

**MEDIA STATEMENT:**  
**Incident at Banksia Hill Detention Centre**  
**1 January 2023**

**Comments attributed to Social Reinvestment WA Co-Chairs Daniel Morrison and Glenda Kickett:**

*"Clearly everything is not working well at Banksia Hill Detention Centre."*

*"The Government is failing everybody in Banksia Hill and the Youth Justice System - the children and their families, the staff operating the centre and services, the community who are not made safer by children's mistreatment, and the victims of crimes whose experiences do not lead to any tangible change."*

*"How we still have a system operating that sees children locked in their cells for up to 22 hours a day, often experiencing mental illness and suicide ideation, when it has been declared unlawful by the highest court in the State is unfathomable."*

*"The blame for the latest escalation in tensions lays squarely at the feet of the Government. For the last 12 months, there have been a chorus of voices from the community pleading with them to do things differently to prevent things like this from happening."*

*"We have been dismissed despite our best efforts. Only speaking up publicly has gained the Government's attention, which we will continue to do if we do not have any other options."*

*"We are glad there is a commitment to review what happened overnight at Banksia Hill to ensure accountability that prevents this from happening again."*

*"However, we have very little confidence in a review conducted by the Department, unless the review includes the perspectives of the children involved, is released publicly, and involves third parties or independent influences to ensure a just process."*

*"Such a review would be better conducted by the independent authorities that are already in place and have the legislative power to do so. However, reviews and recommendations need to lead to action and tangible change."*

*"There must be accountability for the Government's responsibility in these matters, instead of deflecting any responsibility onto the children, and labelling things as too complex."*

*"This is the clear and consistent message from Social Reinvestment WA, a coalition of 31 not for profit organisations, as well as over 65 Aboriginal Leaders from across the state, and 106 organisations and individuals who signed an open letter sent to the Premier in December last year."*

**ENDS**

---

**About Social Reinvestment WA:**

Social Reinvestment WA is a coalition of 31 non-profit organisations campaigning since 2014 to end the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in WA's justice system.

Social Reinvestment WA, and the coalition members, continues to advocate for a basic public policy response supported by data and experts. This response should include the following actions:

1. Investigate failures through an independent inquiry that enables truth-telling and accountability for the behaviour uncovered by Four Corners across the entire system.
2. Immediately ban use of solitary confinement, and adhere to the WA Supreme Court ruling of maximum hours locked in cells.
3. Commit to a specific date publicly to Close Unit 18 and transition children back to Banksia.
4. Convene a taskforce of Aboriginal leaders, independent experts and Government to develop and implement immediate changes within youth detention to improve the care provided to children.
5. Commit to developing a whole-of-government Youth Justice Strategy with direct Cabinet oversight, informed by the taskforce and the Blueprint developed by SRWA.
6. Stop charging, prosecuting and locking up children under the age of 14, who are not old enough by law to drive, vote, or get a job. Help them with tailored support instead of harming them.

[www.socialreinvestmentwa.org.au](http://www.socialreinvestmentwa.org.au)

**Media Contact:**

Joshua Cunniffe

Ph: 0438018217

E: [jcunniffe@wungening.com.au](mailto:jcunniffe@wungening.com.au)