



**MINISTER FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE
MINISTER FOR VOLUNTEERING
MINISTER FOR YOUTH**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE – GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO3 -
BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE, VOLUNTEERING AND
YOUTH**

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I acknowledge that many people working in this area work incredibly hard and have great compassion. I had hoped that you would be able to take on notice to provide figures of how many young people have been detained on remand because of this problem where the Department of Community Services or Juvenile Justice have not been able to meet the conditions that have been met?

Mr GRAHAM WEST: I will take that on notice.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Or do you have those figures?

Mr MUIR: I have some figures. If I could add: the way our data is currently structured, we would have to manually go through records. We are in the process of restructuring. I can tell you that in the last financial year, 928 young people stayed in custody unable to meet conditions of bail and they stayed on average 10 days unable to meet those conditions.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: But you are not sure why they stayed in custody?

Mr MUIR: It is a wide variety of reasons. Sometimes it is not just accommodation; sometimes it is drug and alcohol rehabilitation beds. To be honest, one of the ones I heard recently out at Cobham was one young person had been granted conditional bail and his parents refused to take him home, stating that he eats too much. There are a wide variety of reasons. Sometimes parents have just had enough and sometimes the episode in custody is the breaking point. There are a wide variety of reasons so to find that the answer on DOCS we would have to actually trawl manually through records. I have talked to Ms Mason, the Director General of DOCS, about having a data match between our two agencies and whilst that has been a long time coming, I acknowledge that with Ms Mason having been in this department, we will be able to reach agreement to get some firmer data. To answer your question specifically, it would take us a lot of work to trawl through the data.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I appreciate that there is a limit to how much you can do. However, given that the Act is in force and that if the Coalition came into power we cannot see them repealing the Act, it has to be managed. We obviously think it would be a wise thing to do. It would seem as though it would be just a matter of putting another column in your database about why the conditions have to be breached. It does not sound extremely complicated to be able to collect the data.

Mr MUIR: Madam Chair, you may remember that a number of estimates ago we went through a process with the Auditor-General about the structure of our data. We are in the middle of a four-year program to rebuild that. Whilst we have a field in a database that asks people to report on whether the young person has a history with DOCS, it is not a mandatory field, and we are not confident of the data. So we could give you what data is there, but I could not tell you that that data is 100 per cent accurate. I can tell you what data staff put in, but I am not convinced that that data is accurate.

The Hon. GRAHAM WEST: We will take that on notice. Given that we will have to manually go through each one, could we have an extension beyond the 21 days?

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Yes, I am happy with that.

ANSWER

The number of young people with Department of Community Service Orders admitted to Department of Juvenile Justice custody on remand for 2007 – 2008 totalled 85, with a total number of 163 bail periods between them.

Each young person spent an average of 5.1 days in custody to meet their bail conditions.

Of these 163 bail periods, 153 had Reside As Directed as a Bail Condition, and in 88 cases young people were held in custody for more than 2 days due to being unable to meet bail conditions specifically due to accommodation issues.

The average age of young person was 14.9 years.

	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total
Male	20	39	59 (69%)
Female	12	14	26 (31%)
Total	32 (38%)	53 (62%)	85 (100%)

Graham West MP

Minister for Juvenile Justice
Minister for Volunteering
Minister for Youth