

D21/0435006

26 March 2021

Director – Budget Estimates Secretariat
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Director

I write to clarify evidence I gave on 9 March 2021 during the Budget Estimates hearing for the portfolio of Corrections. The following point in regards to the evidence recorded in the Uncorrected Transcript is provided to clarify the statement I made:

- Page 60 –
During questioning on recertification of batons I indicated that baton recertification did not occur according to a specific timeframe which is incorrect. I would like the answer to reflect details of the Corrective Services NSW current baton recertification process. The response which commences at the bottom of page 60 should therefore be:

Baton recertification is to occur every 2 years for custodial ranks up to and including Senior Assistant Superintendents. This comprises of both an online component and a practical component conducted in the workplace.

A copy of the relevant page containing my statement is attached. I request the above information be noted for correction in the final transcript.

Yours sincerely

PETER SEVERIN
COMMISSIONER

Encl

UNCORRECTED

has got a lot of credibility. She attends work places and is there for people to refer matters to. We are further 50 per cent funding a staff member who is seconded to the PSA because a lot of staff have more confidence in dealing with somebody who represents the union than the employer. Again, she is a resource we jointly fund with the PSA to support staff and also to proactively prevent matters from happening.

Last but not least, there is quite a significant effort made to upskill our senior staff in actually more proactively dealing with matters of people having difficulties in the workplace. This comes to the point of getting them back to work earlier. That is not something they are doing on their own. There are obviously some other areas in the department that need to contribute to that. It is quite a package of activity. My strategic focus in that context has been to say that we have gone through a lot of change and a lot of reform. We have had to absorb an enormous increase in prisoner numbers. We built an entirely new system. We went through staffing benchmarking and so on. It is very important now to focus in the strongest of ways on our staff. One last comment—and this again is something that is backed up by evidence, quite stating the obvious—a workplace that is culturally an intact workplace is also one that is far more conducive to achieving better outcomes for offenders in the context of reducing reoffending.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you, Mr Severin. A couple of questions arising from that. You have indicated that psychological claims have increased; what percentage of increase has there been?

Commissioner SEVERIN: Again, I need to take that on notice.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Given the complex nature of mental health injuries, how many injury management staff are employed by the department?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: We are looking at the, in the jargon, the operating model at the moment. We have looked across the department and seen the number of claims that different injury management staff are managing in each division and our managing board will soon get proposals to make some changes there that will have the effect of increasing resourcing for claims management in Corrections.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: That means you will employ more managers?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: We are going to put more people to the work, yes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Training of Corrective officers. A prison officer killed an escaping inmate last year in Lismore Base Hospital. Many prison officers go decades without a recertification, yet are required to conduct this work from time to time. How often are officers recertified on their firearms?

Commissioner SEVERIN: There is no legislative requirement—the same goes for Police—on recertification. However, I have commissioned a project to look at formal recertification because we do retrain people and we obviously do require people to do their shoots on the range, but there is no formal requirement. I would like to formalise that a lot more. Mind you, the staff member in question was very well trained. It is not an issue of lax training standards. Recertification as well as issues relating to be fit for duty are two areas that we are currently focusing on.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: When are you hoping to have that report?

Commissioner SEVERIN: Within the next couple of months, I guess. It is also something we need to consult with the union on, because it will add a requirement. Obviously if somebody cannot meet the requirements of recertification, they will not be able to use a weapon.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: How often are officers recertified on using their batons?

Commissioner SEVERIN: Again, it is not a compulsory recertification. Everybody gets trained. Training programs, certainly for the immediate action teams and our security operations team, are quite intensive and very regular. The officers do not carry batons at work as part of their normal equipment; that is not necessary. Those who use batons as part of their job are regularly trained. Those who do not, obviously do not get trained. That is not to say they were not originally trained or can seek training in the use of batons that we provide for staff.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Finally, recertification on first aid?

Commissioner SEVERIN: First aid?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes.

Commissioner SEVERIN: First aid is mandated for all of us when we have to use our skills for first aid, we need to recertify. I think it is five years, but again, I take the detail of that on notice.

See
letter to
the chair
clarifying
baton
recertification