



Hon Helen Morton MLC

Minister for Disability Services

Justice centre independent analysis commissioned

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MEDIA STATEMENT

Justice centre independent analysis commissioned

Disability Services Minister Helen Morton has commissioned an independent analysis of the individual plans, programs and services for residents of the Bennett Brook Disability Justice Centre.

The analysis is being carried out by the Hon Peter Blaxell, retired Justice of the Supreme Court of Western Australia and Professor Colleen Hayward AM of Edith Cowan University.

Mrs Morton said the analysis, along with external and Government reviews of security at the centre, were among a range of measures and responses by the State Government in relation to the absconding of two residents from the centre on New Year's Eve.

"As part of their analysis I have also asked Mr Blaxell and Professor Hayward to examine whether due consideration was given by me in determining resident suitability for the centre," she said.

"The Disability Services Commission contracted external security consultants on the first working day after the incident and the Department of Corrective Services' Security and Response Service has also commenced a security analysis at the centre."

The Minister has written to community representatives who expressed concern that the centre posed too great a risk to their safety.

"People are being released from prison each day to go back and live in the community after completing their sentences," Mrs Morton said.

"Many are involved in pre-release programs.

"People with intellectual and cognitive disability, who are unable to plead to an offence because of their disability, and who have been assessed as suitable to attend the centre, pose no greater risk to the community.

"Security measures at the centre relate to the mandatory approach to skills development for the residents, who may fail in a community setting without participating in individualised development programs."

The Minister said people with disability deserved the same level of confidentiality as people without disability who participated in pre-release programs and were released into the community.

Mrs Morton has made her letters to community representatives available to the wider community and can be viewed at <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au>

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