

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY 14TH MAY 2015

CHILD PROTECTION SCREENING

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:44): Supplementary, sir: my understanding is that these checks are at least cost neutral, so why don't you just employ more people in the checking department?

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON (Ramsay—Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, Minister for Social Housing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Youth, Minister for Volunteers) (14:44): Member for Hammond, I have. In fact—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: The member for Hammond is already on a warning from the pre-lunch session. I warn him for the second and final time.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: In late February, we had 9,000 people who were due checks more than 30 days. We are now down to 4,000 people. I continue to work on this backlog. We know that 83 per cent of people receive their check within 30 business days. I have worked on this check on the processing of what we have and by mid-next month we would have tripled the number of people, particularly in the area of assessments. One of the areas that was brought to my attention is that, while many people go through the system very quickly—

The Hon. J.M. Rankine interjecting:

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: —if someone has a name check, then there was a hold-up. What we have worked on is employing and training up more than 25 assessment officers—

The SPEAKER: The member for Wright is warned for the second and final time.

The Hon. J.M. RANKINE: Excuse me, sir. I have only had one call to order as far as I know.

The SPEAKER: You were so busy interjecting after my call to order that you didn't hear your first warning.

The Hon. Z.L. BETTISON: Other areas that we have done is that we now work two shifts over an 11-hour day. What we have introduced is voluntary overtime. People are often working on Saturdays and even on Sundays to get to this backlog. We continue to focus on reducing. Another area that we have seen is an area of overscreening. I have been working

with my colleagues the Minister for Health and Minister for Education to identify within their own departments to make sure that the portability and the validity of that screen is recognised. When people have a screen, we are letting them know to say if you are applying for another screen, 'Here is your customer reference number. Here is the date that you had screened. It is still valid.'