




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Correctional Facilities, Overcrowding

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (10.15 am): This week's budget revealed some very disturbing figures about our prison population—figures that show that this government and this minister are asleep at the wheel. Over the past 12 months under this Labor government's reign, overcrowding has increased in all of our correctional centres by eight per cent. They are at a utilisation rate of 111 per cent. It is even more disturbing that in our higher security prisons, where our most hardened criminals are, we now have a utilisation rate of 115 per cent, which is an increase of nine per cent. We have overcrowded prisons. Prisoners are sleeping on mattresses on the floor or in trundle beds. This is a powder keg waiting to explode. What has been the government's response in the past 17 months? A few weeks ago, we were told that resources are being prioritised towards diversion, community supervision and re-entry services. This is gobbledegook for letting out prisoners early or not putting them into prison in the first place, even though they deserve to be put there. It is a typical reaction from a government that is soft on crime. Criminals should not be rewarded for this government's incompetence.

In contrast, when this side of the House was in government we had a plan. That is something that is totally foreign to the Labor government. We set aside \$61 million for an extra 650 beds, which included 492 beds at the recommissioned Borallon prison that would have been operational 12 months ago. This government stopped that plan. I have little sympathy for prisoners, but my concern is that that is going to increase the risk of assault on our correctional officers, which is a serious issue. I quote a member of this House over 18 months ago—

The Corrective Services Minister needs to be held personally responsible for any incidents as a result of prison overcrowding.

Mr Bleijie: Who said that?

Mr MANDER: The current Minister for Corrective Services said that! When in opposition he puffs out his chest, but when the rubber hits the road he will not take responsibility. Do not hide behind your public servants this time; take responsibility. You will be held by the standards that you yourself set.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the Deputy Premier, I remind members of the importance of not referring to other members as 'you'. I urge members to speak through the chair.