

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE — *FOUR CORNERS* REPORT

686. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to the minister's comments in the *Four Corners* investigation broadcast last night regarding moving young offenders to cells at Casuarina maximum-security adult prison, and I quote —

... we've been able to get a much better environment for everybody, including the youth offenders themselves.

- (1) After the train wreck of the youth justice system was laid bare in last night's program, does the minister stand by his comments?
- (2) In an effort to reinstate community trust in the system, will the minister resign?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

(1)–(2) There are indeed many views —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo and others! I am waiting for quiet, then I will give the minister the call.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Thank you very much.

There are many views about the nature of detention at Banksia Hill Detention Centre. I will quote something about people's views of detention at Banksia Hill —

A young boy told me a few weeks ago that juvie is so good—good food, good beds, good Xbox.

Member, who was that? It was the member for North West Central in her inaugural speech. The National Party and the Liberal Party are schizophrenic on this issue. The problem is that members opposite want to walk both sides of the street.

I note that there has not been an endorsement of my decision to review the Young Offenders Act 1994, which is the first time it will be reviewed in 22 years. If you want to make a difference about the structure of the youth justice system in Western Australia, you have to start at the heart of the rules. We have to ask: is the community being served by the current arrangements for the law in this state? I do not know anybody in the youth justice area who believes that the Young Offenders Act 1994 is contemporary. What have I done? I have launched a review of the Young Offenders Act, which is massively overdue. What am I doing at Banksia Hill? We are spending the money to create a therapeutic environment for those in crisis, while, at the same time, hardening a small number of cells for that very, very small number of detainees who have been acting against the interests of the community.

It used to be that the Liberal Party supported protecting the community. It supported protecting workers in the youth justice system. Of course we want to get good outcomes for youth offenders, but I do not apologise for saying that the three issues are: protect the community first, protect the workforce second, and provide a therapeutic environment for young offenders as best we can. The idea that there is a magic wand that can be waved around to solve the problems of the youth justice system is simply not correct. Let us understand that one of the big reasons we have a challenge is that the Liberal Party chose to close Rangeview Remand Centre. That means there is only one juvenile detention facility in Western Australia. Do not forget that in 2021, when I became minister, the Inspector of Custodial Services said that Banksia Hill was in the best situation it had been in for a decade. Do not forget that. It would be lovely to have a second juvenile detention facility. But, member, do you want it in your electorate? Tell me which site it is that the Liberal Party —

Several members interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: You tell me where the Liberal Party plans to put a juvenile detention facility. You tell me that. When I talked to the people of Broome about selecting a site, the Liberal Party opposed both sites. When Geoff Gallop was Premier and the Labor Party chose the Boronia site, the Liberal Party opposed it. You tell me where you want the second juvenile detention facility.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Attorney General, that was disorderly, as it was also from you, minister.