

**INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF OFFENDERS IN CUSTODY AND THE COMMUNITY,
EXTENSION PERIOD**

Statement by Minister for Justice

MR J.B. D'ORAZIO (Ballajura - Minister for Justice) [2.08 pm]: I advise the house that the Premier and I, as Minister for Justice, have approved a request for a short extension to the Inquiry into the Management of Offenders in Custody and the Community being conducted by Mr Dennis Mahoney. The inquiry was due to be completed on 1 October 2005, but will now be completed by 18 November 2005. This will allow the finalisation of recommendations and, importantly, complete a blueprint for the future of the corrections system in Western Australia. A further amount of \$300 000 has been allocated to the extension period.

The Mahoney inquiry has been the most comprehensive inquiry into the corrections system in Western Australian history. It has produced 2 100 pages of transcript of public hearings, received 90 individual and group submissions, and interviewed more than 70 persons.

I have spoken of the need to restore the balance in our corrections system. Events of the past few days have again reinforced the need to examine and make changes to the way in which we manage and release offenders. People need to have confidence in the corrections and parole system. In order to achieve this, we must have a system that puts community safety and staff safety first and rehabilitation second.

The Mahoney inquiry has allowed an open airing of the issues facing the corrections system and also provided an opportunity for people to have input to determine policy direction for the future.

I also acknowledge the excellent work undertaken by Professor Richard Harding and his team at the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services who are providing specialist advice to the inquiry and developing key recommendations for the report. I understand that Mr Mahoney and Professor Harding will now combine their efforts over the next few weeks to produce the final inquiry report. Counsel assisting the inquiry, Mr Peter Quinlan, will also shortly conduct a final closing public summary of all the evidence and submissions received during the inquiry period.

I look forward to receiving the completed report and thank those involved for their efforts and contributions so far.