

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE — *FOUR CORNERS* REPORT

681. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Given that the concerns that were raised in the program last night have been raised for some time and have been ignored, how can the community have faith in the minister responsible for delivering the improvements required, and will the Premier move him on and install someone with fresh eyes and a commitment to the portfolio?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

The minister is doing very good job in the corrective services portfolio. Whoever the minister is, under any government, in any state in Australia, the corrective services portfolio will always have issues, because we are dealing with people who often have a range of mental health and social issues going on. Also, they are incarcerated, and a great many of them do not want to be incarcerated, but they are incarcerated because of things that have occurred and things that they have done. Going into Banksia Hill is an option of last resort. In the criminal justice system today we have 1 200 young people under the age of 18 years subject to orders of the court. Of those 1 200, 95 are in custody; the rest are managed in the community under supervision orders, welfare orders, community work orders and the like. Whether they are at home with their families or with their grandparents or foster carers, or whoever it might be, they are being managed in the community through a range of measures that are in place. The 95 who have gone into detention have generally—almost exclusively—committed scores of offences. Normally the offence is aggravated burglary, in which they break into people's houses at night while people are asleep in bed.

I actually think the victims count; we need to think about this. There needs to be a consequence for doing that. They cannot just break into someone's house scores of times without there being any consequence. I think there needs to be a consequence. The consequence issued by the court is often a form of detention. In detention, they receive all those services to try to get them back into better forms of behaviour and hopefully out of the cycle of offending. We have also put in place a range of measures, including the Target 120 program and a range of other measures across the child protection portfolio, to try to get young people back on track and prevent them from going into a life of misbehaviour or crime.

When they are in custody, as those 95 are, there is a whole range of programs, including bands. They can play in a band and actually get musical training. They can play football. There are teachers and careers advisers and all those sorts of things. If they are bored, every single cell has a Nintendo unit and a TV. If they are bored, they can do those things. There are management tools for helping us to manage a group of young people of whom many have had dysfunctional and difficult lives. There are ways of helping us to manage them and hopefully get them back onto a better pathway in life. That is what we all want to achieve. I saw last night on that program the idea that there be no detention for multiple serious offences, and I just do not agree with that. If that is what the Leader of the Opposition is arguing, I disagree with her.