

CORRECTIVE SERVICES — LOW-RISK AND NONVIOLENT OFFENDER INCARCERATION

956. Hon SOPHIA MOERMOND to the minister representing the Minister for Police:

I refer to recent research by the Institute of Public Affairs that found that Western Australia's incarceration rate is the highest of all states and almost 50 per cent higher than the national average; that Western Australian prisons are above 100 per cent utilisation; and that reducing the incarceration rate of low-risk, nonviolent offenders would avoid the need to build new jails, thus saving a minimum of \$350 million a year for taxpayers.

- (1) Does the government have a plan to reduce the incarceration of low-risk, nonviolent offenders?
- (2) As part of a strategy to reduce incarceration, does the government have a plan to introduce any form of decriminalisation of drug use?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Corrective Services.

The preamble provided by the honourable member is factually incorrect. The Western Australian prison population is below capacity.

- (1) The Cook Labor government invests significantly in diversion programs, family intervention, rehabilitation and other measures to reduce offending behaviour in the community.
- (2) No.