

**PROPOSED DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES, APPOINTMENT OF ACTING  
COMMISSIONER**

*Statement by Minister for Justice*

**MR J.B. D'ORAZIO (Ballajura - Minister for Justice)** [9.02 am]: As the house is aware, a new Department of Corrective Services will be established early in the new year as part of the government's response to the Mahoney Inquiry into the Management of Offenders in Custody and the Community. This new department will have the responsibility for restoring the balance in our corrections system; and community safety and reducing reoffending will be its top priorities. I am pleased to advise the house that Mr Ian Johnson, an assistant commissioner with the WA Police and currently Acting Executive Director, Prisons in the Department of Justice, has accepted the challenge of initially heading the new agency. As acting commissioner for corrective services, Mr Johnson will, with the support of a new corrections act, take overall responsibility for the management of offenders, both in custody and in the community, and for implementing a better system of assessing and classifying offenders for their security risk and the level of management required; implement a more rigorous evaluation of programs aimed at reducing reoffending; provide better training of staff in both custodial and community operations; provide better opportunities for recruiting and training staff locally; and implement planning for upgrading and replacing corrections infrastructure throughout the state.

I would also like to comment briefly on some of Mr Mahoney's specific observations. I strongly endorse the inquirer's observation that significant reform of our management of indigenous offenders is needed to reduce indigenous over-representation in our prison system and reoffending. I also note Mr Mahoney's concerns about the potential negative impact of public outcry on the management of our corrections system and the need to make the public aware of the inherent limitations of the corrections system. The reality that some prisoners will always escape and some offenders serving community sentences will reoffend can never become an excuse for failing to try to improve our system.