

Estimates Committee 2010 Questions Taken On Notice

(11/06/2010 to 18/06/2010)

Date: 11/06/2010 Output:
Sub Output:
Subject Average length of sentence served by defendants found guilty
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From: Ms Jodeen Carney to Hon Delia Lawrie
Justice and Attorney-General

1-18

Question: What was the average length of sentence served by defendants found guilty in 2009-10 and how does it compare with the preceding year?

Answer:

Answered 10/08/2010

On:

Answer:

Modified: 10/08/10 12:21 PM
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Department of Justice

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE 2010 – QUESTION ON NOTICE

Portfolio: Justice and Attorney-General

Date: Friday, 11 June 2010

Question No: 1.18

Question: What was the average length of sentence served by defendants found guilty in 2009-10 and how does it compare with the preceding year?

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Response:

It is not possible to answer this question.

The actual time served by defendants found guilty in 2009-10 would not be known until they have served their time and have been released into the community. For example a defendant with a parole release date may or may not be released on this particular date as parole can be deferred, not granted or the defendant could end up serving the full imprisonment term. Hence there is no way of knowing when the defendant will be released to parole until it actually happens.

Furthermore, the way in which the Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS) stores sentence length data is complicated and it would require significant improvements in IJIS before accurate sentence served data can be extracted from it. The complication exist, for example, because a person can be found guilty of a number of offences under the actual sentence relating to all of the offences.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics released its Criminal Courts Australia Publication 2008-09 on 12 March 2010.

This publication does not contain information concerning the length of sentences, but indicates that the Northern Territory handed down the highest proportion of actual imprisonment sentences in Australia in all levels of Courts during 2008-09.