

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE — REFORM

433. Ms H.M. BEAZLEY to the Minister for Corrective Services:

I refer to measures announced today to enhance safety and welfare for youth in detention at Banksia Hill Detention Centre. Can the minister outline to the house how youth justice stakeholders have been consulted in relation to these long-term reforms?

Mr P. PAPALIA replied:

I thank the member for her question and her interest in matters of juvenile justice.

At the outset, I echo the words of the Premier. We have confronted a challenging situation in recent times as a consequence of a riot at Banksia Hill that destroyed a lot of property and set back a lot of work that had been done on establishing alternatives for housing some really challenging individuals. We are confronted with a situation now in which we are making it safe in the near term by shifting the most challenging and complex individuals to unit 18 where they will be afforded every service, support and intervention possible to ensure that they are cared for and provided with opportunities for rehabilitation. Back at Banksia Hill, the remainder of juveniles who do not exhibit those sorts of behaviours can be afforded a much better environment. Once we have that, we will throw everything we possibly can at services in both locations. To achieve that, we are seeking assistance from all manner of interested parties. All interested stakeholders who have expertise or advice to offer are being engaged with. I have already met with a number of them. The Premier referred to the Telethon Kids Institute being part of our plan. I met with Dr Carapetis and his team last week. They will be resuming studies that they initiated at Banksia Hill some time ago. But we have asked that they very much focus on more pragmatic and practical advice, particularly on how to deal with the significantly challenging juveniles but also the other detainees we have. They will continue with their very practical research but also provide some advice and specialist knowledge for the task.

I have met with a range of other people. I will continue to meet with anyone who offers expertise and skills we can benefit from. For example, next week we will be meeting with the Mental Health Commission, the Law Society, of course the Inspector of Custodial Services—I look forward to working closely with the inspector on oversight of what we are doing—and the Aboriginal Legal Service. I am meeting with Malcolm McCusker from the McCusker Foundation and Tabitha Corser from the Whitehaven Clinic. Many people in this place would be aware that they both bring a lot of capability and experience to this sort of task, so we look forward to meeting with them. I met with the unions that represent both youth custodial officers and prison officers. I met with the Community and Public Sector Union—Civil Service Association of WA yesterday and have met with the Western Australian Prison Officers' Union a couple of times, and I opened its conference this morning. We look forward to working with them. Also, the Transport Workers' Union of Australia has a role in the corrective services world.

Just about anybody who can assist will assist us with our problem. It is not my problem but our problem—all of us. The challenge we confront is to make our youth detention facilities the best they can be and provide offenders with the best possible chance for rehabilitation.