

DISABILITY JUSTICE CENTRES — PREMIER'S COMMENTS

**705. Mr D.J. KELLY to the Premier:**

I refer the Premier to his statement in this house on 12 June 2013, in which he used the example of a young man who the Premier said had been held in Casuarina for several years for stealing an ice-cream. The Premier used that example to justify his decision to place two disability justice centres in my electorate. I refer also to evidence given today before the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee that revealed that the Premier had been advised that the person concerned had in fact also assaulted several public officers, including police and prison officers.

- (1) By deliberately omitting references to this person's violent offending, did the Premier mislead the house?
- (2) If yes to (1), by misleading the public on this matter, has the Premier further called into question his decision to place these centres fewer than 1 000 metres from Lockridge Senior High School, Lockridge Primary School and Good Shepherd Catholic School?

**Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:**

- (1)–(2) No, I did not mislead the house. In the debate, I paraphrased some examples. I did not have the clinical files in front of me. So, if it was not entirely accurate, I concede that.

**Mr M. McGowan:** Assaulting a police officer? Do you not regard that as important? It is an important fact.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** I paraphrased some examples. If they were not absolutely accurate, I concede that. But I made the point that some of those offenders have committed very violent crimes, and some perhaps relatively minor misdemeanours. I take it that the Labor Party is totally opposed to these two centres. Is that correct?

**Mr M. McGowan:** Why not actually answer the question that you were asked? You misled the house!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** It is not misleading the house to paraphrase from memory some examples. Some of the people who might end up in one of these disability justice centres might be relatively minor offenders. Even in the case of people who have committed a serious offence, there will come a time when they are released. There will come a time when offenders, whether they have a mental health issue or are impaired in some way through a mental health disability, will be released. There will be a very careful process to determine who would go into one of these centres. I repeat what I said I think a week ago—the Labor Party obviously has no sympathy for these people. I do have sympathy for these people, because there are some people in our community who may have offended and may also have a mental disability—there are some. It may have been acquired, or in all probability they were born with that. The approach of the Labor Party is to ignore those people—marginalise them and ignore them.

**Dr A.D. Buti:** What a load of rubbish!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** That is their view! What alternative does the Labor Party offer?

Several members interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Look at the attitude of members opposite! It is there for all to see! Because people have made a mistake and committed an offence, sometimes serious and sometimes less serious, the approach of the Labor Party is to let those people be marginalised in our community. What is the Labor Party going to do with these people? Is it going to allow them to be released into a facility that is open on the street, or is it going to put them in a facility in which at least they are secure and the public is secure?

This is not an easy area of public administration. It is a very difficult area. As the Minister for Mental Health, Hon Helen Morton, has said, great care will be taken.

**Ms M.M. Quirk** interjected.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** There is no compassion at all.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for the first time. Premier, can you wind it up, please.

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

When we have a difficult and controversial issue of dealing with people with an intellectual disability who have offended and who have not faced trial because they are not competent to face trial, I would think there would be some compassion in the community in dealing with that. Yet when the bleeding hearts opposite are faced with a real issue of compassion in our community and a real issue of justice, they are missing in action.

I understand the concerns of the local residents whom the member represents.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr C.J. BARNETT:** Face the issue! What do we do with a person with an intellectual disability who has offended? What do we do? We face up to the issue and try to deal with it in a fair and proper way, and that is what this government is doing. We have said that the second one will not be progressed until the first one is built and shown to be operating properly and safely. That is the position. There are many people in our community; some have offended, some have not. Some may have all sorts of behavioural characteristics that are offensive, and that is the reality in any society. We do not get a result for all those people in the community by yelling and screaming in here; we get a result by having a sense of social justice and a preparedness to deal with the issue.