

PRISONS - PRISONERS IDENTIFIED AS AT RISK OF SUICIDE

665. Mr A.J. Simpson to the Minister for Justice

Can the Minister please advise what measures are in place to ensure that prisoners who are identified as a suicide risk in a Western Australian prison are provided with psychological services when released?

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO replied:

The Department of Corrective Services advise that prisoners who are identified as a suicide risk in Western Australian prisons and subsequently released to serve a term of parole may be provided with access to psychological services through Community Justice Services (CJS). Once released, a prisoner will be required to report regularly to a Community Corrections Officer at a CJS centre. Those identified as a suicide risk who are not engaged with, or who have not been referred to an appropriate service, will be engaged with a psychologist based at the Community Justice Services (CJS) Centre. Those individuals identified as requiring ongoing assistance will be supported by the psychologist in both their reintegration to the community, and issues pertaining to their re-offending and risk of suicide. Length of involvement from the CJS psychologist varies for each case and is dependent upon the needs of the individual. In addition, where appropriate individuals may be referred to alternative local mental health services or other specialist community based services that are able to provide long term assistance.

In the case of people remanded in custody (with or without bail), it is well documented that this places an individual under additional stress and elevates their level of risk to self, whilst in custody. Obtaining surety often serves as a protective factor. It is impossible to predict the potential stressors once a prisoner is released on bail. However, all prisoners being released from prison are advised of the availability of relevant welfare organisations which assist released prisoners, this usually consists of a directory of support services entitled "Where to from Here?" which contains contact details for emergency services including suicide emergency services.