

Question on Notice

No. 886

Asked on 17 September 2015

MR MADDEN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR CORRECTIVE SERVICES (HON J MILLER) —

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline the benefits of the sex offender programs, introduced to our correctional centres, in reducing the risks of re-offending and maintaining safety in the community?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question.

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to keeping Queenslanders safe. One way the government is delivering on this commitment is through the delivery of programs that address the underlying causes of offending behaviour. This is considered to be the most effective way to reduce sexual offences.

The sexual offending programs delivered by Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) include a preparatory program, medium and high intensity programs, a program specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, and a program designed for sexual offenders with a cognitive impairment.

The Getting Started: Preparatory Program is designed to prepare men who have committed a sexual or sexually motivated offence to participate in more intensive sexual offending programs. This program is generally 12 to 16 sessions and aims to enhance the participants' motivation to change, overcome resistance and start the process of self-exploration.

The *Medium Intensity Sexual Offending Program* is available for offenders who are assessed as having a low to medium risk of re-offending and targets psychological, social and lifestyle factors associated with sexual offending. This program runs for between 78 and 132 hours. Primary topics of this program include understanding victim harm, challenging and changing offence-related beliefs and attitudes, improving relationship skills, effectively managing emotions and impulsive urges, problem solving and developing realistic self-management plans.

Offenders assessed as having a high risk of re-offending are referred to the *High Intensity Sexual Offending Program*. This program covers similar content to that of the *Medium Intensity Sexual Offending Program*, however at an increased intensity over 350 hours, completed over nine months.

Given variation between the needs of offender groups, QCS also has the *Sex Offender Program for Indigenous Males*. This program has the same elements as the high intensity program, but has been specifically designed to accommodate cultural, custom and language considerations relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The program also has a strong focus on abuse of drugs and alcohol, and domestic violence.

An adapted program is also in place for sexual offenders assessed as having a cognitive impairment.

After completing a sexual offending program, offenders are referred to the *Sexual Offending Maintenance Program*.

QCS continually monitors sexual offending programs to ensure adherence to nationally and internationally recognised best practiced principles.

A total of 395 individuals completed sexual offending programs in 2014-15. This comprised 255 prison based completions and 140 program completions in the community under supervision.

The Palaszczuk Government remains committed to keeping Queenslanders safe.