

## **ESCAPE FROM SUPREME COURT, HOOKER INQUIRY REPORT**

### *Statement by Premier*

**DR G.I. GALLOP** (Victoria Park - Premier) [2.32 pm]: In response to the escape of nine prisoners from the Supreme Court of Western Australia on 10 June 2004, Mr Richard Hooker, a senior barrister with extensive administrative law experience, was appointed to examine, and report on, the escape. I take the opportunity to advise the House of the findings of that inquiry. In respect of the escape, Mr Hooker's report found the following: The processes and procedures employed by AIMS Corporation to unlock cell 1 were deficient and contributed to the escape; the management of keys at the court custody centre was also deficient; and AIMS Corporation failed to take any steps, or any reasonable steps, to secure the locking of two doors, wedged open at the time of the escape, in the flight path of the escapees. Mr Hooker also found that the department's monitoring of AIMS Corporation's performance under the contract was inadequate. When presented with the draft findings of the inquiry for comment, AIMS Corporation publicly acknowledged that the escape had been "inexcusable" and that it had "badly failed the people of Western Australia". I concur with this view.

Under the terms of the court security and custodial services contract, AIMS Corporation will incur fines totalling \$300 000 for the Supreme Court escape and other escapes this contract year. It will also permanently lose the Supreme Court custody area of its contract, adding a further financial loss of approximately \$300 000.

The Department of Justice is also criticised for its failure to adequately monitor the court security contract at the Supreme Court. It has already started to address its inadequacies and has prepared a plan to respond to the recommendations, including a \$10 million overhaul of court security and associated services over the next five years. I will also table that plan at the conclusion of this statement.

In his report, Mr Hooker makes some suggestions in respect of high-risk prisoners wearing restraints when appearing in criminal courts. I expect the Department of Justice to urgently consult with the judiciary in respect of this issue.

Mr Hooker also considered the role of the Minister for Justice. He formed the view that the minister did account to Parliament for the extent of her own involvement and the actions of her department. Not only that, but that through the parliamentary debate and the media coverage, a significant body of material is available to the public of Western Australia so that the people of Western Australia are well informed.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! This is a three-minute statement. The tradition is that hecklers do not try to interject on a three-minute statement. I call to order the members for Nedlands and Kalgoorlie.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: In terms of the future of the court security, until the expiry of the current court security contract, AIMS Corporation will remain responsible for court security and custodial services at most major courts across Western Australia.

### *Point of Order*

Mrs C.L. EDWARDES: Mr Speaker, given the public interest in this matter and the fact that the Premier has gone over time, it highlights the fact that this should have been a 20-minute statement, which would have allowed for an appropriate response from the -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! The whole point of three-minute statements is so that a minister can make a quick statement and maybe present a paper. The injections have meant that the minister concerned has gone to the full extent of the time. Therefore, due to the level of interjections, some leeway will be granted.

### *Statement Resumed*

Dr G.I. GALLOP: As previously mentioned, the responsibility for the Supreme Court custody area will remain with the Department of Justice. The State Government was also due to advise AIMS of any contract renewal in October 2004. Given the findings of the Hooker inquiry, this will not occur. AIMS will be on notice that it has six months to demonstrate significant and major improvements in its operations. Any failure to do so may result in the company playing no further role in the delivery of court security and custodial services in Western Australia.

### *Motion*

Dr G.I. GALLOP: I table Mr Hooker's report and I move -  
That the report be published.

*Point of Order*

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is an absolute joke to suggest that any interjections from the Opposition have caused the Premier to go more than a minute over time. It again demonstrates the point that this should be a 20-minute statement, and his time should be brought to an end.

The SPEAKER: It is an interesting point of order, but it is not relevant.

*Motion Resumed*

Question put and passed.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: I also table the Department of Justice response to Mr Hooker's report.

[See papers Nos 2672 and 2673.]