

BANDYUP WOMEN'S PRISON — VALERIE PARASHUMTI AND JESSICA STASINOWSKY

60. Mr F. ALBAN to the Minister for Corrective Services:

My question is about Bandyup Women's Prison, which is located in close proximity to my electorate, and the unsatisfactory situation of prisoners Valerie Parashumti and Jessica Stasinowsky continuing to be in contact with each other, despite the recommendation of their sentencing judge, the Hon Justice Peter Blaxell, that they be separated for life due to their shared perverse outlook on life. Can the minister please inform the house of the current situation and what measures the government can take to rectify the situation?

Mr C.C. PORTER replied:

I thank the member for his question and appreciate that the prison in which these two offenders are domiciled is located within his electorate. This matter came to prominence on Sunday in an article in *The Sunday Times*. Pursuant to that article, I sought some information from my department. In response to the member's question, it may pay to simply say this to commence with. I have had a good look now at the incident and charge history for both those offenders, Stasinowsky and Parashumti. I think it is safe to say that there is no information before me on some of the matters that were raised as—if I can put it as high as this—a possibility in *The Sunday Times*. The incident sheets that are kept on a meticulous basis for these prisoners do not indicate any sexual liaisons—I think they were the words used in *The Sunday Times* article. There is nothing in the nature of eating raw meat and no chicken bones sharpened into knives.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

Mr C.C. PORTER: We are getting to that bit. It is certainly not okay. It would be a very rare instance in sentencing, in my experience, for an experienced sentencing judge to actually sentence on the basis that something should happen after sentence regarding the nature of the custody. When this issue first came to my attention, I was extremely uncomfortable with the fact that it had gone on for some time. The fact is that the contact that these two offenders have with each other is during recreation periods, which last for 90 minutes on weekdays and in the vicinity of six hours on a Sunday.

I can inform the member and the house that, after an extensive meeting with members of the Department of Corrective Services yesterday, I gave that department a directive today. I will read it verbatim so that members are clear about what it is. I have requested that —

The only option for limiting physical contact between the two women during recreation periods at Bandyup is to restrict them to engaging in recreation on alternate days. This means that one of the women would be confined to recreation within the Unit while the other would engage in recreation outside. Recreation within the Unit permits free movement within the Unit while confined within the limits of the Unit and grounds. A restriction to the Unit will not reduce the hours of recreation, rather, it will restrict the extent of movement and access to facilities —

Shared facilities —

such as the Canteen and Library.

It includes also the grounds. That is the directive I have given today.

I must say that I am not entirely satisfied with that directive. It is an interim directive. The reality is that the directive will allow some contact between the prisoners at points in time that are in the nature of the two prisoners, if I can describe it in general terms, passing in the halls on their way to education sessions or other things that they are required to do in jail. That is the directive I have given.

I have given a further directive, which is to commence the process of the transfer of one of the prisoners to Greenough Regional Prison. That will take some time because it involves a range of assessments of the prisoners and also the security difficulties that will be faced at Greenough prison. I believe that that is the right decision.

In further response to the member's question, the former Minister for Corrective Services had a policy on this matter. I understand the policy but I disagree with it. The policy effectively allowed contact between these two prisoners during recreational periods.

Ms M.M. Quirk: That is not true.

Mr C.C. PORTER: It is true. I will read from the former minister's ministerial statement from 7 March 2008 —

That said, it cannot be guaranteed they will have no contact: For example, they may have incidental opportunities to speak to each other in situations such as meal times or exercise periods.

I understand why the minister made that call, but I disagree with it.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: You're misleading the house.

Mr C.C. PORTER: The Labor Party's policy when it was in government was to allow the prisoners to have contact during recreational periods.

Several members interjected.

Mr C.C. PORTER: The member for Fremantle is at it again. He is an absolute star! The member for Warnbro would be well advised to keep the member for Fremantle outside his portfolio because he is hopeless. Yesterday evening the member for Fremantle said, "These women represent a threat while they are still together. It's offensive. The government must act with a greater sense of urgency than what they are showing so far." In two days, I have put in place a policy to ensure the separation of these prisoners. Since 6 March, the former government allowed them to coalesce during recreational periods. That is a fact. My friend the member for Fremantle is the Road Runner in opposition but he was Deputy Droopalong in government. I have never seen a man quicker in opposition and slower in government than the member for Fremantle. It is an absolute joke. The member for Warnbro would be well advised to keep the member for Fremantle out of his affairs.