



Dale Last MP
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Shadow Minister for Police and Corrective Services, Shadow Minister for Fire and Emergency Services
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Media Release – Prison staff sentenced to slow growth

If staff at Queensland's prisons are relying on the state Labor government to deliver reinforcements, they will be disappointed according to Shadow Minister for Police & Corrective Services, Dale Last MP.

It was revealed in today's (Thursday) Estimates Hearing that, not only is this year's projected growth less than half of the two previous years, almost 70% of the so-called new staff are staff at the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre, not new staff in existing centres.

"Our prisons are effectively bulging at the seams, and we have a section of one prison that has effectively been taken over by the inmates," Mr Last said. "Yet, despite all the extra demands that COVID has forced on prison staff, the Labor government has halved their increases in staff numbers."

"In the two previous financial years, we have seen the budget allow for an extra 722 and 746 full time equivalent staff. For this financial year, the growth is just 344 staff."

"When you take out the 240 staff that work at Southern Queensland Correctional Centre, which became state-run on July 1st, you are left with just 104 additional staff. In real terms, new recruits for this financial year will be about 86% lower than they were last year."

Mr Last said that there was a "veritable shopping list" of issues in the Corrective Services system and that staffing needed to be a key priority.

"Overcrowding is one issue that the government has failed to address, and in an overcrowded prison environment, you need to be absolutely sure you have the right levels of staffing to ensure safety," Mr Last said. "I can't see how the Minister can decimate staff recruiting when we currently have an occupancy of over 125% in our prisons."

"Of the 104 additional staff, we don't know how many will be custodial officers but, either way, there are very few reinforcements on their way to address the overcrowding and safety issues that Queensland's prison staff face each and every day."

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