

BROMLEY, Mr D.

14 March 2007

The Hon. A.L. EVANS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation before asking the Minister for Correctional Services a question about the prisoner Derek Bromley and rehabilitation courses in South Australian prisons.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A.L. EVANS: Derek Bromley was convicted in 1985 for the murder of Stephen Dacoza in 1984. Derek appealed unsuccessfully to the Court of Criminal Appeal and then to the High Court. The expert evidence given during the trial by the state forensic pathologist (Dr Manock) has been criticised by Professor Plueckhahn, who has said that in his firm opinion 'there is no scientific basis in the post mortem findings of an unequivocal diagnosis of death by drowning.'

Derek Bromley, who is an indigenous Australian currently in his 21st year of imprisonment for murder, has consistently proclaimed his innocence. On Monday 13 February 2006 he presented a petition to the Governor of South Australia for the circumstances of his conviction to be re-examined. Further, in September 2006, he submitted a formal complaint to the Medical Board of South Australia concerning Dr Manock. Although Derek Bromley is petitioning the Governor with a claim that he is innocent, he complains that he is being pressured to attend courses in prison to help him to come to terms with the crime for which he has been convicted. At the same time, he complains that he has been denied access to appropriate re-socialisation courses to help him cope with his eventual release. My questions are:

1. Is the minister aware that the courses available to Mr Bromley have been condemned as unsuitable for Aboriginal persons?

2. What protocol is in place to deal with prisoners who maintain their innocence?

3. In general terms, what programs are currently in place to ensure that prisoners are rehabilitated from drugs or violence whilst in prison and adequately prepared for their eventual release into the community?

The Hon. CARMEL ZOLLO (Minister for Correctional Services): I thank the honourable member for his important question. I clearly do not have in front of me the details of the particular case he has raised. Nonetheless, I can advise the honourable member that the Department for Correctional Services provides individual case management with a management based approach to rehabilitation across both custodial and community corrections. Three senior Aboriginal programs officers have been appointed to our Rehabilitation Programs Branch in Corrections to develop and deliver culturally appropriate programs for violent Aboriginal offenders.

Also, a wide range of services is provided to Aboriginal prisoners, and they have access to all the programs that have been developed for prisoners, including those dealing with alcohol and other drugs, sexual offences, anger management, violence prevention and victim awareness. They also have access to a number of special programs that are specific to Aboriginal prisoners, including the Aboriginal Ending Offending Program, the involvement of Aboriginal elders, the delivery of the Violence Prevention Program, the implementation of a casual pool of Aboriginal liaison officers in our prisons and the enhancement of the department's partnership with Nunkuwarrin Yunti.

The department's through care approach also involves pre-release planning, program referral, assistance to secure accommodation, post-release support, and treatment follow-up for prisoners and remandees exiting correctional facilities. The department's referrals to programs are commonly instigated through the courts and the Parole Board. They issue conditions requiring offenders to be assessed and to participate in specific programs including

alcohol and other drugs, anger management, domestic violence, numeracy and literacy, victim awareness and cognitive skills.

I heard what the honourable member said: that the person who brought this case to his attention believes he has been forced into attending programs which he believes are not suitable for him. I have outlined that we have cultural specific rehabilitation programs, but I undertake to get some advice in relation to this person and bring back a response for the honourable member.