

**General Purpose Standing Committee No 5
Budget Estimates 2010-2011
Questions on Notice**

Questions relating to the portfolio of Corrective Services
16 September 2010, 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Pages 25-26

The Hon. David Clarke: What is the current number of probation and parole officers in New South Wales?

Mr Phillip Costa: I have some numbers here but I might flick that question to Mr Woodham who will give you the details

Mr Woodham: In Community Corrections there are 1,067.

The Hon. David Clarke: How does that figure compare, for example, with the numbers in 2002?

Mr Woodham: There is a definite increase. I know for a fact that the past two years there have been 170 positions.

The Hon. David Clarke: Would you be able to supply those figures for each year from 2002 to the present time? Would you take that question on notice?

Mr Woodham: Yes. There definitely has been an increase.

The Hon. David Clarke: How many new probation and parole staff have been employed over the past 12 months?

Mr Woodham: We have also had normal recruiting. I will have to take that question on notice and give you those figures. But in the past two years over 160 positions were created over and above our authorised strength at that stage.

The Hon. David Clarke: What has been the staff turnover in the past two years?

Mr Woodham: I would have to take that question on notice. From my knowledge of it, the number is very low.

Answer:

I am advised:

Both the Community Compliance Group (CCG) and Community Offender Support Program (COSP) began operations in 2007/08, and operational staff numbers which include Probation and Parole (P & P) officers have been steadily increasing since then.

The number of Community Corrections staff is contained in the following table.

Year	Operational staff (P&P, CCG & COSP)	Administrative staff	Total Community Corrections staff
2002/2003*			
2003/2004	626	182	808
2004/2005	648	208	856
2005/2006	693	225	918
2006/2007	738	248	986
2007/2008	782	254	1,036
2008/2009	823	267	1,090
2009/2010	811	265	1,076

* Note that in 2002/2003 Human Resources data management systems were upgraded, and figures from 2002/2003 cannot be retrieved.

In September 2010, 42 additional trainee Probation and Parole officers and 31 additional Community Compliance officers completed training at the Brush Farm Corrective Services Academy which will shortly lead to a further increase of 73 operational staff, increasing total Community Corrections staff to 1149.

Over this period, the number of offenders under supervision in the community has remained relatively stable, notwithstanding the increase in total Community Corrections staffing numbers.

In the past two financial years there have been 95 separations with Community Corrections staff.

Page 26

The Hon. David Clarke: When was the last training school?

Mr Woodham: In Community Corrections I think the last one finished two or three weeks ago.

The Hon. David Clarke: How many were in that training school?

Mr Woodham: From memory, I believe 30.

The Hon. David Clarke: When was a training school held before that?

Mr Woodham: I think that one went back to back with the one before.

The Hon. David Clarke: So two were held very quickly?

Mr Woodham: There were more than two. I will have to take that question on notice to get the exact figures.

The Hon. David Clarke: Would you be able to give us the date of each training school that has been held over the past two years and the number in each training school?

Mr Woodham: Yes.

The Hon. David Clarke: And the number of trainees in each training school. You indicated that the last training school was held recently.

Mr Woodham: Yes.

The Hon. David Clarke: Two training schools were held close together. Was there much of a gap between the last two training schools and the training school before that?

Mr Woodham: I do not believe so but I can give you those details.

The Hon. David Clarke: From memory, do you have an idea?

Mr Woodham: I do not think it was long at all. In order to be accurate I would have to take that question on notice.

Answer:

Please refer to the following table:

Date of course	Type of course	Number
July 2008	Probation & Parole Officers	22
September 2008	Probation & Parole Officers	25
9 March- 9 April 2009	Community Compliance Officers	26
1-19 June 2009	Community Compliance Officers	21
22 June – 10 July 2009	Community Compliance Officers	12

1 May 2009	Community Compliance Officers - experienced officers refresher course	14
6-23 October 2009	Community Compliance Officers	7
26 October – 13 November 2009	Community Compliance Officers	16
1-19 February 2010	Community Compliance Officers	17
16 August - 3 September 2010	Community Compliance Officers	16
30 August 17 September 2010	Community Compliance Officers	15
September 2010	Probation & Parole Officers	42

Page 29

The Hon. David Clarke: What did that review cost?

Mr Woodham: I think it cost about \$104,000 from memory.

The Hon. David Clarke: Are you pretty sure of that figure?

Mr Woodham: No, I am not.

The Hon. David Clarke: Do you want to take that on notice and come back to us on that?

Mr Woodham: Yes.

Answer:

I am advised that the final cost figure for the Klok Security Review was \$156,652.65 excluding GST. \$28,359 was incurred during the 2008/2009 financial year, and \$128,293.65 was incurred during the 2009/2010 financial year.

Pages 30-31

The Hon. David Clarke: I am referring particularly to the Community Offender Services Probation and Parole Officer Transfer List

Mr Woodham: Yes, there would. I know that a lot of the time, for those people who are on the transfer list, there has not been a position for them. That could be because a lot of the probation and parole officers are very stable in their employment. Some of them stay in the same location for 30 years, so having a position to transfer them in would be one issue. Another issue – and I know particularly with the correctional officers and it is the same with some of the parole officers – is they go on a transfer list and when you ring them, they do not want to move but would like to stay on the list. We could break that down and give you the detail.

The Hon. David Clarke: Could you take that on notice and get back to us? Could you give us a breakdown according to the number of years they have been on the transfer list and the reasons why they are still there?

Mr Woodham: Yes, and if they still want to go.

The Hon. David Clarke: Yes indeed. Is this list updated or do people request that their names be taken off?

...

The Hon. David Clarke: Some people on this list are complaining that they are not getting any priority for new jobs; there is a lot of discontent. I ask once again: Are you quite sure these concerns have never come to your attention?

Mr Woodham: You are talking now about people going for promotional positions?

The Hon. David Clarke: Yes.

Mr Woodham: They have the right to go like anyone else and if they do not get a job, which some of them do not, as long as it is a fair and competitive selection process – and we have had a review of that right across the board too and we believe that our selection committees and the processes they use are as good as anywhere and quite ethical.

The Hon. David Clarke: So you will be able to give us a comprehensive breakdown on how the system is operating.

Mr Woodham: Yes.

Answer:

On 30 June 2010, there were 169 staff on the Probation and Parole Officers Transfer List. Of those:

- 25 had been on the list less than 1 year;
- 39 had been on the list between 1 year and 2 years;
- 43 had been on the list between 2 years and 3 years;
- 24 had been on the list between 3 years and 4 years;
- 31 had been on the list between 4 years and 5 years; and
- 7 had been on the list more than 5 years.

Page 33

Mr David Shoebridge: Can you give the staff to inmate ratios at Parklea for the last 12 months?

Mr Woodham: Yes.

Mr David Shoebridge: Can you do that now, or will you take that on notice?

Mr Woodham: No, I will get it for you. By the way, one of our best superintendents now runs Parklea for the private operator and he knows exactly what staffing levels are required.

Mr David Shoebridge: Can you give the figures for ordinary day-time working, for the weekend shifts, and for the night shifts? ... Can you give answers for all those categories?

Mr Woodham: We can get them for you, yes.

Mr David Shoebridge: When you are giving those figures on notice in relation to the actual numbers that have been at Parklea for the past 12 months, would you also give what the equivalent numbers would be if the facility was being operated by Corrective Services?

Mr Woodham: Yes.

Mr David Shoebridge: If there is any discrepancy between the two, could you take some efforts to explain the discrepancy?

Mr Woodham: Yes, but there would not be a discrepancy. We are quite happy with the way Parklea is running.

Answer:

I have been informed that since the hearing, the Commissioner has been advised that as part of the tender process for the contracting out of Parklea Correctional Centre, The GEO Group Australia Pty Ltd (GEO), which was the successful tenderer,

objected to the release of the Staff Deployment Plan under the then *Freedom of Information Act 1989*. The basis of this objection included:

- public safety and security;
- the intellectual property held by GEO in the information;
- that the development of the information involved a unique work method developed by GEO, therefore disclosure would result in a substantial commercial disadvantage to GEO; and
- the information is of commercial value to competitors of GEO and the release of this information would place GEO at a commercial disadvantage.

I am further advised that Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) accepted the argument that public access to the details of the Staff Deployment Plan could reasonably be expected to affect public safety or security. Further, that CSNSW agreed that GEO has intellectual property in the Staff Deployment Plan and that disclosure of this information would place GEO at a substantial commercial disadvantage in relation to other contractors or potential contractors in the future.

Accordingly, CSNSW agreed that the Staff Deployment Plan developed by GEO should not be disclosed.

Page 35

Mr David Shoebridge: In your answers to Ms Hale on 6 July, you failed to divulge the staffing numbers at Parklea gaol, which is now run by GEO Group. Will you undertake to provide the levels of staffing on notice.

Mr Woodham: Yes. We have no concerns about it.

Answer:

I refer to the answer provided earlier in the transcript.

Page 36

Mr David Shoebridge: So you can check on the prisoners, you agree, without having to open the cells?

Mr Woodham: Yes, if they call for it.

Mr David Shoebridge: How often are those checks done on a nightly basis of each individual cell at Parklea? Do you know?

Mr Woodham: I would imagine the same as anywhere else. I could not tell you exactly how many are done at Goulburn tonight. It could be different tomorrow night because something has happened, but we can get that on notice for you.

Mr David Shoebridge: How many hours are prisoners locked in their cells on average at Parklea on a weekly basis?

Mr Woodham: On a daily basis?

Mr David Shoebridge: On a daily basis or a weekly basis?

Mr Woodham: I believe they are out for about seven and a half hours a day, which is equal to other maximum security gaols.

Mr David Shoebridge: Could you provide the exact answer on notice and could you provide the equivalent hours in equivalent -

Mr Woodham: I am telling you, it is the same right across the board, but I will get you the exact detail.

Answer:

The Operations Manager at Parklea Correctional Centre has advised Corrective Services that the average time out of cell hours for 2009-2010 was 7 hours and 35 minutes.

Page 37-38

Mr David Shoebridge: Commissioner, how many prisoners do you know have died at Parklea prison since privatisation?

Mr Woodham: We are saying three there.

Mr David Shoebridge: Since privatisation?

Mr Woodham: There were three in the 2009-10 financial year, but there may have been some before.

Mr David Shoebridge: The question is about deaths since privatisation, so we can be clear on it.

Mr Schipp: We do not have that detail.

Mr Woodham: We will get that.

Mr Woodham: I have just been told by Mr Kelly behind me, who has carriage of keeping an eye on Parklea as well as being the monitor at the most senior level, that there have been two deaths in Parklea since privatisation.

Mr David Shoebridge: And neither of those were from natural causes?

Mr Woodham: I cannot tell you that.

Mr David Shoebridge: Could you take it on notice?

Mr Woodham: Yes.

Mr David Shoebridge: Were they found hanging?

Mr Woodham: One was, that I can recall. They may have both. I will get back to you.

Answer:

I am advised that the most recent deaths in custody at Parklea Correctional Centre have occurred on 10 July 2009 and 12 October 2009 (under Corrective Services NSW operation) and on 30 June 2010 and 23 July 2010 (under GEO Australia operation).

All four deaths are open investigations with the Coroner.

Page 37

Mr David Shoebridge: Commissioner, can you give the rate of deaths per 100 prisoners in public and private gaols? Can you take that on notice?

Mr Woodham: Yes.

Answer:

The Committee is referred to the following table of deaths by apparent unnatural causes in New South Wales (rate per 100 inmates per year).

Management	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Publicly operated facilities	0.06	0.09	0.05	0.04	0.05
Privately operated facilities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08
Total – all facilities	0.05	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.06

Page 38

The Hon. David Clarke: Commissioner, earlier I asked you questions about the number of probation and parole officers in New South Wales, and you used the expression “community corrections officers or staff.” Does the description “community corrections officers or staff” include officers other than probation and parole officers? Is it a descriptive term for more than just probation and parole officers?

Mr Woodham: It also includes the Community Compliance Group, and the bulk of those officers are probation and parole officers.

The Hon. David Clarke: I am sorry, I am a little confused.

Mr Woodham: They are trained probation and parole officers.

The Hon. David Clarke: The figures that you gave me were purely for probation and parole officers?

Mr Woodham: Community Corrections, which we call it now. There are different aspects of Community Corrections. There are also Community Offender Services Program Centres in Community Corrections, where we have our own accommodation and that is all part of what we call Community Corrections. Most of those people in the Community Compliance Group are trained probation and parole officers.

The Hon. David Clarke: When you say “most of” them, how many in those figures that you gave me earlier, when I understood you were referring to probation and parole officers, include other officers who are not probation and parole officers?

Mr Woodham: I am just telling you that it is probably about 150 or 160 in the Community Compliance Group, and the bulk of those people are trained probation and parole officers. I will get the exact figure for you.

The Hon. David Clarke: So you say the bulk of them are, but not all of them. If you could get those figures -

Mr Woodham: No, some of them are brought in from the outside and recruited regionally and some are prison officers.

The Hon. David Clarke: Will you give us a breakdown of that?

Mr Woodham: It is nearly the same training. Probation and parole officers and corrections officers have virtually the same training, with the exception of weapons and the use of force.

The Hon. David Clarke: If you could take that on notice and give me the breakdown of that, I would be most grateful.

Answer:

I refer to the answers provided earlier in the transcript.

Page 39

The Hon. David Clarke: Have there been any changes in the hierarchy of Probation and Parole since you assumed the position of Commissioner in 2002?

Mr Woodham: Yes, many.

The Hon. David Clarke: Do you want to take on notice what those changes are and come back to us?

Mr Woodham: No.

The Hon. David Clarke: Will you provide details of the changes to the hierarchy at Probation and Parole?

Answer:

The Committee is referred to the answer provided during the hearing by the Commissioner.

Page 44

Mr Grant: There are many people who are acutely mentally ill, including people who are unfit to plead and those who are not guilty on the grounds of mental illness. They are diverted into the forensic patient category. There are two locations currently where they are managed: Long Bay Prison Hospital and the new Forensic Hospital at Long Bay. One pathway is into a higher level of acute care. The second one is actually suggesting the person does not require the acute level of care and can be managed in another environment.

Mr David Shoebridge: It is that second level that is the screening level that we are talking about?

Mr Grant: The screening level is just a processing area when people come into custody. Ideally it is a short turnaround area. They move on from that or they move up from that.

Mr David Shoebridge: Some of them will go into those intensive mental health correctional facilities.

Mr Grant: One of them is a correctional facility, one of them is a NSW Health facility.

Mr David Shoebridge: Some of them will just go into the general prison population, is that right?

Mr Grant: That is right.

Mr Woodham: And they can be managed quite well.

Mr David Shoebridge: Some of them will go of to some other community diversion, is that right?

Mr Grant: If that is appropriate, that is right.

...

Mr David Shoebridge: Do you have statistics of the number of people who have come through those screening facilities in the past 12 months in terms of where they were diverted?

Mr Woodham: Yes.

Mr David Shoebridge: Will you provide those on notice?

Mr Woodham: Yes.

Answer:

From 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010, 14,750 fresh reception inmates were screened by Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) and Justice Health for mental health and/or self harm issues. Of this number, 3,085 had a mental health "alert" or self-harm "alert" created on the CSNSW Offender Integrated Management System. A further 3,723 were identified as having previously received mental health treatment or medication and/or having committed prior self harm attempts, but were not experiencing acute symptoms at the time of reception.

Of inmates with *any* alert identified in this process, 413 were transferred to Long Bay (Correctional) Hospital, 348 were transferred to accommodation in a Mental Health Screening Unit, 77 were transferred to an Acute Crisis Management Unit, and 445 were housed in an observation cell.

Of the inmates with a *mental health* alert only, 7 were transferred to Long Bay (Correctional) Hospital Psychiatric Unit, 103 were transferred to a Mental Health Screening Unit, 5 were transferred to an Acute Crisis Management Unit, and 44 were transferred to an observation cell.

The remaining 7,942 reception inmates were screened and assessed as not requiring mental health intervention and had no previous mental health treatment or medication and/or prior self-harm attempts.