

DISABILITY JUSTICE CENTRES

233. Mr D.J. KELLY to the Premier:

On a serious issue, my question without notice is to the Premier. I refer to the government's announcement today that it will locate two disability justice centres in my electorate—one on land currently part of Lockridge Senior High School, and one only 1 500 metres away on Lord Street, not far from Lockridge Primary School.

- (1) Given the backlash from the community last year when the government tried to put these facilities in Kenwick and Herne Hill, why was there zero consultation with residents this time in my electorate?
- (2) If these facilities are necessary, why is the government asking one community to shoulder the burden by having two so close together?
- (3) Will the Premier come with me to visit local residents and explain to them his decision and hear their concerns firsthand?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(3) The Minister for Disability Services, Hon Helen Morton, did announce, as the member referred to, the creation of two disability justice centres. Yes, there is always a degree of community concern, and sometimes controversy, about it. We have to start with an announcement of where the proposed sites are —

Mr D.J. Kelly: Not proposed sites—actual sites!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member asks the question, I answer the question—that is the way it works. The member asks and I answer.

Obviously, there will be discussions with the community. I am assured that the people concerned are in no way a threat to the community. I will just explain to the house that of the two nominated sites, one is existing Disability Services Commission accommodation at Lord Street in Lockridge —

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: A little bit of social justice and compassion might be a good idea.

The other is a proposed new site in Kiara. This does raise concerns in communities, and I take the issue very seriously, but I think we also need to think about a sense of social justice here. We are talking about people who have an intellectual disability, for one reason or another, who have committed an offence.

Mr M. McGowan: Answer the question about consultation.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Well, ask me a question.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition!

Mr D.J. Kelly: I asked the question: why was there no consultation?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am trying to answer the question, because I think the member asked it with sincerity. One existing disability site to be redeveloped will be a complex of three to four houses, and another new site will be identified. We have to start somewhere, and the minister has announced these sites. There will be discussion with the community, and the minister has assured the —

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Mr Speaker, they are useless.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warnbro, I call you to order for the first time. Let the Premier answer the question, and a supplementary question can be asked.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: As to the people we are talking about, there will be 10 people in each of these two centres. That is the proposal. They are people who have an intellectual disability. They have committed an offence, but they have been deemed not competent to go to trial and not competent to plead. The people chosen are, by all accounts, safe and will be under constant supervision, with the security around these two centres. I will give one example. This is perhaps an extreme case, but I think we have to show a bit of compassion here. This is a case in which a teenager with a head injury was held in Casuarina Prison after he was charged with stealing an ice-cream from a roadhouse in the outback. He could not understand the court procedures. He was never convicted.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Let us think about that. This happened —

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is what I am saying. Listen.

The SPEAKER: Premier, just sit down, please. Member for Victoria Park, I call you to order for the first time; member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for the first time. There are plenty of opportunities for supplementary questions or further questions on this.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: A teenager stole an ice-cream. He had suffered a head injury and lacked the intellectual capacity to stand trial, if there was ever going to be a trial for stealing an ice-cream. He spent —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This teenager spent several years in Casuarina because there was nowhere else for him. That is not acceptable. Any sense of social justice would say that that is totally unacceptable. What this government is —

Mr P.B. Watson: Well, do it in Cottesloe.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There are some kids in Cottesloe, for the member's information, at Cable Station. These young people, typically, should not be in our prison system. They are not a threat to the community, but they need constant supervision, 24/7. They need to be kept within the facility. This costs significant amounts of money. This government is going to build two new facilities; it will rebuild one and build a new one. The minister, having announced those sites, will talk to the community, and I think she will satisfy the community that these offenders are not dangerous. They do not deserve to be in our prison system; they deserve to be treated with some respect and given all the support and care that we as a community can give. I do not apologise for that. The minister will talk to the community, and we will treat the community with respect.