



Deaths in Custody Watch Committee (WA) Inc.

MEDIA RELEASE – For Immediate Release – February 14, 2013

Deaths In Custody Watch Committee calls for the release of all Juveniles on remand at Hakea

The Deaths In Custody Watch Committee (the Committee) has today called for the immediate release of the 83 juveniles on remand in Hakea, an adult prison.

Committee spokesperson Marc Newhouse said all juveniles on remand should be placed in alternative care such as close supervision, intensive care, at home or with family.

Mr. Newhouse said it was not a satisfactory solution to make an order under the *Prisons Act 1981* to declare Units 11 and 12, where the juveniles were being held, as not being part of Hakea Prison. “We are extremely concerned about juveniles being held in Hakea, it is a prison already under pressure due to overcrowding and poor conditions.”

He said the remaining 27 juvenile prisoners at Hakea should be placed at Wandoo Reintegration Centre.

“Our Committee would like to know why there are juveniles in Hakea when 18 to 24 year old prisoners at Wandoo could be there instead, allowing space for the remaining 27 juveniles to be housed at Wandoo, a more appropriate solution. The practical reality is young people are in an environment lacking appropriate facilities and programs.” Mr. Newhouse said.

“Placing juveniles in an overloaded adult prison isn’t consistent with the rehabilitative aims of juvenile justice and unlikely to comply with international laws for the rights of children and the convention against torture and other degrading treatment. The Committee has received numerous reports of young detainees being threatened and intimidated by adult prisoners and Prison Officers in Units 11 and 12. There have also been reports of young people being detained in isolation,” he said.

The head of Shine Lawyers Social Justice Team, George Newhouse said, “the allegations of assaults, isolation, confinement and the withdrawal of rehabilitative or therapeutic programmes was a form of extra judicial punishment and that the West Australian Government would be responsible for any harm or health problems which might arise from the cavalier way that these youths have been treated.”

A media conference will be held outside Hakea Prison at 12 noon on Friday 15 February with prominent Australian human rights lawyer, George Newhouse together with family members and representatives of the Watch Committee.

Further comment:

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