



General Media Enquires

P: (08) 9323 3800

(request Publicity Office)

F: (08) 9323 3878

E: publicity@cpsucsa.org

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Solution is simple – more youth custodial officers are needed

Corrective Services Minister Joe Francis doesn't need a review to find out why so many youth custodial officers are on workers compensation, he just needs to put on more staff to cope with demand according to the Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association.

Branch Secretary Toni Walkington made the comment after the new minister hinted there may be a review of the selection process and training programs when being interviewed on radio today.

"That is a slap in the face for the stringent process that is already in place," Ms Walkington said.

She said up to 60 of the 199 youth custodial officers assigned to the Banksia Hill Detention Centre were involved in some form of workers compensation with up to 35 of them on long-term leave.

These facts were highlighted in the Supreme Court review that ended on Friday after looking into the conditions of children in WA's Corrective Services system.

"It is irresponsible for the minister to question the recruitment process and suggest some of the staff may be in the wrong profession, particularly when the claims relates to significant levels of stress and extreme assault.

"The current selection process is rigorous and not everyone who participates is able to complete it."

Ms Walkington said chronic understaffing meant many of the staff were working extra shifts which was putting them under increased pressure and they could only do so much to fill in the gaps.

"Last year, well before the riot at Banksia Hill took place, we were campaigning for more staff to be employed to stop the rolling lockdowns which prevented children from getting access to adequate education and rehabilitation programs.

"The minister needs to avoid the rhetoric about reviews and just face facts – the system needs more staff."

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Ms Walkington said the system would be continue to be under pressure and there could possibly be more workers compensation claims if the Barnett Government did not respond soon to chronic staff shortages.

FOR COMMENT:

Toni Walkington
CPSU/CSA Branch Secretary
(08) 9323 3800

FOR INFORMATION:

Darren O'Dea
CPSU/CSA Media Liaison Officer
M: 0421 934 794
P: (08) 9323 3855
E: darren.odea@cpsucsa.org

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