

MEDICAL CANNABIS — PRISONS

**594. Hon SOPHIA MOERMOND to the minister representing the Minister for Corrective Services:**

Medicinal cannabis is a lawful prescription medication used to treat a range of conditions also suffered by persons who are incarcerated, including anxiety, insomnia and post-traumatic stress disorder.

- (1) Are any prison doctors currently prescribing medicinal cannabis within the Western Australian prison system?
- (2) If no to (1), what consideration has been given to allowing its prescription within the Western Australian prison system?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer is provided on behalf of the Minister for Corrective Services.

- (1) Currently, there are no prison doctors prescribing medicinal cannabis within the Western Australian prison system.
- (2) Department of Justice health services provides health care in prisons, in alignment with community standards. However, there are some considerations around provision of certain medications within the custodial environment due to the fact that the living situation in prison is not the same as that in the community. In the custodial environment, medications that have the potential to be misused are prescribed cautiously and after consideration of supporting evidence. Medications perceived as being tradeable may be diverted by prisoners and sold to others within the prison; they may be taken in a manner that is not recommended; and vulnerable prisoners may be stood over and compelled to surrender their medications to others. Therefore, the introduction of new medications is discussed by the Department of Justice's team at the drugs and therapeutics committee, and all evidence, supporting or otherwise, is considered. Health services regularly reviews and reconsiders what medications can be routinely made available to the prison population.