

BANKSIA HILL DETENTION CENTRE — MINISTER FOR CORRECTIVE SERVICES' COMMENTS

**288. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Corrective Services:**

I refer to the fourth riot to occur at Banksia Hill Detention Centre this year and comments made by the minister in this place in 2021 that, “generally speaking, youth offending behaviour is not because people are bad but because of the circumstances of their life”.

- (1) Does the minister still believe that life circumstances and conditions like foetal alcohol spectrum disorder contribute to the behavioural problems of young offenders?
- (2) Does the minister accept that, under this government’s watch, there has been a failure to implement programs to manage these issues?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:**

I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question.

- (1)–(2) Yes, it is true, and that is why 93 per cent of young offenders are handled in the community and are not sent to Banksia Hill. The overwhelming majority of young offenders are managed in the community. They are managed in their own locations, hopefully engaging with their own families. The best pathway forward for young offenders is exactly the one that the McGowan Labor government supports, which is to work with young offenders in their community. That is why both the current and the former Minister for Community Services invested so much money into Target 120. That is why we are working with communities in the Kimberley to invest in the resources families need.

**Mr R.S. Love:** What are you doing at Banksia Hill?

**The SPEAKER:** Order, please!

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Exactly as the Leader of the Opposition asked, we do that. That is exactly our response. Of course, there are some offenders who are violent and who the courts decide need to be remanded or sentenced to detention. The sorts of charges we are talking about include aggravated rape; assaulting public officers—that is usually attacking a police officer—assault occasioning bodily harm; grievous bodily harm; assault with attempt to rob; aggravated home burglary; aggravated armed robbery; stealing motor vehicles; impeding a person’s breathing or blood circulation; possession of firearms; driving dangerously causing death; stealing; criminal damage; and deprivation of liberty. These are just an example of the charges that the 47 rioters were involved with. I make it clear: yes, this Labor government believes that the best place to handle young offenders is in the community. That is why 93 per cent of young offenders are handled in the community, but for that small cohort of violent offenders that the Children’s Court believes need to be handled in detention, of course we want to have them in detention.

I tell members what, and this is my last comment: I stand with the staff at the detention facility; I do not stand with the violent offenders. I stand with the community; I do not support those who make excuses for violence.

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, if you want to have the opportunity for a supplementary question, you will need to ask your question by way of a supplementary question, not continual interjection.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** At the end of the day, the Leader of the Opposition has to decide: does he stand with the McGowan government, which supports the overwhelming majority of young offenders being handled in the community but stands up to violence and does not give in to it; or does he want to give in to violence?