

Question on Notice
No. 2165
Asked on 10 November 2016

MR KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR POLICE, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR CORRECTIVE SERVICES (HON W BYRNE) –

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide an update on the roll out of domestic violence programs for perpetrators in correction centres and advise whether participation in the programs will be mandatory?

ANSWER: [Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services (Hon. Mark Ryan MP)]

Domestic and family violence has a significant social and economic cost. The Palaszczuk Government is committed to seeing domestic and family violence eradicated.

On 28 February 2015, the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, chaired by the Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO, delivered a report containing 140 comprehensive recommendations to the Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts.

A number of the recommendations are relevant to the corrective services system and the management of offenders.

Specifically, recommendation 81 pertains directly to Queensland Corrective Services (QCS), in relation to the eligibility of prisoners serving less than 12 months in custody, for domestic and family violence related offences, being able to access intervention programs.

I am pleased to advise QCS revised the eligibility criteria in 2015 for participation in interventions to remove the 12 month minimum sentence requirement. When Labor came to Government in early 2015, those serving less than 12 months were not eligible. Prisoners are now able to participate in programs regardless of sentence length.

Currently, the Positive Futures Program and Sexual Offending Program for Indigenous Males address aspects of domestic and family violence in the custodial setting. QCS facilitates a number of programs that address other behaviours which contribute to domestic violence, including a cognitive self-change program, emotional resilience and wellbeing, sexual offending, substance abuse and violence.

I am advised that new re-entry services implemented in 2016-17 identify prisoners who are being released to parole and facilitate access to external services, including (where appropriate) a referral to perpetrator programs run by specialised domestic and family violence service providers.

Further, I am advised that prior to release, QCS develops management strategies to reduce the risk to the victim and wider community. Upon release, parole conditions, which may include mandatory attendance at perpetrator programs, are closely monitored by Probation and Parole staff. Swift action is taken, if any breaches occur.

The Palaszczuk Government has just announced an additional \$10.5 million will be invested over the next five years to protect and support Queensland victims of domestic and family violence. This includes delivery of perpetrator programs in the community by specialised organisations. Localised agreements between service providers and Probation and Parole have been established to ensure offenders can participate in perpetrator programs in the community. This includes early identification of prisoners prior to their release from custody.