

**MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS
Annual and financial reports 2009-10**

Tuesday 9 November 2010

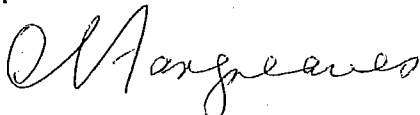
Supplementary Question

The Chair asked the Official Visitor in relation to unfair lockdowns (pg 259 DHCS AR vol 1) – Are you satisfied that the staff shortage problem which led to complaints from Bimberi residents about "unfair lockdowns" has been addressed?

Ms Hargreaves - The answer to the Committee's question is as follows:

The work environment of a youth justice centre presents challenges to staff and I understand that the lockdowns are a measure of last resort by Management at Bimberi. However, on a number of occasions during my fortnightly visits to Bimberi in 2010 the residents complained to me about their perceived 'unfair lockdowns' due to a shortage of staff. It is pleasing to note that at the present time there is a full complement of staff operating at Bimberi and there have been no such complaints from residents since the staffing issue has been addressed. It is important that if a behavioural consequence requires a young person to be 'locked down' for a period of time that everyone else does not need to suffer because of a staff shortage. As one young person said to me: 'It is not our fault if there is a shortage of staff!' As the Official Visitor I am very pleased that this matter has been addressed by the Department.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Ms Narelle Hargreaves, OAM

Official Visitor, Children and Young People

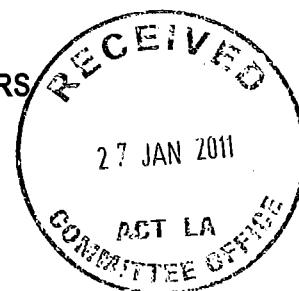
Date: 24/1/11

MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS
Annual and financial reports 2009-10

Tuesday 9 November 2010

Supplementary Question



The Chair asked the Official Visitor in relation to Post release programs (pg 259-260 DHCS AR vol 1) – Your report expressed some concern about post release programs for Bimberi. Has there been any improvement in cross-agency post release programs for residents leaving Bimberi?

What would you like to see achieved?

Ms Hargreaves - The answer to the Committee's question is as follows:

I understand that young people exiting Bimberi following a period of sentence or remand of more than 14 days have an individual transition plan which is developed with the young person and seeks to meet their health, educational/vocational, accommodation and other needs. I am also aware of a number of programs and services available in the community to assist these young people such as Housing ACT; Homelinx - a Catholic Care Youth Housing program. My concern in listening and supporting the young people is that there appears to be 'a gap' between the rhetoric of the plan and the actual practicalities of the implementation processes of the transition plan. However, progress is being made regarding this matter which is pleasing to note.

Recently there have been changes to the organisational and management structure at Bimberi which I support. I would like to see a more effective balance between the building of 'RELATIONSHIPS' with the young people and the 'SECURITY' issues associated with young people who find themselves residing at Bimberi as the Courts have determined their loss of freedom for varying periods of time. The new programs and resources that are now operating at Bimberi is encouraging and I look forward to my role during 2011 in listening to and supporting the young people. Worthy of a conversation, would be to consider the setting up of a mentoring type program of qualified interested community members to join a 'FRIENDS OF BIMBERI' program to support the young people both in the Centre and post release.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.

Ms Narelle Hargreaves, OAM

Official Visitor, Children and Young People

Date: 24/1/11