Civil Service Association of WA, which the member for Warnbro would

never have done. He would have YCOs running around with all those things all the time. Does he know what? Some of them are on leave because they do not feel safe to go to work. Perhaps they are in the wrong job if they do not feel safe walking around that place. I am more than happy to walk around Banksia Hill unescorted without youth custodial officers by my side, without carrying a duress button; it is a perfectly safe place. Having said that, there are a small number of kids who are very difficult to manage.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is enough!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I accept that. But the bottom line of what we have done in youth justice is far more successful than what the opposition ever did.