



Speech by

**Hon. TOM BARTON**

**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Hansard 11 November 1998

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**  
**Woodford Correctional Centre**

**Hon. T. A. BARTON** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: I take this opportunity to congratulate the management and staff of Queensland Corrections, especially those at the Woodford Correctional Centre, for their quick and decisive action in thwarting a possible escape bid. It shows clearly that the intelligence network and operational matters within the prison service are going well.

It all began when officers gained information about possible drug use in a certain section of Woodford prison. Officers were able to locate drug utensils and a tattoo gun. More significantly, they also discovered a detailed map of the prison with notes that pointed to a possible escape bid. I cannot go into any more detail than this without breaching highly confidential security matters.

Prison authorities enforced an immediate lockdown of the prison, which is currently still under way and is likely to continue this morning until every part of the prison is searched. I have been advised that the situation is quiet at the Woodford prison while the search is being carried out. Extra security measures are being maintained at the prison and the Corrective Services Investigation Unit and the Proactive Intelligence Network are working together closely to finalise investigations into this latest incident. This is clear evidence that procedures and systems are working, and everyone involved in this latest incident is to be congratulated.

The member for Broadwater has used this latest incident to voice concerns about officer morale and a possible rise in prison incidents. I have a hint for the member for Broadwater: when Queensland's worst criminals are housed in one place, there are going to be occasional incidents. Maybe the member for Crows Nest should have a quiet word with the member for Broadwater and tell him about the realities of prison administration, because clearly the member for Broadwater does not have a clue.

The member for Broadwater was on ABC radio this morning, talking about a breakdown in prison procedures. I would like to know how a successful operation, where a possible escape was nipped in the bud, was a breakdown in procedures. He then went on to say that morale was declining in the prison service. Apart from not being able to define "morale", he did not have any clear evidence to support his claim. He just had some scuttlebutt about morale. When asked how morale could be improved, the member for Broadwater pointed the finger at work rosters. According to the member for Broadwater, if there are good work rosters in our prisons, then everyone will be happy. This is just another example of the insightful intellect of the member for Broadwater being brought to bear on the operations of our prisons.

**Mr GRICE:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find that offensive and ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member has asked that the statement be withdrawn.

**Mr BARTON:** I am prepared to withdraw, because it is an acknowledgment that he does not have any insightful intellect.

**Mr GRICE:** Mr Speaker, I find that offensive and ask for it to be withdrawn.

**Mr BARTON:** I will withdraw. It reminds me of the police raid on computers at the Palen Creek Correctional Centre in September this year. Up until that incident, the member for Broadwater did not even know that there were computers in our jails. I have news for the member for Broadwater. If we

want to improve morale in our prisons, we do exactly what we are doing: increase staff to lessen the workload placed on current staff, buy the basic equipment, such as bullet-proof vests and two-way radios, that prison staff have been requesting for the past three years and, when incidents occur, do not have a knee-jerk reaction and completely change around systems and concentrate on fancy gimmicks. Instead, provide guidance and let staff get on with the job. It is amazing what can be achieved when the Minister does not continually interfere in operational matters, like my predecessor the member for Crows Nest used to do.

We have had more than 20 significant drug busts in our prisons in the past four months and, rather than suffering from poor morale, staff are very enthusiastic about these great successes. They are coming up with more initiatives to improve the security of our prisons, and I will have more good news about these initiatives shortly. Instead of allowing mass break-outs to occur, we are getting on top of the issues and getting the runs on the board. The member for Broadwater should watch this space, because we have lots of good news to come about how well our prison system is travelling.

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