

Question on Notice

No. 1088

Asked on Tuesday 28 September 2004

Mr LINGARD asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (Mr Welford) -

QUESTION:

For the last two financial years and for the year to date (reported separately) (a) what was the number of juveniles convicted for arson offences in Queensland and (b) how many offenders received the maximum sentence?

ANSWER:

The numbers of juveniles convicted of arson, which is an offence under section 461 of the Criminal Code, are set down below. Due to the seriousness of the charge of arson, they can not be dealt with in the Magistrates Courts. These figures only include the Supreme and District Courts which have computerised information systems. This information system had a staggered implementation from July 2002 with all courts on the system from 1 July 2004. It has not been practical to undertake manual searches of all criminal files in regional centres prior to them coming online.

| | 2002-2003 | 2003-2004 | 1/7/04 to 4/10/04 |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Total Number of Convictions | 5 | 13 | 8 |

The maximum sentence for arson is life imprisonment. No juveniles convicted during the relevant periods received the maximum sentence. The judiciary in all states, including Queensland, is bound by principles authoritatively stated by the High Court of Australia regarding the imposition of maximum penalties. Specifically, a maximum sentence should only be imposed in the very worst category of cases.