

Question on Notice
No. 1474
Asked on Tuesday 28 November 2006

MR MESSENGER asked the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (MS SPENCE)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the list of stakeholder organisations officially recognised by the Department of Corrective Services for consultation purposes and listed on the department's website—

Will she advise the rationale as to why the Queensland Prison Officers Association (QPOA) is not officially recognised as a stakeholder organisation by the Department of Corrective Services when the QPOA represents over half the current number of prison officers currently working in our gaols?

ANSWER:

- The Queensland Prison Officers Association (QPOA) pursues an industrial relations agenda. They have recently sent correspondence regarding consultation between the QPOA and Queensland Corrective Services.
- The QPOA are seeking to be treated the same as the registered industrial union. They ask for equality; however they are not a registered industrial union.
- A response has been sent to that letter which states that if the QPOA are seeking equality or the same status as the relevant registered union, they are required to attain that same status. This is achieved by the association being registered as an industrial organisation under *Chapter 12 of The Industrial Relations Act 1999*.
- The question of the status of this association and their desire to be treated the same as the relevant registered union are really issues that need to be dealt with through the appropriate industrial frameworks managed by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.
- Should this occur, Queensland Corrective Services would extend the same rights and entitlements and benefits as it extends the relevant registered industrial organisation.
- Until that happens, Queensland Corrective Services will be guided by Government policy and the provisions of current awards and certified agreements, in relation to collective industrial relations, which considers such matters as union coverage and assistance provided.

- This requires Queensland Corrective Services to recognise the important role of unions and the traditionally high levels of union membership in the public sector. It supports constructive relations between management and unions and recognises the need to work collaboratively with relevant unions and employees in an open and accountable way.
- It also makes it clear that Queensland Corrective Services, as an employer, recognises that union membership and coverage issues are determined by the provisions of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999* and any determinations of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.
- In that regard, the Queensland Public Sector Union is the authorised, registered industrial organisation that is a party and a signatory to Queensland Corrective Services' awards and agreements. Queensland Corrective Services and the Queensland Public Sector Union both have obligations under those documents which must be met.