



Community & Public Sector Union  
Civil Service Association of WA

## MEDIA RELEASE

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Civil Service Association of WA Inc

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### Latest attack highlights safety compromise

Staff freezes in the public sector are compromising the safety of youth custodial officers at the Banksia Hill Detention Centre according to the Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association.

Branch Secretary Toni Walkington made the claim after an officer was seriously assaulted last Friday morning.

The officer was king hit from behind and repeatedly kned to the head before a second officer subdued the 18-year-old detainee.

The injured officer collapsed and was taken to hospital for assessment.

The detainee was one of a few sent to the special purpose unit after they recently mounted an internal fence and accessed a unit roof, arming themselves with broken glass and rocks.

Ms Walkington said there should be two officers working in the unit at all times.

“Children in this unit are the most violent ones where the risk factor is higher than usual, meaning it is important for two staff to be working there the whole time,” Ms Walkington said.

“Unfortunately staff are continually being taken out of the unit which compromises the safety of our members.

“This is what happened on Friday when the second officer was called to another unit, leaving the attacked officer vulnerable and on his own.”

Ms Walkington said it was another example of the Barnett Government’s freeze on public sector numbers having a major impact on frontline services.

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“The government was pretty keen to tell everyone there would be no effect on the delivery of frontline services with their crippling cutbacks last year and the public needs to know this was a hollow claim.”

Ms Walkington said members were also concerned they were dealing with 18-year-olds who were sentenced as juveniles and will not be transferred to an adult prison.

“The unarmed juvenile custodial officers are dealing with very strong young men.

“Prison guards in adult prisons can use chemical agents and have access to other tools while these officers only have their hands.

“Given their vulnerability the least the government could do is address legislation pertaining to young offenders being housed in a juvenile facility, otherwise more staff will be seriously injured in the future.”

Ms Walkington said their members were not trained to work with adult offenders which they said could account for up to 20 per cent of the population.

**FOR COMMENT:**

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