



The Hon Joe Francis MLA
Minister for Emergency Services; Corrective Services;
Small Business; Veterans

Our Ref: 51-08874

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
GPO Box A11
PERTH WA 6837

Dear Mr O'Brien

Simon,
Thank you for your letter of 21 October 2015 regarding Petition No 98, concerning the construction of a new Women's Remand and Reintegration Facility (WRRF) adjacent to Hakea Prison (Hakea).

This Government acknowledges that many women are held on remand or serve short sentences for non-violent crimes. Many have themselves been victims of serious crime and sustained abuse. When women are sentenced to custody it has a profound impact on their family life.

While the Government is committed to divert women from custody where it is appropriate to do, community safety remains paramount. Current remand numbers indicate there is a need to establish a safe, secure facility that helps address the complex needs of women prisoners. I believe this will provide better outcomes for prisoners and a safer Western Australia.

As you are aware, on 15 December 2014, I announced that the existing Units 11 and 12 at Hakea will be converted to a standalone female facility. These units will be segregated from the rest of Hakea, and a new separation fence, gatehouse and additional buildings will be constructed on the site

The new Women's Remand and Reintegration Facility (WRRF) will focus on providing services that:

- divert prisoners from time in custody, through the use of non-custodial options that ensure:
 - that every woman who is eligible for bail is given the greatest possible chance to organise bail prior to being processed into custody; and
 - that fine defaulters are given every chance to pay their fines, and therefore avoid a custodial sentence, prior to being processed into custody;

- assist women who are remanded for short periods of time;
- prepare women for reintegration into the community; and
- represent international best practice in the treatment of women prisoners.

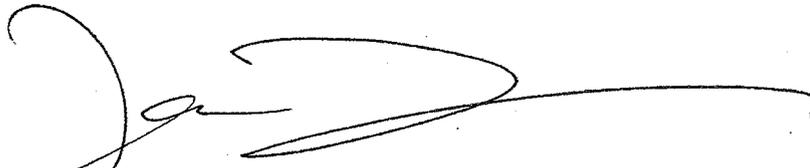
The WRRF will also include a confidential visits area, up to date legal resources and greater services for women on remand, thus addressing many of the concerns of the petitioners.

In addition, the WRRF will relieve the population pressure at Bandyup Women's Prison and allow for improved facilities and services to be provided. This will include the development of improved mental health services, and the refurbishment of older accommodation and facilities.

Without in any way diminishing the seriousness of their crimes, this Government is focussed on implementing activities that help vulnerable women out of trouble, by tackling costly inter-generational crime and creating a safer community for all Western Australians.

I hope this information is of use.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Francis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

HON JOE FRANCIS MLA
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES;
CORRECTIVE SERVICES; SMALL BUSINESS; VETERANS

17 NOV 2015