

Question on Notice
No. 929
Asked on Thursday 7 June 2007

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

QUESTION:

How many prisoners serving sentences for sexual offences have been released into the community since 2003 that did not complete one of the Department of Corrective Services sexual offender programs (reported separately by year)?

ANSWER:

In 2005, the Beattie Government provided \$5.9 million dollars to Corrective Services over a three year period to facilitate the enhanced capacity for delivery of sexual offending programs in custody. The 2004-05 and 2005-06 financial years represent a transition period for the Queensland Corrective Services, with the establishment of the Sexual Offending Programs Unit and training of new staff to meet the Government's objectives.

A high volume of specialised assessments were completed in order to inform appropriate intervention recommendations. A total of 590 specialised assessments have been conducted by the Unit since its inception in 2005.

The minimum time frame for treating sexual offenders is between 1 year 5 months and 1 year 10 months. Current empirical research demonstrates that programs need to be of sufficient intensity and duration if they are to effectively reduce recidivism. International best practice standards dictate that programs need to be of approximately 100 hours in duration and approximately 300 hours for high risk/need offenders to allow for the consolidation, generalisation and integration of learning. Programs currently offered meet this benchmark .

Queensland Corrective Services has recently implemented the Inclusion (Behavioural) Sexual Offending Program specifically to target those offenders with low cognitive functioning or significant learning barriers, who previously were unable to access intervention. This program has received the endorsement and commendation of Emeritus Professor Bill Marshall of Canada.

The Beattie Government is committed to ensuring community safety, therefore sexual offenders serving a period of imprisonment over two years for a serious sexual offence are considered by the Serious Sexual Offenders Review Committee. This committee was established to refer eligible offenders in Corrective Services' custody to the Attorney General for advice on prospects of success of an application under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003*. All sexual offenders, treated and untreated, who meet this criteria are referred to this committee for consideration.