

ROEBOURNE REGIONAL PRISON — AIR CONDITIONING

Petition

HON DR BRAD PETTITT (South Metropolitan) [2.03 pm]: I present an e-petition containing 603 signatures couched in the following terms —

To the President and Members of the Legislative Council of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled. We the undersigned ...

call upon the Legislative Council of Western Australia to support the installation of air conditioning in all the cells at the Roebourne Regional Prison in North-Western Australia before the 2022–23 summer. The region regularly experiences temperatures of 40 degrees or more. In January 2022, the prison experienced 50.5 degrees, which was its hottest day on record. Without air conditioning, the cells are unbearably hot especially at night. Inmates can endure long lockdowns of up to 12 hours in their stifling cells. Former inmates have described Roebourne as ‘inhumane’, ‘torturous’ ‘haunting’ and ‘horrific’. The unbearable heat in Roebourne Regional Prison has been the subject of inquiries and articles for two decades. It was addressed extensively in a 2020 Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services report. It has been commented on by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International and is the subject numerous newspaper articles. About 80 percent of inmates are Aboriginal people. Many have physical ailments that are exacerbated by the stifling, relentless heat. Between 2010 and 2016 alone, there were 82 cases of heat-related illness reported to the prison’s health centre. There is a real danger that the heat could lead to an inmate’s death. Furthermore, the conditions do not meet the recommendations of the 1987 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. We call on the Legislative Council to encourage the WA Government to prioritise the installation of air conditioning in every cell at Roebourne Regional Prison. We ask that the Government treat this as a matter of urgency.

And your petitioners as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See paper 2075.]