

Juvenile Justice Staff assaults and Meeting with Minister Elliott

The PSA met with Minister Elliott on Wednesday 12 April to discuss the issue of staff assaults.

Presented to Minister Elliott were the following facts:

- In October 2015 hundreds of thousands of dollars damage was done to the facilities in the Chisholm Program by the very detainees the Department now claim can be safely managed in general population.
- In October 2016 an incident at Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre involving several young offenders left one female officer injured. To this day the member remains off work with the likelihood that she will never return to duty due to, again, the violent nature of these young offenders.
- In January 2017 an Officer from the Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre was injured on duty due to interaction with young offenders also resulting in hospitalisation.
- The 14 February 2017 we had a further two Youth Officers physically injured at Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre due to the behaviour of a young offender. One member was hospitalised.
- And as reported before the IRC on the 31 March 2017 within a two-week period again at Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre there have been a further seven staff injured.
- The members within Juvenile Justice do not accept the Department's position that incidents are declining. Injuries and violence from these young offenders has and will continue to increase.
- The PSA further stated that levels of violence from these young offenders has members on every shift fearful due to the volatility of offender behaviour which often has no reason other than to injure staff.

- The PSA has met with all levels of management within the Department in trying to address these challenging young offenders as we no longer believe that their behaviours can be managed safely within the current centres infrastructure and the program of Detainee Risk Management Program (DRMP).
- The PSA states the Department has a duty of care to both staff and young offenders in providing a safe environment and the current method of managing these young offenders is causing jeopardy which may result either a detainee or staff death.

The PSA further stated to Minister Elliott that there are two critical needs for Juvenile Justice members:

- Remove these violent young offenders from the general population at both Cobham and Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice centres and place them in a unit which is solely designed to both manage and rehabilitate their behaviours. The Police were so concerned about the risk of two recent detainees that they drove them in separate vehicles.
- The Association's position is that there needs to be specialist centre built to house these young offenders.

Minister Elliott agreed these young offenders cannot be maintained in the current detention centre environment and has encouraged the PSA to call upon all forms of government to help us in addressing this risk.

Minister Elliott further supported position by saying he would assist the PSA in getting access to Cobham for the media to see the real job and the risk you face.

We will keep members advised as we continue in our action of calling on the Government and Juvenile Justice management to address this most crucial need.

