

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE No. 3

Friday 17 November 2006

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

JUSTICE, JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Committee met at 11.30 a.m.

MEMBERS

The Hon. A. R. Fazio (Chair)

The Hon. D. Clarke
The Hon. C. E. Cusack

The Hon. P. G. Sharpe
The Hon. I. W. West

PRESENT

Department of Corrective Services

Mr L. Grant, *Assistant Commissioner*

Mr G. Schipp, *Deputy Commissioner, Corporate Services*

Mr D. Rodgers, *Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Offender Management and Operations*

Ms V. J. Ruisis, *Regional Executive Director, Outer Metropolitan Region*

Department of Juvenile Justice

Ms J. Mason, *Director General*

Mr P. Muir, *Assistant Director General (Operations)*

Ms S. Cross, *Assistant Director General (Management and Services)*

CHAIR: I declare this hearing opened to the public. I welcome the witnesses to this hearing, at which the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure portfolios of Justice and Juvenile Justice. The Committee has resolved to deal first with the Justice portfolio and then with Juvenile Justice. Before we commence I wish to make some comments about procedural matters. In accordance with the Legislative Council's guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings, only Committee members and witnesses may be filmed or recorded. People in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photographs. In reporting the proceedings of this Committee you must take responsibility for what you publish or what interpretation you place upon anything that is said before the Committee. The guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available from the Committee clerks.

Any messages from attendees in the public gallery should be delivered through the Committee clerks. Witnesses are reminded that they are free to pass notes and refer directly to their advisers while at the table. I remind everyone that mobile phones must be turned off. The committee must report on its budget estimates in a very short timeframe. The return date for questions on notice, which will be confirmed after the meeting, at this stage is proposed to be 12 noon on Wednesday 22 November. The short timeframe is necessary due to the Committee's reporting deadline of 23 November. Given this short timeframe, I would ask witnesses to answer as many questions as possible during the hearing, rather than taking them on notice. Do you anticipate that that would pose any difficulties?

Ms RUSIS: It depends on the question.

CHAIR: That is understandable. Mr Grant, Ms Ruis and Mr Schipp, I remind you that you are giving evidence on your former oath or affirmation. I declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of Justice and Juvenile Justice open for examination.

DONALD PATRICK RODGERS, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Offender Management and Operations, Department of Corrective Services, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: Would anyone like to make a brief opening statement?

Mr GRANT: No, thank you.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Mr Grant, I see we do not have Commissioner Woodham here today.

Mr GRANT: That is correct.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Where is he?

Mr GRANT: Mr Woodham is on sick leave at the moment.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: For how long has he been on sick leave?

Mr GRANT: He commenced sick leave when he was on recreation leave. His recreation leave commenced on 10 July 2006.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: When did the recreation leave finish?

Mr GRANT: I do not have that information before me. I recall it was a couple of weeks after the recreation leave commenced.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: He was on recreation leave for approximately two weeks, is that correct?

Mr GRANT: That is correct.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Would you take that on notice, to confirm that?

Mr GRANT: I will.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Since about 24 July Commissioner Woodham has been on sick leave, is that correct?

Mr GRANT: That is correct.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Can you tell me how many days he has worked this year?

Mr GRANT: I am sorry, I have not brought that information with me.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Would you take that on notice?

Mr GRANT: I will.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: He certainly has not worked since 10 July?

Mr GRANT: That is correct.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: The Minister recently told this Committee that the commissioner had been re-signed to a new five-year contract. What sort of government medical checks were conducted in the public interest ahead of his being re-signed?

Mr GRANT: I am not aware of any checks that would have been conducted, so I cannot tell you at this stage.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: You are not even aware whether he had a medical check at all?

Mr GRANT: That is not the usual process, as far as I understand. I am unaware of any process like that occurring.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: You do not have a process whereby staff and officials of the department have a medical check before they are signed to, for example, five-year contracts?

Mr GRANT: No, we do not.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: You do not have that at all?

Mr GRANT: Not if they are current employees. When people commence employment with the organisation, a medical test is done. Mr Woodham has been working in the department for almost 40 years, and during that time he has taken very little sick leave as I understand it. He is a very committed person who has served the community very well during that time, and he is entitled, like all members of the public service, to take sick leave if he is sick.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: How much sick leave does he have left?

Mr GRANT: I am sorry, I do not know the answer to that.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Would you take that on notice?

Mr GRANT: I am not sure that that is a question that is suitable to this forum, in relation to the number of sick leave days. I might have to take advice as to whether that is an invasion of his privacy.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: You will take that on notice, subject to advice you might obtain?

Mr GRANT: Yes.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: There has been an extensive HealthQuest campaign within Corrective Services in the last 12 months. That is correct, is it not?

Mr GRANT: I would not describe it as an extensive HealthQuest campaign. We certainly do use the services of HealthQuest to determine the fitness of people who may be unable to return to work.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Has there been a campaign at all?

Mr GRANT: I would not describe it as a campaign. I would say it is an appropriate process that is put in place when we have regard to someone's ability to continue to work due to a medical or psychiatric problem.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Has that included the commissioner, given his apparent health problems?

Mr GRANT: No, it has not. It would only apply in circumstances where we believe that someone is unable or unfit to perform their duties based on medical information.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Could that apply to someone who has not been able to work for the past four months, for instance?

Mr GRANT: There is no specific ruling on that, as far as I am aware. So I would say not.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: How much time would a person have to have off on sick leave before you would feel it appropriate that they be referred to HealthQuest?

Mr GRANT: Each case would be taken on its merits. I think it would depend very much on the circumstances of the sick leave, and consideration would be given to the likelihood of the person making a recovery and the prospective timeframe for that recovery.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: You have gone into those details in relation to the commissioner, have you, or HealthQuest has?

Mr GRANT: No. The department makes specific referral to HealthQuest under circumstances where it has sufficient concern to believe that a person may be unable to return to work. We have no such concerns with regard to the commissioner. We expect him to return to work and take up his duties.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: But he has been off for the past four months?

Mr GRANT: That is correct.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: And you are going to get advice on how much time he has had off previous to that time over the past twelve months?

Mr GRANT: I certainly will.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Are you aware he has been off for other periods during that 12-month period?

Mr GRANT: I cannot recall, I am sorry.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: You cannot recall whether he has been off at all?

Mr GRANT: I cannot.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: But you will get that information. You do not consider someone being off for the past four months as something that should be drawn to the attention of HealthQuest?

Mr GRANT: As I said, each case is taken on its merits. In the case of Mr Woodham we have every expectation that he will recover and return to the workplace. Under those circumstances it would be a waste of government resources to make such a referral.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Did you make that decision yourself?

Mr GRANT: It has not been a consideration.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: It has not even being considered? You have not considered whether it is necessary for him to be referred to HealthQuest or not?

Mr GRANT: As I mentioned, we only consider HealthQuest when we are of the view that someone was unlikely to return to work or that their fitness to return to work was called into question.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: What things have you taken into account to make the decision that it is not necessary for him to be referred to HealthQuest?

Mr GRANT: I think the question asking me for that information is probably misplaced. The Minister has approved the commissioner's leave.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: That was going to be my question: who approves sick leave for the commissioner, and the answer to that is clearly the Minister.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The approval for that sick leave I guess is lodged with the department, is that correct? The sick leave form returns to the department?

Mr GRANT: I might ask Mr Schipp to answer that question.

Mr SCHIPP: It does, yes.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: So, those sick leave forms are on file now in relation to Mr Woodham?

Mr SCHIPP: Yes—if not a form certainly a submission to the Minister seeking that leave.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Has the leave been approved by the Minister?

Mr SCHIPP: Yes.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: When was that leave approved?

Mr SCHIPP: There has been a number of approvals. The most recent one was approved about three weeks ago for a period up to 4 December.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: One will be required?

Mr SCHIPP: Either that or the commissioner will return to duty. But at this stage the advice is that the commissioner will be returning to duty on 4 December.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: On what date was the first sick leave approved?

Mr SCHIPP: Given that the recreation leave was approved—and the Minister approves for the Commissioner, not just sick leave but recreation leave as well—given that the first period of leave I think commenced on 10 July as recreation leave, that was approved prior to the commissioner taking leave. And then, as Mr Grant said earlier on, the commissioner fell ill whilst on recreation leave and that form, I would imagine, somewhere around 23 or 24 July would have been approved as sick leave by the Minister.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: In terms of any request for HealthQuest to investigate the illness, that would need to come from the Minister, is that right?

Mr SCHIPP: It may come from a number of sources. If there was a concern about a person's fitness to continue work it may come from the individual themselves or it may come from the individual's supervisor. As Mr Grant said, each case would be taken on its merits.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: In the case of Mr Woodham, is his supervisor the Minister or is it the Director General of the Premier's Department?

Mr SCHIPP: It is the Minister.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: So, it is not a matter for the Director General of the Premier's Department as head of the Chief Executive Service to investigate excessive sick leave, or what may present itself as being potentially excessive sick leave?

Mr SCHIPP: I cannot comment as to whether the Director General of the Premier's Department has an ability to investigate excessive sick leave within either the CES or the SES ranks. That would probably be something you would have to address to the Premier's Department. But certainly the CEO of the department is employed under the Public Sector Management Act and is accountable to and reports to the Minister.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: We have asked a lot of questions and I think the reason is probably clear: we are concerned that a person who is clearly unwell and unable to complete a contract may have been offered a five-year contract where there could have been good reason to think he cannot complete that and we are just trying to ascertain what procedures are in place to protect against that scenario occurring.

Mr SCHIPP: The contract does provide for an officer to take sick leave and the employment conditions under the Public Sector Management Act and regulations do provide for people to take both sick leave on an annual basis but also in circumstances where there are serious illnesses or illnesses that have a prolonged debilitation period that accumulated sick leave can be accessed.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: If, hypothetically, a person knows that they have a terminal illness, is there anything to prevent them from entering into a contract that they know they will not be able to complete? Are there any safeguards against that occurring?

Mr SCHIPP: Not that I am aware of, but perhaps that would need to be addressed to the Premier's Department in terms of what the conditions of appointment are.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Are there any industrial disputes going on at the moment at Long Bay?

Mr GRANT: There are. There is an industrial dispute on today.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: That started today, did it?

Mr GRANT: That is correct.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Does that involve all the staff at Long Bay?

Mr GRANT: That is correct, the custodial staff. As you are aware, there are a number of staff sub-branches of the PSA who operate in various positions in the Department of Corrective Services. One of those is the Prison Officers Vocational Branch [POVB]. The Prison Officers Vocational Branch have withdrawn their services today at Long Bay. However, there are protocols in place whereby certain members of that branch are on standby to deal with security issues, notwithstanding the fact that they are members of the POVB. The COVB are working today and the non-custodial staff are working today. So, it does not extend beyond the Prison Officers Vocational Branch.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: How many staff are not working today?

Mr GRANT: I would have to take that question on notice. I could not tell you the exact number.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Have you got an approximate idea of what percentage of staff is not working? You would have an idea on that surely?

Mr GRANT: I might ask Mr Rodgers to answer that.

Mr RODGERS: All the non-commissioned officers would not be working today. Those of the officers at executive officer rank and below would be part of the industrial action, apart from the emergency unit staff who provide a response service from their building, but they do not participate in any front-line duties other than to respond to emergencies.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Approximately how many people fall into that category?

Mr RODGERS: About 20 officers in the emergency unit structure.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What arrangements are in place at the prison to deal with that?

Mr RODGERS: At the prison at the moment we are assembling our executive officers from other locations and they will respond to that location and provide basic services to the inmates.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: What is the dispute about?

Mr GRANT: The dispute is about a disciplinary action taken against one of the members of POVB in relation to an episode of misconduct.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: An episode of misconduct of another member of the staff?

Mr GRANT: That is right. A prison officer has engaged in misconduct and the prison officer has been suspended from duty and has had their pay withdrawn during the period of suspension. The Prison Officers Vocational Branch are seeking to have the pay reinstated for that member.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: When was the last industrial dispute that you had out at Long Bay before this latest dispute?

Mr GRANT: I would have to take that on notice, unless Mr Rodgers knows the date of it.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Approximately how long ago was that?

Mr GRANT: We have regular industrial discussions and liaisons where we might be in dispute over issues. Are you talking about strikes?

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Yes.

Mr GRANT: I would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Can you recall if there been anything in the past two months?

Mr GRANT: I do not think so, no.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Three months?

Mr GRANT: I do not think so, no.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Can you try and apply your mind to remember when the last dispute involving members going on strike occurred?

Mr GRANT: I would hate to mislead the Committee and speculate on that. I would prefer to give you that answer.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: If you could take that on notice. Mr Schipp, you were recently on a three-person panel for the selection of two new assistant commissioners, is that right?

Mr SCHIPP: That is correct.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Who were the other members of that panel?

Mr SCHIPP: Ian McLean as acting commissioner and Frances Howard as an independent female.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Who were the two people recommended for the positions at that panel hearing?

Mr SCHIPP: Mr Peter Peters was recommended for the position of Assistant Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner, and Mr Mike Woodhouse was the recommended candidate for the position of Assistant Commissioner, Probity and Staff Development.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Was there any dissension among panel members about the selection of the people to fill those positions?

Mr SCHIPP: No, there was not.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: It was a unanimous decision, was it?

Mr SCHIPP: It was a unanimous decision.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Was there later substituting of one, if not both, of the names after intervention from higher up the ladder at corrective services?

Mr SCHIPP: No.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: So you stayed with the same two names from the very beginning and there were no changes?

Mr SCHIPP: When you say "the same two names" do you mean the same two names of the recommended candidates?

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Yes?

Mr SCHIPP: No. There was no intervention.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: So the two names agreed to by the panel at the time of the sitting were Mike Woodhouse and Peter Peters?

Mr SCHIPP: That is correct.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Was there any intervention by Commissioner Woodham in the selection of those two people for the role of assistant commissioner?

Mr SCHIPP: None to my knowledge.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Well, not to your knowledge, so that it is a possibility that there could have been?

Mr SCHIPP: I am not aware of any and I would find that highly unusual.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Were you called back to Sydney early from Junee during what was to have been an inspection of the gaol there?

Mr SCHIPP: Was I called back?

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Back to Sydney early?

Mr SCHIPP: Can you tell me, perhaps, when? I have been to Junee I think twice in the last 12 months, once a couple of weeks ago.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Yes. In the past 12 months have you been called back early from Junee?

Mr SCHIPP: No.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Not at any time in the past 12 months?

Mr SCHIPP: No.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Did you not have to come back early because of matters relating to the selection for the two assistant commissioner positions?

Mr SCHIPP: No.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Does that ring a bell?

Mr SCHIPP: No.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Are you quite sure of that?

Mr SCHIPP: No. Sorry, I am quite sure that the answer is "no". The trip that I took to Junee a couple of weeks ago, if not last week—I cannot remember the exact date—was planned, in terms of the itinerary. There was no calling back early or any amendment to the itinerary that was established to do that.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: There may not have been a calling back early, but did you come back early?

Mr SCHIPP: No. I came back on the flight that I was booked on. As I said, the itinerary was laid out. I cannot think of any reason why I might have—

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Thank you. Up until Mr Woodhouse's appointment as assistant commissioner, was his previous title Executive Director, Probity and Performance Management Division?

Mr SCHIPP: Yes.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: If that is the case, how is it that Mr Woodhouse is based in Montagu Street, Goulburn, when the position publicly advertised, and which he secured, was clearly to be based in Sydney?

Mr SCHIPP: I am sorry. Can you repeat the question?

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Yes, I am happy to do that. If that is the case, how is it that Mr Woodhouse is based in Montagu Street, Goulburn, when the position publicly advertised, and which he secured, was clearly to be based in Sydney?

Mr SCHIPP: I am not aware that the advertisement or the job itself indicates that it is to be based in Sydney. There are a number of positions, assistant commissioner positions, that are based in non-metropolitan or non-head office locations. One of those is the former Executive Director, Probity and Performance, and the Audit Branch that is attached to that division is similarly located in Goulburn, along with the Probity Branch of that division. The transfer of those positions was announced by the Government some time ago and the positions were transferred down to Goulburn. I would have to check on what you indicate is the requirement of the advertisement or the job itself to confirm whether it does report, or is required to be located in Sydney.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: So you are not really aware whether it specifies location in Sydney or not?

Mr SCHIPP: No, I am not aware whether the position description actually requires that. It may say that the position operates out of corporate office. Certainly there is an office for Mr Woodhouse to work out of within the corporate office in Sydney.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: If it did specify that one was to be based in Sydney, would it be unusual, in your view, that he was given the position?

Mr SCHIPP: No, I would not consider that unusual. I mean, the position may actually require the officer to travel extensively throughout the State. And apart from visiting each of the facilities that the organisation has around the State, there is also a major facility at Eastwood, which is our Corrective Services Academy, and the Corrective Services Academy is a major part of the portfolio administered by the Assistant Commissioner, Probity and Staff Development. It may be that the position works, on a number of occasions, out of the facility at Goulburn for the probity and the audit aspects of the division.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Coming in on that, if Mr Woodhouse's office was in Goulburn but the position is based in Sydney, he would keep travel logs, would he not?

Mr SCHIPP: Certainly. Mr Woodhouse has a motor vehicle, for example, as part of his salary package—

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: I am sorry. You misunderstood me. I am talking about travel logs.

Mr SCHIPP: The majority of his travel would be done by motor vehicle, and the point I was leading to was that any business travel that Mr Woodhouse is required to undertake—be it travelling between offices, or indeed from home to office—is required to be logged as a part of that process of logging the mileage of the motor vehicle.

CHAIR: The time for Opposition questioning has expired. We will now go to Ms Lee Rhiannon.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Thank you. Mr Grant, firstly, it is there a policy on visiting arrangements for prisoners and, if so, could you give the Committee a brief rundown on it, please?

Mr GRANT: You are asking for a general statewide policy in relation to visitors?

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Yes.

Mr GRANT: Yes. There are a number of policies that relates to visits. There are a number of procedures. The department's Operations Procedures Manual has a section that relates to visit where it describes the processes and so on that are to be carried out in relation to visits.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I am sorry to interrupt, but I am also interested in the benefits. Is there an overarching mission statement or something, a sort of philosophical approach to visits?

Mr GRANT: Absolutely. The Department is strongly of the view that maintaining contact with families is a very appropriate activity. We believe that people who maintain contact with their families are less likely to reoffend than people who do not. And we recognise that the types of relationships that people have with their families are very, very important, particularly relationships with children. People, when they come into custody, are dislocated from their families and from their social support network. One of the challenges for people when they return to the community after they have been in custody is to get those relationships operating again and, therefore, the visits process is a very, very important part of that.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I want to go back to some of the questions about Emu Plains that we discussed at the last estimates hearing. At that time I asked a question, and Mr Kelly referred it to Mr McLean, about inmate visits. We had a discussion about that in which he explained the changed regime. Subsequently, you and I met with Ms Neil about that issue. I had raised concerns that I thought that Mr McLean had misled the inquiry—that was the hearing on 28 August. The essence of what he was saying was that the inmates had been involved in this, and I was left with the impression that they really had even requested it and had agreed with the change.

Mr GRANT: If I can just clarify that. Two issues were being discussed at the same time. One of them related to the issue of telephone calls and decisions that were taken to reduce the amount of time that an inmate could make a telephone call, and also to increase the amount of time between telephone calls—it is an automated system. That activity and that aspect was something that was initiated by the Inmate Development Committee. In relation to the other matter, I believe what Mr McLean was suggesting, and it may have been misconstrued or the language may not have made it clear, was that inmates were certainly informed about the process through the appropriate mechanism, which is through discussions with the Inmate Development Committee. But I might ask Valda Ruis to elaborate.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So that it is clear for all of us, could I just go to the transcript? Mr Grant and Ms Neil had told me that before. They said that he had not misled us; that he was talking about the telephone privileges. However, when I look at the transcript the issue of telephones was only mentioned once. And then we get down to, say, a hundred words later and within those 100 words Mr McLean is speaking all about visits. The arrangements with telephones is, quite seriously, not

mentioned. He said, "This was discussed with the inmate development committee." The "this" in that sentence must be interpreted—

Mr GRANT: There is no argument about that. I am sorry for interrupting you but it was discussed with the inmate development committee.

Ms RUSIS: I will just give you a quick chronology so that we can be clear on what happened. I have verified this with the general manager of the gaol. In late April the general manager of the gaol approached the assistant commissioner about proposed changes for an agreement in principle. It was then discussed informally with the women at Emu Plains in the last week of April. On 8 May formal notices were placed in Emu Plains on 8 May explaining the proposed changes to the visits. That was two days prior to the inmate development committee meeting held on 10 May. It is minuted that the proposed changes, which were up for discussion at that stage, were discussed on 10 May. Does that clarify the chronology?

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Certainly, you have said so for the moment I accept that, although it is different from the information. That is different from what Mr Grant and Ms Neil told me. When we had our meeting you said, "Mr McLean hasn't misled the committee." When he provided the information that this was discussed with the inmate development committee he was not referring to the visits; he was referring to phone privileges.

Mr GRANT: Because I am so confident about what we said at the time, I misunderstood what you thought was misleading. I thought what you believed was misleading was the fact that the inmates had invited this change to their visits. I was trying to clarify that the inmates invited the changes to telephone conversations. In relation to the visits, they did not invite the change. However, they were informed about the changes through the inmate development committee process. I think I misunderstood what you were disputing as misleading. I thought you were suggesting that the misleading related to the process whereby inmates initiated a change, as opposed to the fact that Mr McLean had consistently said that inmates were informed about the change prior to any of the change taking place.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: The goalposts have shifted a bit. At the same meeting Mr McLean said, "No objections were raised by the IDC or any inmates prior to the implementation of split visits." Are you still sticking by that, because that is what has been disputed?

Mr GRANT: That is our understanding. I know there has been a lot of information about this, including what I have described as misinformation from certain parties that indicated that letters had been written to the general manager of the centre and had not been responded to. We have quizzed the general manager about this on several occasions and been told there were no letters. We are an organisation that attempts to be transparent, and we respond to letters from the community. We did not receive such letters. To follow that on, because of this concern, I believe we have been very open to this. We established a mechanism to find out what people thought about it after the fact because of the perception that people had been forced into this arrangement and there were concerns about it. In the first instance we established a survey.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: When you said "forced into the arrangement" I think you have just acknowledged that the arrangement was changed and that the inmates did not agree to it. It is just that they were informed of it. Informed is not getting their agreement.

Mr GRANT: I did not say that. I said the perception that they had been forced into it. I am not suggesting that there was an attempt by the general manager to get the inmates' agreement. What we have said all along is that there were discussions with them and they were informed about it. They did not initiate it; they may not have asked for it. I do not believe that the minutes of the meeting, which I do not have in front of me, reflect that there was widespread dissent about it. Following that event, dispute numerous opportunities through the formal mechanisms, including access to official visitors and access to the Ombudsman's office and other legitimate channels of complaint, the Corrective Services support line and so on, we are not aware of any process. We established a survey, which we said we would do. During the time that the survey was made available there were hundreds of visitors through the centre—1,075 visitors—and only 16 of them decided to respond to the questionnaire, which gave them an opportunity to have an input. They were also asked whether they

wanted to participate in a committee that would have regard to the way visits operate. We thought that was a reasonable approach, and it was something that the external parties had lobbied for. We invited people to that. Only one person from the visiting community has suggested that they want to participate.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: From the visiting community?

Mr GRANT: That is right, yes.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: With all due respect, I think you know that for many visitors their life is pretty tough. I think you trying to hold that against them is not fair.

Mr GRANT: I am not holding it against them. The point I was making was that I believe widespread concern about this has been represented by certain groups, but we are not aware of it. We do not have the body of correspondence. We set up a mechanism for people to make such complaints and we have not received the complaints. In fact, I think the general level of satisfaction amongst the people who did respond—usually that sort of survey polarises people who have antagonistic views, the ones who think we are doing the right thing and no-one is doing the wrong thing—was generally positive about the visits.

Ms RUSIS: The problem we have is that with the surveys that were completed the most common complaint was the length of time for processing of visits, which is a legitimate complaint that we take seriously. We do not want people coming and waiting for hours. In a way, what we are trying to do is to have a more orderly way of visits so that people are not being held there for a long time awaiting processing.

Mr GRANT: If I can just add another detail that may not have been clear at the time. I did mention it. I will be speaking to the general manager again during the week to confirm that it is her intention to reinstate all-day visits for children of women in custody. I think there will be a maximum—

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So she will reinstate that?

Ms RUSIS: Yes, and it will be during the week.

Mr GRANT: There is a mid-week visit especially for children and mothers.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Are you saying only on weekdays, not on weekends?

Ms RUSIS: For children who are at school, obviously they can have them on school holidays. We are open to suggestions for school aged children. For non-school aged children, it will be on a weekly basis. We also need the co-operation of DOCS. As you would be aware, some of the children are under DOCS care so we have to have the supervision of DOCS there, too. It will be all-day visits with lunch provided specifically for children. One of our concerns is that the number of visits at Emu Plains can vary. An abnormally low number could be 30 visits, and a high number could be 180 on the same day. We do not know how many are coming, so you can imagine that that causes problems, too. That is also not a great environment for children if there are a lot of people there and they are waiting a long time to be processed. The all-day visits will be an attempt to have quick processing all day with only children there. I do not know if you have been to visits on weekends but they can be fairly—

Ms LEE RHIANNON: Hectic.

Ms RUSIS: Yes. It can be quite chaotic. We will do that; that will happen. Another thing that has happened since we met last time at the estimates hearing was the chair of the women's advisory council, Janine Penrose-Wall, met with Ken Middlebrook, who is the assistant commissioner of the outer metro region, and with Janet Rucroft to discuss different possibilities. I was not at that meeting but I understand it went quite well. One of the outcomes has been the reintroduction of all-day visits mid-week for children.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: That sounds good. It sounds like you have gone back to the previous regime for prisoners who have children, because you now have all-day visits. The big dispute was that you had ended all-day visits.

Mr GRANT: On the weekends.

Ms RUSIS: Lunch was one of the issues. Most visitors who come in on the weekends do not have children. It is very hard to quantify it, and I have been trying to get some actual figures of how many. Anecdotally, I have been told that fewer than half have children. It is probably more like a quarter, but it will vary from week to week. The all-day visits for the children was always the issue because of the non-availability of lunch, and we have gone through with that.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I thought Rotary provided lunch except on some long weekends.

Ms RUSIS: Mr Grant might have more information. My information was that it was not always reliable, and safety concerns about the way the food was prepared had been raised. That might sound overly bureaucratic but that is just a reality.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: That is fair enough.

Ms RUSIS: There were problems with that.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So you are providing the lunch now?

Ms RUSIS: Yes, for the all-day visits because we know how many will be there. The children will be there and we will provide a healthy lunch for them. It is in a much more controlled setting and it is less chaotic than the weekends.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I have a question about processing. I heard that when you changed to the new regime it also involved a new booking system that the staff were refusing to do. Is that still the case, or have you gone back effectively to the old regime? When children are involved do they have to book?

Ms RUSIS: My understanding is there is currently an intention to introduce the booked visits on the weekends. We have a standard set, I think from memory, that everybody will be processed within 15 minutes, so it would stop people outside waiting for a long time. For the midweek visits we need an indication of people who are coming with children. It would not be unreasonable for those to be booked because we would need to know a minimum for catering reasons. I do not think that is unreasonable. For the weekend visits the proposal is to introduce booked visits, which is very commonplace in most gaols, the reason being a response to the time of processing. It is always a juggling act for us too, because there are issues of contraband and people not having proper identification and all of that. So the whole idea of the booked visits is to accelerate that process.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So, are the staff now doing that?

Ms RUSIS: They have not started as yet, no. The booked visits have not started yet.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: But is it the case that the staff said that they would not do bookings?

Ms RUSIS: I honestly do not know.

Mr GRANT: It is not so much that they would not do it. It is whether they were resourced to do it, or whether it should be a custodial or non-custodial function. Those issues are currently being negotiated. That is probably the reason it has not commenced.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: So, there was a refusal for those reasons, that it just needed to be better resourced?

Mr GRANT: I am not sure it reached the point where it was refused. I think it was negotiated. When we bring about work practice changes we always discuss it with our staff.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: But I thought you had a starting date and you were not able to start it because the staff were not willing. Is that the case?

Mr GRANT: As I said, the custodial staff believed it should be a function done by the non-custodial staff, and they were probably seeking more resources I do not think that that has been resolved and I think that is why at this stage it has not been introduced. When I was speaking to the general manager a few days ago she indicated that he was optimistic that they would be getting this process up and running early in December. So obviously she made some progress in the discussions.

Ms RUSIS: I think one of the stumbling blocks had been that they wanted to ensure that the IT capacity was there for the booked visits to happen—just ensuring that the computers did not let us down.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: How are visiting regimes at other prisons? Are changes in the wind or are things a little bit more regulated?

Mr GRANT: Basically there are certain standards and approaches to searching and to visitor identification. All those things are standardised across the system. Gaols are very different. They have very different populations. Some have populations that do not mix easily and there are some definite arrangements inside gaols where there may be more than one visiting location. So, we do not have a standard protocol that says visits start and stop at this time.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I appreciate that. What I may not have asked clearly is, we had this sudden change in the visiting regime at Emu Plains. It seems that may have been resolved. Has there been any radical change in visiting hours at other prisons?

Mr GRANT: I am not sure it was a sudden change. As I mentioned, it was discussed over several weeks, but the visiting arrangements in each correctional centre will be discussed and determined at the centre level. This decision was not driven by a centralised policy. It seemed like a sensible thing based on the arguments put forward by the centre as to why they changed, and there is no drive in the department to change it. However, visits do seem to work very well from a number of perspectives. Split visits operate in a number of centres as well, to give more people access to visits for a start and to deal with the complexities of the population in gaol. But there is no central drive from the department to reduce that.

Ms LEE RHIANNON: I was not suggesting that. The question was has there been a sudden change or a change in visiting regimes in other prisons? Although we may have had disagreements about Emu Plains, I think we agree there was a radical change from one system to another system. I am trying to get a sense, has it happened at any others?

Mr GRANT: The visit systems are different from centre to centre and obviously there is a point in time when they change. I am not aware of any other sudden changes but I am interested in getting feedback from people about changes and we will respond to that.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Mr Grant, can you update the Committee on the success of the department's Pups in Prison program?

Mr GRANT: I might ask Mr Rodgers to answer that question.

Mr RODGERS: The Pups in Prison project is operated at the Kirkconnell correctional centre. Assistance Dogs Australia [ADA] is a non-profit organisation founded in 1996. With the help of the Department of Corrective Services, ADA operates the unique Pups in Prison training course at the Kirkconnell correctional centre. Under the program, which has been running since 2002, prison inmates care for the dogs while they receive obedience training in prison. With the help of the department, the program has placed 74 dogs across Australia. Inmates at Kirkconnell, under the supervision of correctional officer Scott Keen, train labradors and golden retrievers to help enhance the quality of life and improve the level of independence of people with physical disabilities. The inmates who feed the dogs in prison and are responsible for keeping their kennels clean have themselves benefited from the added responsibility that the program demands. The puppies are

regularly taken out to Bathurst to familiarise themselves with wheelchairs, trolleys and crowds and to teach them skills such as hitting the traffic lights.

Recently, ADA presented one of this years graduating pups, Harley, to Paul Cox, who was confined to a wheelchair as a result of an accident. Harley was raised and funded by the Liverpool Harley-Davidson owners group. Kirconnell correctional centre has managed the Pups in Prison program for five years and has raised 11 dogs just like Harley. These highly trained animals allow recipients to have greater mobility, gain confidence and higher self-esteem. The most recent group of dogs will graduate on 7 December, after which they will spend six more months with the ADA on a more intensive program. After these the Pups in Prison program will receive four more puppies—two black labradors and two golden retrievers.

The Hon. IAN WEST: If I could ask the acting commissioner about the great dilemma for many decades, probably for hundreds of years, of ensuring the mentally ill are appropriately housed. Can you give us any information as to the current initiatives or any initiatives the Government is taking to ensure that the mentally ill are appropriately housed?

Mr GRANT: I certainly can. The first point to make about that is that the correctional system should never be regarded as the ideal place for managing people who are suffering from mental illness. A very concerted and comprehensive strategy has been put in place by the Government across multiple departments aiming to address this vexing issue. The fact is, historically a large number of people suffering from mental illness have been in custody. The place where this is most appropriately commenced is at the front end of the system. The Department of Health through Justice Health now provides in 17 core locations a mental health assessment service, which is an extraordinary improvement on what was available before. There are provisions under sections 32 and 33 of the Mental Health Act that enable magistrates to divert people from custody if they appear with an obvious mental health problem.

In the past, expert services were not available to magistrates to inform them of the mental state and appropriate management strategies of people who come before the courts. About two weeks ago I attended a meeting that had present the heads of some jurisdictions, including the Local Court, who described the introduction of this mental health advisory service as the most significant change that has happened in courts in recent times. It is having a great effect. One of the effects is diverting people at the earliest possible opportunity from custody.

In addition to that, the Government has been making a major investment in the facilities and services provided to inmates with mental health issues. Notwithstanding the fact that some of them can be diverted and managed in the community, there are people who are so dangerous or who need a period of stabilisation that they warrant some type of secure accommodation. Because people come into custody because the court, having had regard to these assessments, still wants to stabilise the person, we have established in the front end of the prison system another second-tier of barrier to stop people from moving on in the system if it is not warranted. The first of those that has now opened is a 43-bed mental health screening unit for male inmates. It is in our Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre. That was instructed at a cost of \$14 million and was opened in March of this year by Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir.

The Hon. IAN WEST: An excellent person to open it.

Mr GRANT: Yes, it was, and she was incredibly impressed with the facility. She spoke in her opening remarks very passionately about this cause. In addition to that, we have constructed a similar facility for women, a 19-bed facility in Mulawa. It is close to its completion at a cost of \$14 million. We also fixed up the clinic at that time.

When people come into custody there is a second point of opportunity while they are remanded to provide better advice to the court about their long-term management prospects. Should it be decided that they will stay in custody, they commence their sentence with a much better management plan. They are two very important initiatives. The biggest part of this picture is that we are also working on the development of two new major health facilities on the Long Bay complex. The first is a new 85-bed prison hospital at a cost of 53 million dollars, which includes 40 beds for the acutely mentally ill. We expect that there will always be people who go through acute episodes of

mental illness. It may have nothing to do with their offending or the time of their offending. They will not be picked up in the forensic provisions of the Act but those people will have an opportunity to be managed in a decent, reasonable environment at a world standard. In addition, a 135-bed forensic hospital that will be funded and operated by NSW Health is also under construction. Parts of the old Long Bay hospital have already been demolished. On that site we will have a state-of-the-art forensic hospital not run by the Department of Corrective Services, which is exactly what we want. We do not believe that we have the skills to manage people who are seriously mentally ill. This is an incredible improvement.

In the meantime, and to support all these processes while we are waiting for this to happen, we have created what we call a mental health precinct at the MRRC. We have 120 beds in the centre, custodial staff who are specially trained and other support staff and Justice Health working with offenders who have mental health issues. So if they come into the system, anywhere in the system, we can put them into that environment. Because of the very good co-operation between Health and Corrective Services we were joint winners of the major Baxter health award, which is awarded by the Minister for Health, for our improvement to the waiting time for psychiatric patients. The whole landscape for dealing with the mentally ill in custody has improved to a level that has never been seen before. It is part of a very comprehensive strategy. We are very proud of it and we are very pleased to say that it will continue to improve when we have these new hospitals in place with all of the services and with our staffs working together in concert. We will have a much better system for managing the mentally ill.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: You mentioned the Baxter award. I understand that the department has recently won three other national awards. Could you provide information to the Committee about those please?

Mr GRANT: I will ask Mr Schipp to comment.

Mr SCHIPP: The Department of Corrective Services' vision is to contribute to a safer community through quality correctional services. The achievements of the department are not limited to one centre or branch but spread across the department and reflect corporate excellence and innovation. The department is proud to announce that three prestigious national awards have recently been bestowed upon the department in recognition of its achievements, namely, the Excellence in Corruption Prevention award, the Excellence in Commitment to Skills and Education award and the LiFE, Living is For Everyone award for 2006. The corruption prevention award is a significant award from the Corruption Prevention Network. The Corruption Prevention Network became an incorporated body in 1998 and operates through an organising committee of elected volunteer public officials and non-voting nominees from central and watchdog public agencies. This organisation is backed by the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the New South Wales Ombudsman. The award encourages excellence in corruption prevention and this year was based upon the theme "Improving Organisational Culture: strategies to promote an ethical workplace culture that encourages integrity and minimises corruption". The award recognises the hard work and the achievements of the past five years since the department established its Probity and Performance/Management Division. The creation of this division has helped to re-enforce the department's commitment to being a corruption-resistant organisation. This division represents a unique concept in the Public Service, as it co-locates a number of branches that can impact on corruption prevention into one division.

The Excellence in Commitment to Skills and Education award was awarded by the Australian Electrical and Electronic Manufacturer's Association. The AEEMA is the leading industry body representing Australia's information and communication technology, electronics and electrical manufacturing industries, in regards to the supply of infrastructure, products and manufacturing-related services to Australian and world markets. This award praises the excellence in commitment to skills and education of the department's Corrective Services Industries' Technology Business Unit. The award was in recognition of training development and provided for its joint venture with Black and White Engineering Solutions at the Metropolitan Special Purpose Centre, MSPC, located at Long Bay.

The joint venture sees inmates refurbishing faulty appliances for Australian electrical manufacturers and importers. The training provided by the business unit covers technical and cognitive behavioural skills and is delivered through classroom-style learning and vocational

experience. Through this award the training program was recognised as "excellent, specialised, well-researched, developed and implemented". I am pleased to say that the skills and experience gained by inmates through this program have led to further professional development and constructive employment. Suicide Prevention Australia, SPA, is a non-profit, non-government organisation working as a public health advocate in suicide prevention. The mission of SPA is to facilitate collaboration and continuing improvement in suicide prevention.

The LiFE Awards were established by SPA in 2004 to recognise and honour the exceptional work of individuals and organisations involved in the field of suicide prevention. Suicide affects hundreds of thousands of Australians every year and continues to be a major public health Issue. Although death by suicide is a relatively uncommon event, such deaths are nonetheless premature and needless, and have a devastating impact on extended family relationships, workplaces and, ultimately, the community as a whole. The Australian Bureau of Statistics states that in 2004, 1.6 per cent of all registered deaths, or 2,098 deaths, were attributed to suicide. Males comprised nearly 80 per cent of these deaths. Suicide results most often from an accumulation of risk factors, and it intersects with problems and concerns across society: mental health, drugs and alcohol, family issues, employment, cultural identity, law enforcement and criminal justice, education and poverty. It is likely impossible to measure the profound impact and deep distress which surrounds an actual suicide.

According to a 1999 report by the Australian Institute of Criminology, incidents of suicide and self-harm are proportionately higher in the jail setting than in the general community. New receptions in prisons are particularly prone to self-harm and suicide because of a variety of psychological, emotional, socio-environmental and health factors, including-mental illness, intellectual disability, drug and alcohol intoxication and addiction, and generally high levels of anxiety and poor coping skills. I am delighted to announce that amid these challenges the State's primary reception jail, the 930-bed Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre known as the MRRC, at Silverwater, has been duly recognised at this year's LiFe awards. For the first time in 2006 the LiFe awards offered by SPA included the public sector award category and the Department of Corrective Services won this inaugural award category.

The MRRC opened in 1997 and during its first 2½ years of operation there were 12 suicides and numerous acts of serious self-harm requiring hospitalisation. These incidents had a profound, yet largely unacknowledged impact on the inmates' families, on other inmates, and on staff working within the correctional centre. With each suicide, existing screening and at-risk management procedures were reviewed and refined. In late 1998 two teams—one comprising Justice Health staff and the other Department of Corrective Services staff—who had been working independently to identify and manage inmates at risk of self-harm and suicide were amalgamated. This new team was called the Risk Assessment and Intervention Team, known as the RAIT. The RAIT has proven most effective as it provides a single, seven-day, multi-disciplinary service, staffed by custodial officers, Offender Services and programs staff and mental health nurses.

Building on the heightened awareness of the MRRC staff generally to the risk of suicide and self-harm in custody, an on-going program of training and development opportunities has been provided to staff in contact with inmates in the MRRC. This program focuses on the identification, assessment and management of inmates in crisis. The program has engendered a culture in which all correctional staff take responsibility for the prevention of suicide and self-harm in the MRRC. From the front door to the accommodation units staff are actively involved in the identification and appropriate referral of inmates at risk of suicide or self-harm. Custodial staff throughout the MRRC go beyond the traditional security role in adopting a compassionate and flexible management style to minimise the risk of suicide and self-harm in vulnerable inmates. They work closely with Offender Services and programs and industries staff and staff from Justice Health to provide a continuum of care.

The expertise of each discipline is respected and drawn upon in the management of the inmates. The number of suicides occurring annually at the MRRC has dropped from an average of five per annum in the first three years to an average of 1.5 per annum over the ensuing 6 years. Incidents of serious self harm requiring hospitalisation are now a rarity rather than an almost daily occurrence. These significant improvements in the reduction of suicide rate can be attributed to the commitment of all staff within the MRRC and their willingness to work together across all disciplines in the prevention serious self harm and suicide. All correctional staff are mindful of their duty of care

towards inmates. The staff of the MRRC stand out for their dedication, determination and expertise in reducing the incidence of suicide and self harm in a particularly dynamic and challenging correctional centre.

The Hon. IAN WEST: Being mindful of the importance of education in a civilised society, can you give some indication about what is happening in education within the system and what impact it is having on recidivism?

Mr GRANT: I am very pleased to talk about that. We have very well developed education program tin gaols. One of the first positions other than a correctional officer ever filled in a gaol was that of schoolmaster. They have been involved in gaols since the nineteenth century and they perform a very valuable function. Along with education in the community, there has been a lot emphasis on equality in recent years. The impact of the Australian Qualifications Framework on the provision of education in gaols has seen the development of a very high standard of accredited programs run by very highly qualified staff, which is always part of the accreditation.

We have our own registered training organisation in the Department of Corrective Services called the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute [AEVTI], which has primary responsibility for education in correctional centres. It is accredited by the New South Wales Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board. Inmates who complete any studies conducted by AEVTI—and any course run by AEVTI is an accredited program—receive a nationally recognised qualification. The work of AEVTI is also supplemented by TAFE. The department has a contract with TAFE for the provision of vocational training. AEVTI's primary focus is on adult basic education.

When we have done surveys of people who come into custody we have found that they generally come from very compromised education backgrounds. A large number of people have been expelled or suspended from school and about 60 per cent of them have not achieved a year 10 standard. When they come into custody there is an opportunity to interview them, do an education profile, assess their education level and place them in appropriate programs.

We have also been fortunate over the past few years to be supported by the Government with some significant enhancements to funding for education programs. In 2003, in the Government's Targeting Repeat Offender Strategy, a significant funding enhance was made available. I think there was about \$7 million for literacy programs alone. We increased our expenditure by \$2.7 million in 2005-06 to finance an additional 27 full-time equivalent literacy and numeracy and work skills positions across 25 correctional centres. We also increased our TAF allocation by \$400,000. We had \$1.3 million of TAFE hours and we have increased to \$1.7 million.

Education is a significant activity. Our tendency is to target people at the secondary level as opposed to the tertiary. Some inmates can move beyond that. We also provide extensive TAFE hours for people participating in vocational training. Where possible, we link the TAFE programs to the work that is done through the corrective service industries. Not only do we give them work experience, we also try to give them accredited qualifications. The qualifications include areas such as hospitality and various trades. We have also entered into agreements as a traineeship provider. Increasingly we are providing traineeships that give people much more specific skills linked to training in the workplace. We are very pleased with what we are doing.

We often focus on the people in gaol—we have more than 9,000 people in custody. The figure was 9,500 last weekend. We also have about 18,000 people who we manage in the community. One of our new strategies has been to attempt to link offenders on community-based orders to opportunities to participate in education in the community. We have an excellent program called the Pathways to Employment, Education and Training, run in partnership with TAFE. We have that running across a number of TAFE institutes involving offenders from a range of parole officers. We have a great commitment to this.

Mention was made of recidivism. We do not have a measure of the effectiveness of education programs for recidivism alone because it is very rare for an offender in custody not to do an education program at the same time they are participating in things like violent offending programs, sex offending programs, anger management and impulse control programs and so on. It is difficult to say whether it is the complementary impact of the education program or the very specific impact of one of

the more intensive treatment programs that target behaviour based on a cognitive behavioural programs and which is having an impact.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: Mr Schipp, I asked you some questions about Mr Woodhouse and his position and we had some discussion about travelogues. Can you arrange for the travelogues to be tabled?

Mr SCHIPP: Yes. Are you talking about next week?

CHAIR: Yes, noon next Wednesday.

Mr SCHIPP: Over what period?

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: All the travelogues in respect of this position.

Mr GRANT: He has only recently been appointed to the position.

Mr SCHIPP: It would have been last week or the week before.

Mr GRANT: That would be two weeks of running sheets.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: But he has been acting in the position.

Mr SCHIPP: He has been acting in the position for a couple of months. The position prior to that, which is the executive director, he occupied for a number of years. Are you talking about log sheets for the past 12 months or two years?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Since he has been acting in the position.

Mr SCHIPP: The assistant commissioner position?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes.

The Hon. DAVID CLARKE: In reply to question taken on notice, the department advised that Mr John Gilmore was temporarily engaged on a project by the department. What is that project?

Mr GRANT: As you said, Mr Gilmore has been temporarily engaged to assist in a project. The project relates to the development and implementation of improved strategies relating to supervision of offenders in the community. The range of duties and responsibilities involved include the auditing of compliance to policy, approved procedures for community supervision of offenders, recommending changes to policies and procedures as considered appropriate and reporting the audited outcomes directly to the commissioner.

CHAIR: I thank you very much for your attendance.

(The witnesses withdrew)

JENNIFER MASON, Director General, Department of Juvenile Justice,

STEPHANIE CROSS, Assistant Director General, Management Services, Department of Juvenile Justice, and

PETER MUIR, Assistant Director General, Operations, Department of Juvenile Justice, before the Committee.

CHAIR: Welcome to the hearing. I remind you that you are giving evidence on a former oath or affirmation. We will start with 20 minutes of Opposition questioning.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: In the answers to questions on notice you indicated that the projected budget for detention centres this year is \$66.105 million. Is that still the figure, or has the figure been revised?

Ms CROSS: It is still \$66.105 million.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are you aware that there are a lot of rumours that \$0.5 million needs to be cut from detention centres this year?

Ms CROSS: I am not aware of that rumour.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: It does not accord with anything that is happening?

Ms CROSS: No.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is it possible to get an update on the issue of the pornographic emails?

Ms MASON: I can give you some information. I am expecting some final recommendations from the investigators, I think next week, about various procedural or other issues they have identified in the course of their inquiries. They have now completed all the interviews, and have confirmed to me, as we believed from the start, that there was no child-related material. They did not come across any evidence that any of the detainees or clients of the department had seen any of this material, and they came up with no evidence that any of the emails were sent as part of a campaign of harassment or anything like that—which obviously were issues that we were keen to get clarified because that would have greatly exacerbated the severity of the conduct as we saw it.

We still have a handful of people who are yet to show cause. We have done show-cause interviews with those who chose to exercise that right. We have various people who have verbally indicated that they may seek to challenge either the finding itself or the severity of the penalty. But as yet I have not been served with any formal process in that regard; we have just had that verbal advice that that may occur. We are not yet in the commission about any of the matters, if I can put it that way.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I understand that when we spoke last time we were dealing with two different categories, and one of them had been investigated fairly thoroughly. Has that first group of 12 now been finalised?

Ms MASON: We have finalised what I might call the forwarders as a group, which is the single and the multiples. When I say "finalised", we have finalised 29 people and found misconduct in regard to those people. As I say, there are possibly two or three who are yet to show cause.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What position did the Public Service Association take in relation to these matters? Was it involved at all?

Ms MASON: When the investigators go out and interview people, people have a right to opt to have an observer in the interview. Sometimes—although by no means always—that person is a

PSA delegate of some kind. More usually, a person just asks a colleague or somebody, if they choose to have that option of an observer. People from the PSA have come along to some, although not all, of the show-cause interviews, which again is not uncommon, and made recommendations as to penalty. We have also had—do not hold me to this—we have definitely had one representation from the PSA in regard to seeking more time to pay on a fine, because of financial hardship of a particular individual. That is the generic involvement of the PSA.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Of the 29 that had been finalised, were all of them fined?

Ms MASON: Yes.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I understand the maximum fine was \$2,000, is that correct?

Ms MASON: Yes, the most that anyone has been fined is \$2,000.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: How many people were fined \$2,000?

Ms MASON: I do not have that information with me, but it would be quite quick to find it out. I think we can probably meet the deadline you mentioned earlier.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Thank you for providing the evaluation of the rural residential rehabilitation program. The evaluation refers to young people in custody, and says there has been research showing that recidivism rates are nearly 100 per cent. Are you aware of research that shows recidivism rates of 100 per cent for young people who have been in custody?

Ms MASON: I am not aware of that research. I do not remember that reference in the evaluation. As you would know, from taking an interest in the area, data generally, both nationally and internationally, on juvenile recidivism is far from standard. I am engaged with my counterparts across Australia in a very active process of trying to establish standard data indicators. Trying to establish even the most basic comparative figures between States is very difficult, even as far as length of sentences, length of orders, who supervises whom, and that sort of thing. Recidivism is one of those indicators that is measured differently everywhere. It would not surprise me if particular subcategories of young offender have very high recidivism rates. I think we discussed this on a previous occasion.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The report on the Justice Health survey of young people in custody refers to the fact that 19 per cent of males and 24 per cent of females seriously considered suicide in the past. Is there a six-bed unit at Cobham detention centre that cannot be used because it does not comply with standards, to minimise opportunities for suicide?

Mr MUIR: No.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are there any beds in Cobham detention centre that are not available for use because they do not comply with standards?

Mr MUIR: No.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: They are just not available for use, for any other reason?

Mr MUIR: One or two beds are down for minor periods for maintenance if damage is caused. There are absolutely no beds in Cobham that unavailable because they do not meet requirements.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are there any beds in Cobham that are unavailable for reasons other than maintenance?

Mr MUIR: From my recollection, yesterday there was one bed out of action of the 74.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: In the admissions area in Justice Health, does that include those—?

Mr MUIR: They are not part of the beds at the centres. There are beds in the clinic area in Cobham. They are not used routinely for accommodation; they accommodate young people from time to time. Frankly, they are probably some of the more secure rooms in the system; they are very, very sturdy and solid rooms.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: And they are all available for use?

Mr MUIR: To the best of my knowledge, yes.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What has happened with the information that was obtained in the survey? Has it progressed to analysis and recommendations?

Mr MUIR: Both the Department of Juvenile Justice and Justice Health have formulated a joint clinical services plan. That plan has been endorsed by both organisations. It seeks to address the major issues that have arisen from both our community and custodial health surveys. It has been endorsed by the executives of both organisations, it has accountability is attached to it, and its implementation is overseen by the joint clinical governance committees, between both organisations.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The report contained some information that could be very beneficial for other agencies, such as the Department of Community Services. For example, it showed good awareness of kid's help lines but very low percentages using it. Will that have implications for policies beyond both organisations?

Mr MUIR: One of the things that we are doing at the moment, other than publishing and sharing this data as widely as we can, the Department of Community Services is part of a cross-agency senior officers group, chaired by the director general, looking at the cross-agency management of young offenders. So it is a piece of work that we are engaging in at the moment under the auspices of the chief executive committee?

Ms MASON: Under the human services Minister's committee.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The survey showed of 212 detainees surveyed, 68 per cent had received an injury from a fellow detainee. Does that concern you? Why is that figure so high? What actions are being taken in response?

Ms MASON: I suppose we are always concerned about the volatility of our detainees but I believe actually that our staff do an excellent job in intervening. They are young people, they are impetuous, they are highly hormonal and they are given to impulsive behaviour. Our staff—I think Mr Muir would back me with this—in general do a very professional job of intervening when the detainees are sparring or fighting with one another. It is a very difficult task for our staff because they have to use minimum force and they are constrained in all sorts of way by child protection legislation and so on. I would say in general terms that the number of incidents that we get on a daily basis in the centres is quite low, considering the volatile nature of the population. Would you agree with that?

Mr MUIR: Yes. It is an issue that is concerning to us. It is one of the things we do, monitor. We do keep data on detainee-on-detainee assaults. We do monitor the trends. There are lots of factors that influence that, some of which are young people from different areas, quite frankly at times, not liking each other or having old scores to settle. We try to manage that by way of making sure that our placements of detainees are well thought out. Our manager of placements is quite cognisant of making sure that we have adequate separation of detainees where there is certainly a known history. For example, on our client database we have what we call an alert system where we record information that everybody needs to know about. So if some of these matters arise they can be shared across the system so that even if detainees move from one place to another that sort of data is transmitted with them.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are you able to monitor how many detainees have been seriously injured?

Mr MUIR: I can only give you an anecdotal answer.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: That answers my question. How many beds are funded in each of the eight detention centres for this financial year?

Mr MUIR: This financial year, Acmena 30, Frank Baxter 105, Junaperina 24, Cobham 74, Reiby 57, Keelong 23, Orana 30 and Riverina 24.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are the 24 beds at Junaperina for girls?

Mr MUIR: Yes.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are other beds available at Junaperina for boys or is that no longer necessary?

Mr MUIR: No longer necessary.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I understand that in the past week 37 detainees have been accommodated at Acmena?

Mr MUIR: To the best of my knowledge it did not reach 37. There was an influx of young people last weekend. They were under numbers and I talked to the manager of placements over the weekend. We had an influx of people over the weekend but it was cleared by Monday morning. To the best of my knowledge when I came in on Monday morning it was 35.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Did that involve detainees sleeping on mattresses on the floor?

Mr MUIR: We have got other holding rooms that we can utilise. To be very honest I do not know how they managed it—it may have.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I do not know how they do either.

Mr MUIR: It may have involved that but there are agreements there with management and staff on how they will handle those matters.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: How many detainees were admitted to detention in 2005-06? What was the average length of stay?

Ms MASON: Sometimes we have little issues of whether it is read from the live database or the frozen database. We have some database issues, and the figure that I have is 4,040 admissions during the course of 2005-06, 60 per cent of whom were in for a week, 16.8 per cent for a week to a month, 17.8 per cent for a month to six months and 5.1 per cent for over six months. That makes an average length of stay of 42.4 days but a median length of stay of three days—do not ask me how that can be so divergent.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I understand how it can be so divergent. It is just that they have been reported differently.

Ms MASON: It may well be that you would see different figures at different places. That is a live database extract and it is sometimes different when they have done a frozen sort of audit of it.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What is the estimated cost to this year's budget of transporting detainees from Cobham to Parramatta Children's Court?

Mr MUIR: I could take that question on notice and provide the actual figure. There is no additional cost because the way we organise our transport services is that the transport staff pick up from Cobham every morning and do a run from Cobham to Parramatta. We have always done that run. The arrangements at Parramatta do not increase our costs in the metropolitan area at all because

we have reorganised and are able to do all of the work at Parramatta within the existing resources. I am not sure if I have answered your question, but we certainly have not allocated additional resources at all to Parramatta because we have been able to consolidate from other areas into Parramatta.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: But there is an additional cost?

Mr MUIR: No, and I will explain why. For example, Bidura court was running a lot more people. We have been able to downsize Bidura court and so instead of having to run two shifts a day at Bidura, we no longer have to do that. Lidcombe court has closed down completely. So the resources we were putting into other court locations, we have consolidated back to Parramatta, plus because so many people were going to Bidura and it was a longer run, we were actually doing two runs a day to Bidura, and it is a much simpler run to Parramatta for us now.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Obviously there are facilities for Juvenile Justice in the new Parramatta court?

Mr MUIR: Yes, we have been involved from the very early planning stages in Parramatta. We have had senior officers on the planning committees pretty well from day one.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Do you anticipate Cobham Children's Court closing down in the future?

Mr MUIR: I have had discussions with senior representatives of the Attorney-General's Department and they have indicated to me that they plan to have a court sitting at Cobham. We actually favour that. They have indicated to me their plans to continue a presence of some form in criminal matters—we obviously have not had any discussions with them on care issues—and certainly we support that.

Ms MASON: But, as you are aware, the care matters, I think, have transferred or are in the process of transferring, if they have not already done so.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Just returning back to the Justice Health report on young people in custody, it states in the survey that 62 per cent of detainees committed a crime to get drugs or alcohol, 47 per cent were affected by drugs at the time of their offence, 38 per cent were affected by alcohol at the time of their offence and 59 per cent were affected by alcohol or drugs at the time of their offence. Why is it then that Table 38 shows that only 48 per cent of detainees saw a drug counsellor while they were in detention?

Mr MUIR: That was a matter of self-report, and we have obviously looked at that issue. The statistics we have, and I do not have them here with me, indicate that the majority of young people do see an alcohol and other drug counsellor. Certainly, our screening processes are that whenever someone comes through the centre they are assessed by a Justice Health nurse and if there are any indications for the need to screen and assess, then those young people are referred. Lots of young people actually decline that sort of intervention. We strongly encourage them. In fact, in centres our incentive schemes are strongly geared towards rewarding young people who seek treatment and help, and tend to discriminate against those who do not seek that treatment and help where there is a known problem.

So, yes, we did see that figure. I have looked back through the research and the best that I can ascertain, talking to some of the researchers, and particularly to our former Director of Psychological Services, it would seem to be in the way the question was asked in the survey. There may have been, and I cannot be entirely sure of this, but my former head psychologist indicated to me that he seemed to think there may have been a methodological problem with that question.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: So you do not believe it is a shortfall in service?

Mr MUIR: No, we do not. Across the department, in terms of drug and alcohol counselling, we commit in excess of \$4 million to drug and alcohol counselling right across the organisation. So there certainly is a very substantial organisational commitment and resource commitment to alcohol and other drug counselling.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: In terms of young offenders in the eight detention centres at the moment, how are they accessing mental health services when they are experiencing an acute episode?

Ms MASON: We have got some material from Justice Health about that. At the moment at Acmena, Riverina and Orana we have got a visiting psychiatrist visiting the centre. We have obviously got a psychologist as well. I have not got the figures of our psychological profile but, as you are aware, we have a psychologist on staff. Justice Health provides an on-call psychiatrist, which is 24 hours a day, and there is a specialist adolescent psychiatrist on call until 10 p.m. for urgent matters, and there is access to telehealth services. The Adolescent Health Director of Justice Health also has a mental health clinical nurse consultant who is available—that is only during business hours.

The Justice Health nurses at each juvenile justice centre provide initial risk assessment for young people in custody within 48 hours of reception. Assessment particularly focuses on mental health and drug and alcohol, which we mentioned earlier, and sexual health. The initial screening process is focused on risk assessment, especially risk to self, risk to others, as well as public health risks. A further health assessment that includes a comprehensive mental health report is then conducted within five days of reception. If these assessments identify mental illness or a problem then referrals to appropriate clinicians are made. If acute in-patient services are required then care is negotiated with the local area health service.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: In relation to Acmena, for example, there are not any adolescent beds available in that area, as I understand it. What happens to a detainee in that situation who requires that service but there is not a service available in the local area?

Ms MASON: Mr Muir can answer that in more detail, but, as I said, Justice Health has a visiting psychiatrist who is basically handling prescription and onward referral matters. Obviously, for example, they do not do the forensic court reports; that gets referred on. If it is an acute matter then it basically has to be a matter that Justice Health negotiates with Health, and if they need to then they get the kid into Bloomfield or wherever else there is a bed.

Mr MUIR: That is correct. The only other thing I can add to Ms Mason's comments is that we have our own specialist crisis team, and certainly in the case of Acmena that is a team of our own people—psychologists and counsellors—who are on call 24 hours, seven days a week. The only matter I can remember from Acmena is one young person who was acutely psychotic; we actually did precisely what Ms Mason said and he was brought further south, and my recollection is he was housed at Nexus in Newcastle. Other young people have been treated successfully with medication at Acmena and certainly Justice Health have been very responsive to the need for ongoing psychiatric care, should that be necessary.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I think there is a general understanding that there are young people who if the beds were available there would be more referrals to beds.

Mr MUIR: I have got to say it has improved out of sight since Justice Health have taken over because it is the health system working with itself.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: But that is making the medication more speedily available.

Mr MUIR: No, in my experience, in a very lengthy career, I think young people's access to in-patient care in custody is probably about the best it has been. I have said in earlier hearings to one of the questions that there is a lot of demand. But certainly in terms of young people in custody we have had acutely psychotic people and we have had a very good response.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are you still talking to corrective services about availability of adolescent beds in Long Bay gaol?

Mr MUIR: Not in Long Bay gaol. Corrective services talked about the forensic hospital set up by Justice Health. Once that hospital is established there will be adolescent beds available in that facility.

Ms MASON: My understanding is—and bear with us because we are answering on behalf of Justice Health in order to assist the Committee, as you know—the forensic hospital, as Mr Grant explained earlier in the session, is quite historic in the sense that it is not going to be a prison anymore, it is actually going to be run by the health service rather than as a prison, and it is going to have, I am advised, 16 secure adolescent beds in a dedicated adolescent unit. They are still doing the planning on the models of care to be adopted in the management of those patients but it is also intended, and it is part of the broadening out and making it a hospital in the true sense, that it will also be available for use by civilian patients. My understanding from Health is that it is going to be quite a different facility than—I do not know if you have ever been to the old Long Bay hospital? It is going to be quite a different sort of a model in the sense that it is going to be actually run as a hospital with a dedicated secure adolescent unit.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Will there be Juvenile Justice staff based at the hospital?

Ms MASON: That is certainly not intended, no.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: But it will be a facility available to the Juvenile Justice system?

Ms MASON: It is going to be run as a hospital with custodial staff. I am not actually aware of the role of custodial staff, but it is not intended that it is not going to be built until February 2009. So those details will have to be worked out.

Mr MUIR: In addition to that, we have had discussions with Justice Health and with NSW Health on our needs should any regional or other facilities be modified, so that security considerations can be taken into account when they are rebuilding. Also, we have funded a half project officer jointly with Justice Health to look at the management of young people with issues within our system.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Can you explain to me what a Griffith remand is?

Mr MUIR: Griffith remand is where a court adjourns a matter involving usually a very young person, who is released on bail on very stringent conditions. It is typically seen as a period of testing over which the court will look at the young people's ability to respond to supervision and not offend during that period. At the end of the Griffith remand period a report is made to the court. Up until the establishment of the Youth Drug and Alcohol Court, in the juvenile jurisdiction the term was fairly loose, but a Griffith remand is now a disposition under section 33 of the Children Criminal Proceedings Act.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is that as an alternative to a custodial sentence?

Mr MUIR: A Griffith remand is not a final sentence, but is part of what a magistrate or judge would consider. Its primary use in our system is in the Youth Drug and Alcohol Court, where young people are released on Griffith remands on very stringent conditions.

Ms MASON: They are brought back to the court periodically, whether they are complying with the conditions or not, and in a sense it informs the court's final determination of the matter. If they have been complying, then the court may dispense with any custodial sentence. But, obviously, if they have not been complying, the court may pull the pin and order incarceration.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are those young persons supervised by the Department of Juvenile Justice?

Ms MASON: That depends on the conditions that the court imposes. The court may ask us to be involved, or may remand a person to a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre for example.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Miscellaneous Amendments Bill has just gone through. I understand there has been a law that stops young people who are on bail for a criminal offence being accepted into facilities such as refuges. The effect of that is that young people under the care of the Department of Community Services cannot be accommodated with people who are on remand or on bail in respect of an offence. I understand that law has now been relaxed. Are you familiar with that? The question I wanted to ask is about the effect that that is having.

Mr MUIR: I am not aware of any piece of legislation that precludes young people with criminal offences being placed in youth refuges. Certainly, youth refuges are very keen to know the backgrounds of young people that we are placing with them. Different refuges have different attitudes to that and to particular forms of offending. But, general, there is no blanket prohibition.

Ms MASON: It may have been a clarifying piece of legislation. We would be very happy to look at it, but it has not specifically been drawn to my attention.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: In relation to the Department of Education and Training operating detention centres, is there any process that you are going through to discuss what happens in school holidays? I understand the filling of gaps, in terms of schools operating on normal terms in some detention centres, and in other centres staff rotating their leave so that they can stretch the amount of time that classes are available, is all being negotiated locally. Is there a process to try to get more flexibility?

Mr MUIR: We advocate with the Department of Education and Training—and, again, I am speaking for another department—but those matters have to be subject to local negotiations. My understanding is that the award that governs those arrangements provides that the school staff must agree to work what the Department of Education and Training calls an extended school year. If the particular staff of any individual school opt not to participate in the extended school year, and only to work traditional school holidays, then the department has no control over that. We have made our preferences known very clearly to the Department of Education and Training. We have a number of senior officer level contacts and regular senior officer contacts with both departments. We have advocated very strongly for an extended school year, and the hierarchy of the Department of Education and Training strongly support that. But, ultimately, it comes down to the local members of the relevant unions and staff to approve.

Ms MASON: As you would no doubt be aware, our vocational staff and other staff do a very good job designing programs to fill up the school holidays and other gaps, and some of those, including Acmena, in which I know you have an interest, have actually been very active recently in a whole range of programs. That has been commented on. There has been almost a revolution at Acmena in terms of the program staff getting the custodial staff and everyone else involved in quite innovative programs there. I think you would find that very interesting.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is there any review of education programs available to detainees, given the trend now for TAFE to be more flexible in the way it delivers courses? I suppose, in a sense, TAFE-style courses often are more appropriate for people who have fallen out of the formal education system.

Ms MASON: As you would probably know, when you go round to the centres, the school principals who work in those kinds of institutions tend to be very committed people who are very interested in getting the kind of education that our detainees find accessible, which tends to be not desk-bound particularly but very much hands-on because often they have attention issues. Mr Muir has just passed me a note to the effect that last year there were 633 placements of detainees in TAFE courses run by the Department of Education and Training. So I think they are responding to the concern that you raised about moving outside conventional parameters of desk-bound schooling. But I am not aware of anything formal that they are doing to change the system.

Mr MUIR: There are always considerations. I know that there are considerations at the moment. My most recent meeting with them was last week, and they are certainly considering the mix and are cognisant of the issues you have raised.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: It really seems to be a system that has come out of the days when welfare and everything were mixed. The age and profile of young people in the facilities is now very different, and TAFE is very different as well.

Ms MASON: I understand your point. But I must say that from centre to centre they do very well. I was at Baxter all day last Friday. As you know, they deal with much older detainees, and the school there does a very good job of dealing with the age range there and getting those young people involved in very practical vocational sorts of things, like bricklaying and so, because they are looking to go on into a working career. Obviously, with the ones at Reiby, they have got to find things that stop them climbing the walls.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: But, in terms of rehabilitation, many of the young people I have met are caught up in car theft and driving offences love motor motors. Aboriginal kids, for example, seem to have a passion for that. Why not offer them motor mechanic courses and the like to work in with their passions, but in a way that channels it into a legal alternative to what is happening?

Ms MASON: That is a very good idea. In fact, last time I was at Acmena kids were doing exactly that—stripping down a car and rebuilding it, rebuilding its engine and so on. So I think you would probably be pleased about that.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am talking about doing this in a way that potentially links them into an apprenticeship.

Mr MUIR: I was at Acmena two months ago, and I met one young person who actually has completed his formal certificate in welding. He had been on a lengthy order, but there is every expectation he will move out into full-time employment, probably in boilermaking. He was very impressive. In fact, our vocation instructor up there told me the young person was a better welder than the instructor was.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: That is what I mean: often, these young persons are very gifted, and they are willing to spend hours on things that capture their imagination, and it is not always art.

Ms MASON: No, I agree with that.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: My next question relates to sex offenders. Thank you for the information you provided to me in answer to the questions on notice, but my question should have included the age profile of those who are on remand for sex offences.

Ms MASON: What we gave you last time related to convictions, is that right?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes, young people in custody who have been convicted of a sex offence. It is clear that my question should have asked about people on remand.

Mr SCHIPP: In what period, given the brevity of time?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Could it be for the same period as the data you provided earlier, the same date?

Ms MASON: If we can, we will.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: If and a third date is easier, just to get by, that is okay.

CHAIR: Does the Ms Lee Rhiannon have any questions?

Ms LEE RHIANNON: No.

CHAIR: We will now go to Government questions.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am interested in the programs for women and girls at Juniperina.

Mr MUIR: Juniperina Juvenile Justice Centre, which is located at Lidcombe, was opened on 24 August 2005. It currently has a funded bed capacity of 24 and a maximum capacity of 48. The centre accommodates girls and young women of all classifications across New South Wales. Female detainees may be accommodated in other juvenile justice centres from time to time while awaiting court appearances. Young women at Juniperina participate in a range of therapeutic and developmental programs, including counselling and group work programs focusing on anger, stress management and alcohol and other drug use. The move to Juniperina in August 2005 rejuvenated community interest in providing programs. Community groups providing programs at Juniperina include Rotary, Coolabaroo Neighbourhood Centre, Fernwood Female Fitness Centre, Samadhi Yoga Centre, Nature Care, Masuka Aboriginal Accommodation Group, Youthsafe, Sydney Community college, the Australian Music Foundation and Danceskool.

These programs range from living and social skills to fitness classes, yoga and dance classes. Currently the Young Women's Advisory Committee is sponsoring initiatives in service delivery for young women, including interagency partnerships and pilot programs. A Partnership with Youth Block, a youth health and resource centre, has been established to pilot provision of intensive case management services specifically to young women at Juniperina. The Juniperina Mothers and Children's Working Group has been successful in partnership with Karitane in obtaining a \$150,000 grant from the Attorney General's Department Crime Prevention Division for adolescent mothers in custody, linking to a new future families project. This grant will facilitate Karitane's provision of a range of services for Juniperina, including one-on-one support, group work, post-release support and staff training. Karitane is a specialist child and family service affiliated with South Western Sydney Area Health Service.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Have there been improvements in measures to detect contraband entering the centres?

Ms MASON: We have taken strong action to try to prevent the smuggling of drugs into juvenile justice centres and we have initiated a number of anti-drug and contraband measures. The purpose of these initiatives is to prevent contraband being brought into the centres and we are also developing an appropriate regime for the testing of staff, consequent upon the passing of appropriate legislation earlier this year. The aim of these measures is to provide a safer workplace for staff and a more secure facility for young offenders. Any drug finding instances are referred to New South Wales Police for investigation as to appropriate legal action. Our ability to detect illicit drugs and manage detainees with drug problems has been enhanced by a wide range of strategies implemented, following the Drug Summit. Strategies to aid in the detection and interdiction of drugs in the centres include: alcohol and other drugs training for staff; creation of the Drug Intelligence Unit in the Department of Juvenile Justice; use of drug detection dogs to conduct searches at juvenile Justice centres, and screen visitors; introduction of the Arunta telephone monitoring system in our centres; and the introduction of random targeted urinalysis testing.

] The DIU is a departmental unit responsible for the exchange of information among other law enforcement agencies. Arunta is a computer-based telephone system that enables detainees in juvenile justice centres to make approved, pre-programmed external telephone calls without the need for a staff member to supervise the call. It also allows for the recording and monitoring of all returning calls. Calls made to legal practitioners and the Ombudsman are not recorded and cannot be monitored. Monitoring and recording of detainee calls commenced when the DIU became operational in January 2003. Arunta monitoring is primarily aimed at determining detainee access to and use of contraband, as well as addressing other security threats affecting juvenile justice centres.

Targeted urinalysis testing was introduced in September 2005 to determine whether the detainee is under the influence of a drug, is suspected of drug use or is involved in a significant incident. Eligibility for possible targeted urinalysis testing on return to the centre is also a condition of leave. In the period July 2005 to June 2006, a total of 576 urinalysis tests were carried out, of which 41, or 7 per cent, positive test results were returned. Detainees returning a positive result I refer to drug and alcohol counselling and withdrawn from programs or work release until a prior risk assessment is completed. They are also denied day and overnight leave for a period of at least a

month. The total figure is a combination of random and targeted testing. During this period there were 87 targeted urinalysis conducted, which returned 28, or 32 per cent positive results.

Centre managers use test results information to develop appropriate case management strategies for detainees. As a result of positive tests, the centre manager can also request a DIU and initiate telephone monitoring of a detainee's calls to establish how and who may be bringing contraband into a centre. Since June 2000 drug detector dogs have been used to search centre grounds and to screen detainees and their visitors for drugs. All eight detention centres are searched by the drug detection dog unit on a regular basis. The drug detection dog unit teams are operated by the Department of Corrective Services, and are engaged on a fee-for-service basis by the Department of Juvenile Justice.

In the period July 2005 to June 2006 a total of 144 searches were conducted by drug detector dogs across the eight juvenile justice centres. During this period, 2,089 visitors were screened, of which 37 were refused entry on the basis of a positive indication by the drug detector dogs. The types of contraband found during these searches included bongos, cones, knives, tobacco, lighters, money, stems and pens used as smoking pipes.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am aware that the department has made great efforts in relation to the training of staff in recent years. Would you advise the committee of new developments in that area?

Ms CROSS: In the 2006-07 financial year the department allocated close to \$4 million to ensure that all our front-line members are provided with relevant high-level training programs, both in custody and community settings. During the last financial year we ran a number of programs, and we had 229 new or permanent and casual youth officers attend the training induction program, which is a 29-day training program. The program includes training for inductees regarding issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It also covers information dealing with the policies of the department, legislative responsibilities and the required illegal mandates. It talks about occupational health and safety, which, obviously, is very important. The child protection matters are being discussed with the Ombudsman's office, and the training program aligns very much with the Ombudsman's requirements. It includes daily work practices so that people understand searching, movements, security and those sorts of processes, and managing difficult behaviour. It covers a whole range of requirements that we have for staff before they start what we term "on the floor" in the department.

We had 152 staff members attend a two-day training and emergency procedures program, which was run in conjunction with the Department of Corrective Services. We had 237 staff attend computer-based training programs on electronic case management information systems. We had 30 unit managers and unit co-ordinators attend what we term our operational management development program, which has now been run twice. It involves six days of face-to-face training as a four-month period, plus work-based activities. Upon the completion of that program, and including the assessment requirements that come with that, participants receive a nationally recognised qualification, which is a certificate 4 in business in front-line management. We had 122 staff attend general management development and training. We have assisted managers attended the Assistant Manager Coaching Program, which is a two-day face-to-face training session, and involves six individual training and coaching sessions as well. We had 160 staff attend computer application training programs, such as Excel, GroupWise, et cetera. A total of 1,061 staff have been trained in managing difficult behaviour up until the end of last financial year, and we had a number of refresher training programs running in our Managing Difficult Behaviour Program. We had more than 1,000 staff trained in that Managing Difficult Behaviour Program.

As a result of a review undertaken last year we have made some changes to our induction programs, and we have provided much more expansion of our youth induction program, as I said previously, that involves a lot more practical on-the-job training than it has in the past. We have now implemented skills of maintenance sessions in the centres so that our staff are getting on-the-job skills maintenance activities as part of each program. Major training programs that are available for staff include a certificate 4 in youth work, which is a nationally recognised qualification and covers programs such as youth liaison specialist skills in dealing with relationships with our clients, working within the legal and ethical framework, responding holistically to client issues, working with

culturally diverse groups, participating in workplace safety procedures—another fairly comprehensive program for which people get a nationally accredited qualification—managing difficult behaviour, emergency procedures, casework skills, electronic case management, a lot of training on drug and alcohol awareness, and Aboriginal cultural awareness programs.

I have mentioned child protection. We have a fairly strong focus on occupational health and safety training, obviously, in the nature of our environment. We write evidence-based programs with young offenders, so we do some training on those programs. General supervision and performance management training for managers, certificate 4 in business front-line management, which I mentioned earlier, supervision coaching, which I mentioned earlier, computer application training, et cetera, and we also provide scholarships to our permanent staff to undertake any accredited programs, such as a degree or diploma. We actually have quite a comprehensive program.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What funds are available for the restoration of the historic House at Yasmar?

Ms MASON: The entire site of Yasmar has been handed over by us to the Department of Lands. Our only focus at the moment is on that one-third of the site that we are still managing, which used to be the training facility.

CHAIR: Thank you for your attendance. The committee secretariat will fax the questions taken notice to you as soon as possible.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(The Committee adjourned at 1.34 p.m.)