

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 3

Monday 1 December 2003

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

JUVENILE JUSTICE

The Committee met at 11.30 a.m.

MEMBERS

The Hon. A. R. Fazio (Chair)

The Hon. C. Cusack
The Hon. M. J. Pavey
The Hon. I. W. West

PRESENT

Department of Juvenile Justice

Mr D. Sherlock, *Director-General*

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

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

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:

**Budget Estimates
General Purpose Standing Committee Secretariat
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

CHAIR: The Hon. Catherine Cusack will substitute for the Hon. Greg Pearce. I declare the proposed expenditure for Juvenile Justice open for examination. We will be taking questions in 20-minute blocks, starting with the Opposition. Mr Sherlock, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr SHERLOCK: No.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Would you advise the Committee of the details of reported incidents at the Kariong Detention Centre last week?

Mr SHERLOCK: I am not quite sure what particular incident you are referring to.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Were there any incidents?

Mr SHERLOCK: There are always incidents in a detention centre, and it depends on what you describe as an "incident".

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Anything out of the ordinary?

Mr SHERLOCK: There was one incident last week which we regard as out of the ordinary. I will ask Mr Muir to provide the detail for you.

Mr MUIR: On 20 November nine detainees from the Carinya Accommodation Unit shut themselves in that particular unit in the eating and recreation area. They threatened staff and refused to leave. In accordance with standard departmental procedures where the staff perceived a threat to their safety, they withdrew until appropriate management strategies could be put in place. Staff negotiated with the detainees for approximately four hours and four young people left voluntarily. There followed a number of hours of negotiations in which it was then deemed that that strategy had reached its end. Wearing appropriate safety and protective equipment, staff entered that unit and ordered the detainees to lie on the ground. Most of the remaining detainees complied with that direction; a number did not. They were placed on the ground forcefully in accordance with the department's policies, procedures and training, and those detainees were then handcuffed and moved to their room and placed in segregation. The police attended the unit the following day. The police at no point were required to deal with this situation on its own. They have taken appropriate evidence for charges to be laid. The department is currently in the process of reviewing three detainees for a potential transfer to the adult correctional system.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What time did the incident commence?

Mr MUIR: I received first notification of the incident sometime between 11.30 a.m. and midday.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: That is when you found out about it, but when did it commence?

Mr MUIR: I believe approximately 20 minutes prior to that.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What were the detainees doing in that room at that time of the day?

Mr MUIR: They were there as normal procedure. It is their normal routine. It was moving towards lunchtime. That is just standard routine as to where young people would be at that time of day.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What was the duration of the incident? What time was it resolved?

Mr MUIR: It was finally resolved sometime between 7.00 p.m. and 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: You say the "appropriate protection and safety equipment was used". Can you outline what equipment was involved?

Mr MUIR: When staff are required to attend this type of situation the department has protective overalls that they would use. We have also equipped staff with what we would call an antistab vest, that is—I cannot give the precise details of what is in them—a heavily protected vest to guard the vital regions of the chest and abdomen of staff. They are also equipped with shields and safety helmets with visors.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Were batons or other things involved?

Mr MUIR: All instruments of force in the Department of Juvenile Justice are in the department's regulations that require any implements of force to be approved by the Director-General. Batons are not an approved implement within the Department of Juvenile Justice.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: When were the police notified of the incident?

Mr MUIR: In accordance with the department's procedures, the police were notified of the incident fairly soon after the events commenced, as was the New South Wales Ambulance Service. That is a precaution that is followed as a matter of standard procedure. The duty officer for the local area command attended the centre, held some discussions with the supervising officer and left the centre some short time after.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Are you satisfied with the police attendance at the incident?

Mr MUIR: Absolutely. The department has clearly negotiated protocols and procedures with the Brisbane Water Local Area Command, from memory, and this department has always received a very high level of support from that local area command. They attended first thing the following morning to take the appropriate evidence to allow charges to be laid.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What caused the incident?

Mr MUIR: The department is still conducting its investigation as to the precipitating factors for the incident. The department is looking at a methodology for examining such implements, which we are calling a root-cause analysis. We will be conducting that root cause analysis very soon. To date we really only have the reports of the unit. There were precipitating factors. There were some particularly difficult young people. As you would be aware, Kariong holds some of the State's most difficult young people. It is a high-security unit.

An outline of the event is that a young person was told that he would not be receiving a visitor that day. That was not anything that the department had anything to do with. We believe the young person's girlfriend could not make the centre. He was informed about this by the supervising officer and was offered alternative means to contact his girlfriend by telephone at a subsequent time. The young person became highly agitated and started becoming abusive and threatening towards officers. Other young people subsequently joined in that event, and when staff perceived that their safety might have been compromised they withdrew until appropriate backup and response could be organised.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: You say there were nine detainees involved initially. Is that the whole unit?

Mr MUIR: My understanding is that only one young person was absent from the unit at that time, and that he was undertaking visits with his family. So the answer is: apart from that one person, yes.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What are the ages of the three young people who are now being considered for transfer to prison?

Mr MUIR: One young person is 17 and turns 18 in January; one young person is 17; and there is one who I think is just under 17. I must point out that the department does not take these actions lightly. Two of the three young people are serious children's indictable offenders. They have been, or by the end of this week will have been, sentenced to two terms of imprisonment, so they are what this department calls classified persons. A classified person is someone who actually has been sentenced to a period of imprisonment by the courts, but the court then makes an order section 19 of the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act to allow the young person to spend a period of time in a juvenile justice centre. Under section 28 of the Children (Detention Centres) Act, if a classified person is deemed to be unsuitable to be held in a juvenile facility, the department may make application to both the Minister for Juvenile Justice and the Minister for Justice seeking their approval to move those young people to an adult facility. I must point out that at this stage such application is still being assessed and prepared.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Will the final decision be made by Mr Sherlock?

Mr MUIR: No. The matters are referred to both Ministers, and the final decision-maker on those—

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am sorry. Has the department decided on its recommendation on the matter?

Mr MUIR: On the young person who turns 18 in January, the department will be forwarding that particular application. That young person has now been involved in violent situations in three different contexts in the department, and we have assessed him as presenting a very, very high risk to the safety of our staff. For the second young person who is due to be sentenced on a very serious matter this week, we will be looking to either make appropriate recommendations to the court or making our own decision. So, at least at this stage, in regard to the older two, the department will be progressing those matters. Naturally, with a 16-year-old in the adult system, it is not a decision that the department takes lightly. We have called for full reports on these matters, and we will make a final decision on the 3rd, when we see the full extent of the facts.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Do you have any idea when he turns 17?

Mr MUIR: I do not have that information with me, but I could provide it if you require it.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I would appreciate that.

Mr MUIR: We will take that on notice.

CHAIR: Could I sound a word of caution that in providing such specific information about inmates the question of confidentiality should be borne in mind.

Mr MUIR: Madam Chair, the department is bound by the Children (Detention Centres) Act, which would preclude us from providing any identifying information. So we can only provide to the Committee non-identifying information.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is the 16-year-old convicted of an offence, or is he on remand? What is his status?

Mr MUIR: I would have to take that matter on notice.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Does the department have guidelines for visits to detention centres? If so, can you make those available to the Committee? What is the department's attitude to members of Parliament visiting detention centres? Are Ministers and members of Parliament able to be accompanied by staff?

Mr SHERLOCK: The department's policy is very clear on that. It is in the context of government policy. In respect of members of Parliament, who are local members generally, we would make arrangements for those people to visit, because the centre is in their electorate. We have made numerous arrangements for the shadow Minister to visit our centres and many of our officers, and on

occasions she has been accompanied by other members of Parliament. Our view in the department is that we provide, within reason, free and open access to our centres and our services generally, and legislation does allow that.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: The Minister, whoever that is, would be accompanied by staff during visits to detention centres on occasions?

Mr SHERLOCK: She may be, she may not be. That varies. I am aware of some occasions when the Minister has been travelling in certain parts of the State on other duties related to other parts of her portfolio and has made arrangements at short notice to visit a departmental facility. On such occasions she would not necessarily be accompanied by senior officers of the department. But, certainly, the local management would be present when she visited.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: When her ministerial staff accompany her does she have to seek approval from the department for those staff to visit detention centres?

Mr SHERLOCK: I think Mr Muir wants to add a comment there.

Mr MUIR: Anybody visiting a detention centre is accompanied. They are secure environments, and the department has a clear policy on visits that anybody visiting a centre should be accompanied for their own safety.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Accompanied within the detention centre by your officers?

Mr MUIR: Yes. Even with other agencies—for example, with the Department of Education and Training or the Department of Health—we have clear procedures around those people visiting, to ensure that they are appropriately escorted. There is a very practical function with detention centres: being locked facilities, someone with a key must be with the person.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: I appreciate and respect that, having visited the facility at Grafton, where the staff were very accommodating in relation to the inspection that I was able to take part in. But I am talking about the Minister's own ministerial staff. Are they able to accompany her or do they have to seek permission from the director-general, or whomever, to accompany her?

Mr SHERLOCK: Madam Chair, perhaps I might clarify my answer to an earlier question about "being accompanied". As Mr Muir indicated, obviously they would be accompanied inside the centre, quite often by the centre's management staff. But I understood the question to be about being accompanied by other people external to the centre. On some occasions the shadow Minister has visited and been accompanied by members of Parliament. Those arrangements have been made through the Minister's office and the department. If the Minister visits personally she may or may not be accompanied by one or more of her personal staff, but whatever arrangements are made, they are made with the department and we are aware beforehand who is visiting. As Mr Muir indicated, they would be accompanied around the centre in the normal way to ensure security.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: If the Minister were taking her personal staff in, that would be on the basis of community information to use as information rather than seeking your approval to be accompanied by her personal staff?

Mr SHERLOCK: Generally, yes.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I would like to follow up on questions asked at the previous hearing relating to Aboriginal overrepresentation in the system. We were discussing that although the proportion has increased we did not know whether the absolute numbers of Aboriginal people had increased. Have you had a chance to review that, and, if so, do you have anything further to add?

Mr SHERLOCK: Yes, we have had a closer look at that. Although I do not have the actual numbers with me, I can say that the rates of detention for indigenous people aged 10 to 17 in the juvenile justice system over the period 1994 to 2001—which, I understand, is the period in which you were generally interested at the time—dropped. For the first quarter March 1994 the rate of detention

of young Aboriginal people aged 10 to 17 was 628.3 per 100,000 in the system. For the first quarter March 2001 that rate of detention had dropped to 292.7 per 100,000.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is that per 100,000 in the population or in the system?

Mr SHERLOCK: I think it is per 100,000 in the system. I am sorry, it is in the population. Those figures are available from the Australian Institute of Criminology statistics on juvenile detention in Australia, 1981 to 2001.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The question related to the number of young Aboriginal offenders in detention and whether we had been able to make any inroads on the number who are being held in detention.

Mr SHERLOCK: Those figures would suggest that there has been a significant drop in the rate of detention of young Aboriginal people over that period.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: We have been able to reduce the number of young people in detention but because the number of young Aboriginal people has not been reduced it appears that all the reduction has been in the non-Aboriginal population. That is why we were interested in knowing about numbers.

Mr SHERLOCK: They are the numbers, and they would suggest a significant reduction. As I indicated at the last hearing, the reduction in detention for non-Aboriginal people has been more significant than it has been for young Aboriginal people—there is no question about that. There are a range of reasons for that, some of which the Department of Juvenile Justice has some control over, but there are many more widely ranging reasons, such as social and economic disadvantage, high levels of offending and, it is argued, different treatment in the justice system itself.

CHAIR: The time for Opposition questions in this block of questions has run out.

The Hon. IAN WEST: What improvements has the department been able to achieve in its management of workers compensation claims and costs?

Mr SHERLOCK: I will refer the question to Ms Cross, who has the most detailed understanding of that area.

Ms CROSS: Over the past six years the department has achieved very significant savings in costs associated with both its workers compensation premium and its average cost per claim. The savings are most graphically illustrated by comparison of claims and their cost for 1997-98 with the cost last financial year. Six years ago the department paid a total of \$2.059 million for a total of 270 claims, which was an average cost of around about \$7,626 per claim. Last year, after we did some considerable work on trying to reduce our workers compensation costs, the total amount paid was \$1.098 million, which was an average of \$3,675. This is about half the earlier cost, so as you can see there has been a very significant reduction for the department.

As I said, the reduction is based on a significant amount of work that the department has been doing over the past two years. The introduction of a strategic approach to the management of occupational health and safety and injury management was one arm of that strategy and included the development of a strategic plan and some development of a management system and procedures that we have put in place to ensure that risks are reduced in the workplace. As part of that process we have implemented a preventative strategy that looked at areas of risk we had within the organisation and identified particular programs that we felt were going to achieve a significant outcomes for us. Some of those programs that we have implemented to date include the manual handling of hazardous substances.

We have implemented a system in regard to office environment and first aid, and we are trialling a number of programs to continue to improve on our workers compensation, things such as mechanical safety, safety and security briefings for visitors to the centre, and risk management of detailing programs. We have also spent a reasonable amount of time training our staff in safe work practices so that they reduce the amount of risk they place themselves in when they are working on the

job and so that they have the skills to deal with hazards in the workplace. As part of the process we have also trained our managers in occupational health and safety so that they have a much better understanding of not only the responsibility but also how to manage that within the department.

We have also increased our induction training program for our youth officers, which now has a very significant focus on managing difficult behaviour and the training we require for those staff so that they reduce the risk of injury. We have centralised our workers compensation injury management processes so that we have a co-ordinated strategy across the department. We have a comprehensive policy that we have implemented to establish in the department the processes and systems that we need and, as I said, to make sure that it is streamlined and that staff are aware of the processes. We have also implemented a return-to-work strategy for the department, which identifies specific areas of individuals' responsibilities.

We have instigated regular quarterly workers compensation reviews of all our claims and looked at return-to-work strategies for those staff and opportunities that might assist them to get back into the workplace. We have also reduced a number of mitigated claims. Overall, we have had a significant reduction over the past six years because of those strategies that we have put in place.

The Hon. IAN WEST: I assume that a monitoring system is in place.

Ms CROSS: We have significant monitoring systems. We have occupational health and safety committees that meet between every month and every quarter, depending on the particular location. We review incidences at those meetings, do workplace inspections to identify whether any hazards have arisen, and spend a great deal of time working with the staff and managers to identify potential areas of risk and to reduce them. At the local level a lot of work has been happening at individual locations, yes.

The Hon. IAN WEST: What success has the department had with its program to employ more non-indigenous workers?

Mr SHERLOCK: The department has achieved considerable success. In fact, it is regarded as one of the leading public sector employers of indigenous people in this State. We now employ approximately 120 Aboriginal staff in the department, which represents approximately 10 per cent of our total work force. We have got to that position through very deliberate policy support by a strong program of recruitment and training specifically for Aboriginal people. That also is known as the Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Strategy of the department. It reflects the department's determination to provide culturally appropriate and effective services to all those young Aboriginal people under its supervision.

The overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in our system is a source of very serious concern to us, as it is, I know, in the adult system. We have a comprehensive plan to reduce that overrepresentation. We have spoken previously about that. The employment strategy itself is a key part of a broad strategic plan that the department has to deal with the overrepresentation issue. The employment strategy builds on best practice that has already established in the organisation. It aims to establish and continuously improve new programs, policies and schemes to facilitate Aboriginal employment. It aims to continue improving career paths and to support career development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander [ATSI] staff, to sustain the workplace support for ATSI staff, to continue to educate all staff to provide the best service to ATSI clients, and to monitor the management of the strategy, and it also aims, of course, to value the contribution, skills and experience of ATSI staff in the department.

I am very proud to inform this Committee that only last week the department received two notable awards for its Aboriginal employment program. Firstly it was awarded as a finalist in the State Government category for the 2003 New South Wales Aboriginal Employment and Business Awards. Those awards were presented by the Deputy Premier last week. As well, on Friday evening, the department was awarded a silver award in the workplace diversity category in the annual Premier's Public Sector Awards. Both awards are very significant achievements for the Department of Juvenile Justice. Aboriginal staff are employed in a range of positions in the department. They include virtually every position in the organisation: youth officer, unit co-ordinator, unit manager, clerk, project officer,

caseworker, mentor, sessional supervisor, youth justice conferencing convener, youth justice conference manager, juvenile justice officer, and senior manager.

Many of those positions were in fact established last year as a major restructure of the organisation following a review by the Council on the Cost of Quality of Government. In establishing that new structure and those new positions, many of those positions were identified specifically for Aboriginal people. In addition to that, the department recently commenced discussions with the National Aboriginal Sports Corporation of Australia to investigate job opportunities for ATSI rugby league players who retire from the National Rugby League. The department hopes to capitalise on the sporting and life experiences and abilities of those former players in working with the department. Underlying the success of the campaign to recruit more Aboriginal staff has been the department's Aboriginal unit, which was specifically established last year. It is a unit that has responsibility for policy development in relation to services to young Aboriginal people. It is headed by a senior manager, an Aboriginal woman, who reports directly to me as the chief executive officer of the organisation. But it is fair to say that the department has demonstrated outstanding success to the level of best practice, if you like, in New South Wales in terms of being a State Government employer with the highest representation of Aboriginal staff.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Congratulations.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: But we just need a few more around you here.

Mr SHERLOCK: Yes. I think that is probably all, Madam Chair.

The Hon. IAN WEST: As I understand it, you have an officer in that monitoring unit who is overseeing and monitoring that success. Are you in a position to give us some advice as to retention rates and periods of time? Are there any exit pollings done to ascertain the satisfaction rate, if you like, of those in the Aboriginal community who are coming through the system?

Mr SHERLOCK: Certainly. I do not have the actual figures with me in terms of retention, but what I can say anecdotally, I guess, is that it is put to me regularly that the Department of Juvenile Justice is the employer of choice for Aboriginal people. That is something that is not said lightly. It is put to me by our Aboriginal staff, by senior managers in the organisation who have been leading that strategy. Certainly I think there is a very high level of satisfaction.

CHAIR: I wish to ask a follow-up question on that. Are you doing anything similar in terms of recruiting people from non-English-speaking backgrounds to work with some of the young people in your care?

Mr SHERLOCK: Yes, Madam Chair, we are. There are other groups in the community that are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system, incredibly—but not to anywhere near the same extent as are young Aboriginal people. There are groups such as Pacific Islander young people. We have sought to employ people from their backgrounds to engage them with community organisations in a way that supports them in our services. I might refer to Ms Cross, who might have some further detail on that.

Ms CROSS: Whilst the department does employ a number of people from non-English-speaking backgrounds, we actually have five identified positions within the department where we have targeted specific staff from specific backgrounds to assist us to achieve the outcomes. We have juvenile justice officers. We have two multicultural officers. What we say is that these people are from non-English-speaking backgrounds but they are actually targeting specific groups within their local areas. We have a Vietnamese juvenile justice officer and a Pacific Islander juvenile justice officer, and we also have one caseworker position, for a person who is working with young people from a Pacific Island background.

CHAIR: Is that having a positive impact on the way that those young people are responding to being in the custody of the department?

Ms CROSS: I believe it is. We have a number of staff, as I said, who are not in an identified position but who work in our detention centres. A number of them are from a Pacific Islander

background, for example, in locations where we have Pacific Islander background clients, and we do see some very positive results there because there is an opportunity for those people to work with our very young clients as positive role models as well as working with them in regard to some cultural issues that they might have. But we also have support access as well throughout juvenile justice officers who are working in the community, so there is a two-pronged approach.

The Hon. IAN WEST: In terms of your return-to-work strategies in regard to the workers compensation issue we spoke about earlier, are you able to give us any rates or figures as to those return-to-work strategies relative to injuries sustained and in terms of percentages of those who have returned to work?

Ms CROSS: I do not have that data available with me. As I said, we have a significant program where we are targeting return to work strategies with our staff, and that has been a strategy that has been in place in more recent times. But, unfortunately, I do not have that data available with me.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: At the last estimates hearing, you might recall I asked the question "What is the dollar cost of the pay rise that has come into effect this year?" I think your answer was that you did not have the exact cost with you and the Minister offered to take it on notice. We did not actually get the exact cost of pay rises this year in the responses to questions on notice. I wonder if you have that figure now?

Mr SHERLOCK: I think we can clarify that for you. I think Ms Cross has the figures.

Ms CROSS: Yes. We have two separate pieces of information. One is in regard to the increase for the January 2001 pay increase in the year 2003, which was a \$1.98 million cost to the department, and that was the total cost. For 2003-04 the total level of funding for the department is \$4.28 million.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is that the funding given to the department, or is it the cost?

Ms CROSS: The cost.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The full-year effect of the pay rise in January?

Ms CROSS: No, the \$4.28 million is the cost for this financial year, 2003-04.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The cost of the two pay rises?

Ms CROSS: Yes.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What is the increase in the department's budget?

Ms CROSS: The department's budget this year is \$122 million, last year it was \$119 million.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: That is an increase of \$3 million.

Mr SHERLOCK: To be more precise, this year it is \$122.746 million. Last year the adjusted budget after allowing for transfers to the Corrections Health Service and other matters—the operating budget for the department—was \$119.651 million.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: To compare like with like, that \$119 million would have included six months of funding for the pay rise granted on 1 January.

Ms CROSS: That is correct.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What is that figure?

Ms CROSS: As I said, it was \$1.98 million.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: That sounds like a fairly substantial shortfall, a big gap, between what your pay rise will cost and the funding for the department. The shortfall is about \$2 million.

Mr SHERLOCK: The important point is that the department has had a strategy to find those savings requirements, and largely that has been around workers compensation costs. As I have already indicated, there has been a significant improvement in our performance, with a reduction in premium levels. Other savings related to the use of motor vehicles, information technology and other areas. We have been able to meet that shortfall through those strategies.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What is the dollar value of those savings?

Mr SHERLOCK: Certainly with workers compensation there was a \$3.3 million reduction in the premiums in 2002-03.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Congratulations, that is quite an achievement.

Mr SHERLOCK: Thank you. I ask Ms Cross to provide more detail.

Ms CROSS: As Mr Sherlock mentioned, we have made a saving of \$3.3 million in workers compensation. We also had some procurement efficiencies where we made \$400,000 in savings in the aggregation of procurements, getting better value for our dollar. There were savings on telephones and mobile use as well as motor vehicle rationalisation. We have reduced the number of our fleet by some 90 vehicles over the past two years. We are looking at extending the lease terms of those vehicles. There were minor savings in other areas such as fringe benefits tax, and so on.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What is the total saving?

Ms CROSS: At the end of 2002-03 it was \$5.328 million.

Mr SHERLOCK: I add that the savings achieved through those measures were greater than required by the Government. It has certainly been a challenge to find those savings, but the department believes it has been done in a way that does not impact adversely on our service delivery. Indeed, it has been the outcome of some very positive work, particularly in relation to workers compensation and achieving a far more professional, safer work environment for our staff.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Earlier we were talking about members' staff accompanying members of Parliament to juvenile detention facilities. The shadow Minister was denied the ability to have a staffer from the Opposition accompany her on a recent visit to Reiby. Was that decision made by you or by the Minister's office?

Mr SHERLOCK: I do not have any recollection of that particular visit. Certainly the arrangements we have made with the shadow Minister is that she approaches the Minister's office for approval to attend and indicates who she wishes to attend with her. Following the Minister's decision, the department makes the necessary arrangements.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: I am trying to get to the bottom of whether it is a procedural or political issue; obviously it is a political one. Can you give information on the recent report into health issues conducted by the department into the health of children within your facilities? Has that report been released? What are some of its findings?

Mr SHERLOCK: It was an extensive survey—to my knowledge the first ever undertaken in this State of the health needs of young people in custody. We have quite a lot of preliminary information, some of which our Minister announced today at the opening of a Juvenile Justice conference in Sydney. I will ask Mr Muir to give you some of the highlights of that survey. The full report of the survey has not been released formally at this time. It was done in a way that we have the consent of the young people concerned and we have no issue with providing you with some basic information in terms of the outcome of the survey.

Mr MUIR: The survey was conducted in partnership with the Corrections Health Service and with the Health Science Department of the University of Sydney. The survey looked at some 220 male detainees and 19 young women in custody. It looked at a range of indicators as to their health. We conducted a broad range of physical health screenings including some blood tests, a very detailed questionnaire on lifestyle, and some psychological screening. As the director-general indicated, to our knowledge it is the first study of its kind that has been done in Australia with a juvenile population. The conclusion has been followed up from a world-first study of a similar population of young people with community-based orders as well.

Some of the highlights are that the report is being discussed publicly and reported on for the first time today at an Australian Institute of Criminology conference on Juvenile Justice. Briefly, some of the outstanding features of the report, as one would expect, are that there were some social background indicators for detained young people that stood out. For instance, 43 per cent of all young people in custody who were surveyed had one or both parents in prison; 11 per cent had a parent currently incarcerated; 42 per cent said they had been physically abused; 38 per cent had experienced a level of emotional neglect; 34 per cent had experienced physical neglect; the figures on sexual abuse were low, but that is what one would expect in a self-report survey of this kind, because young people tend to underreport experiences of sexual assault.

When cross-tabulated against one of these psychological screenings that we conducted—and that was a screening on trauma—some indicators in that trauma survey showed us that some of these figures may have been actually underreported rather than overreported. In relation to physical health there were some of the things that one would expect. Asthma was one thing that we did not expect. About one-third of all young men and nearly 60 per cent of all young women had problems with asthma. Referring to hearing infections, 28 per cent of young men and 39 per cent of young women had some form of diagnosed ear infection, with a mild hearing loss in around one-third of young people. In relation to intellectual capacity, about 17 per cent were assessed as having an intellectual score consistent with an intellectual disability, but that was mitigated by the fact that we have not yet had an opportunity to properly cross-tabulate data to assess performance factors.

We found that reading levels were probably better than we thought, but in numeracy about 64 per cent of young people had arithmetic skills that were consistent with someone with an intellectual disability. So we are still looking at determining what that means. About 84 per cent had some form of clinical mental disorder, although the more severe of those disorders were relatively small in number. The majority of disorders were really at the mild to moderate range but the three most prevalent disorders were conduct disorder, substitute disorder and adjustment disorder. The latter certainly would be consistent with the very turbulent lives that some of these young people have led.

We found that 19 per cent had injected drugs in the 12 months prior to coming into custody, that about 90 per cent had used cannabis and that 96 per cent had consumed alcohol or had been drunk. We found very high levels of correlation between drug and alcohol use and the commission of crime, something that was outlined again recently at the Alcohol Summit. Those are just some of the major findings. It will be a detailed report when the department has had time to look at these issues in more detail. We will certainly be publishing the results of that survey.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: So the data you just revealed to us will be presented at the conference today. However, the more extensive parts of the report will be released later.

Mr MUIR: We have decided that in order to get the data into the research arena we will release what we are calling a key findings report, which is really a summary report. There will be an in-depth report that we hope to formally release around about April next year. There are some ethics committees that we have to consult before we actually release detailed findings. That was part of the research approval. But about April next year is the target for the whole report. The summary report will be discussed for the first time today.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: You said that 39 per cent of all respondents had ear infection problems. Is that a problem in the Aboriginal community? Have you been able to establish what percentage relates to indigenous respondents?

Mr MUIR: As a part of the ethics committee approval with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council we have not broken down the data.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: But are you seeking approval to do that?

Mr MUIR: At this stage we are still discussing the matter with the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council. One thing I can say about Aboriginal health is that it was certainly no worse than the non-Aboriginal cohort. The central feature of the health survey seemed not to be whether a young person was Aboriginal. Certainly the health of this cohort as an offending group seemed to be the more critical factor rather than aboriginality per se.

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Do you have statistics on sexually communicated diseases?

Mr MUIR: We do. The survey established that of those screened 93 per cent had engaged in sexual intercourse. The median age for the first sexual intercourse was 13 years with an age range from 6 to 17 years for males. The median age was 14 for females with an age range of 12 to 16. Of the 183 males and 14 females who had a regular partner, 49 per cent, or 89 of the young men, and 57 per cent of the young women had either never used condoms or used them less than half the time when they were engaged in penetrative sex with partners. Of the 184 males and 16 females who had had a casual partner, 33 per cent of the young men and 44 per cent of the young women had never used a condom or they had used them less than half the time when they had sex with casual partners.

Referring to the sexually transmitted disease rate—and I am going from memory here—we found that there were no incidences of HIV-AIDS amongst the population. Hepatitis B and C rates were around 10 per cent. The figure that probably surprised us a little is the fact that chlamydia was more prevalent amongst young women than amongst the adult female detained population.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What was that figure?

Mr MUIR: I am sorry, I do not have that figure in front of me. My recollection is somewhere approaching 30 per cent. That is the figure I can recall.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I refer to a question that was asked at the last estimates committee hearing. Mr Greene asked a question about the number of admissions in 2002-03, which was 4,169. He asked how many young people were actually involved in that. The answer was 1,875. He particularly wanted historical information so that he could work out whether there were more or fewer young people being admitted into custody. Do you have the figures for the previous year so that we can see whether that 1,875 figure has increased or decreased on the figures for the previous year? You can take that question on notice if you like.

Mr SHERLOCK: I think we have those figures here. Did you want the total number of people in custody?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: The total number of unique individuals who have been admitted to a detention centre in 2001-02.

Mr SHERLOCK: I have them split into remand and control—control being sentenced young people, otherwise they are on remand. In 2000-01 the number of unique individuals was 1,796 on remand and 675 on control orders. In 2001-02 the remand number was 1,762 and the control number was 608. In 2002-03 the remand number was 1,750 and control was 560.

The Hon. IAN WEST: What details can you give about the progress that has been made in the department's capital works program?

Mr SHERLOCK: At the moment the department is implementing what we call stage two of its capital works program, which has three key components to it. One is the development of the new detention centre for young women at Lidcombe on the site of the old Minda and Minali centres. The second project is the redevelopment of the Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre and the provision of infrastructure to support new accommodation services that have been put in place. The third project is the redevelopment of the Reiby Detention Centre.

I might take you through some of the details. This year \$9.379 million has been allocated to improve the infrastructure of Cobham, as I have said. Major construction will be undertaken throughout this year and we expect that project to be completed in 2005. Some \$10.853 million has been allocated to replace the outdated dormitory-style accommodation at Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre. The construction period will be approximately two years, with completion in 2005. Some \$14.264 million has been allocated this year for the new young women's centre at Lidcombe. I should also mention a number of projects in addition to those major construction projects.

Some \$1.661 million has been allocated for the upgrade of the department's client information data system to incorporate substantial changes in business processes arising from the recommendations of the Council on the Cost and Quality of Government report, which I mentioned earlier. Some \$1.208 million has been allocated for the continuing renewal of the department's information technology infrastructure. Some \$1.964 million has been allocated for the upgrade of the department's Mincom information management system. We are working on that project jointly with the Department of Commerce and the Powerhouse Museum. The Government has allocated funds to those three agencies, which have similar technologies, to redevelop their management information systems.

Some \$643,000 has been allocated to the capital purchase of transport vehicles to support the extension of juvenile transport to the North Coast region. That is part of a four-year program whereby the Department of Juvenile Justice is progressively taking over from the police service the transport of juveniles once those young people are in Juvenile Justice custody. Police are responsible for transporting those young people from the point of arrest to a juvenile justice centre and once they are in our custody Juvenile Justice will progressively, over the next four years, pick up responsibility across the State for their transport to court or to medical appointments. The capital cost I mentioned is the capital funding this year but there is a very significant recurrent cost attached to the takeover of that responsibility from police. That, in turn, will free many police officers to engage in what they would regard as core business rather than routinely transporting juveniles to court or to other locations.

In addition to those projects, \$1.1 million has been allocated this year to a new juvenile justice community office in the Hunter region. We have had community staff located there above the Worimi court but the Attorney General's Department is about to commence demolition of that court and to construct a brand-new court complex on that site, which the Department of Juvenile Justice has owned until now. This project will involve transferring the site to the Attorney General's Department for the construction of the new court and, through that process, freeing funds for the Department of Juvenile Justice to purchase another community office for our staff in the Newcastle area. That process was concluded recently and our staff have occupied that office.

The Hon. IAN WEST: What is the time frame for the new \$14 million centre at Lidcombe?

Mr SHERLOCK: We expect the centre to be completed probably in early 2006. The total cost of the centre is \$24.987 million.

The Hon. IAN WEST: As to assuming transport responsibilities from the police, has videoconferencing been factored into that transport system and what positive effect will it have in reducing costs and improving the user friendliness of the system?

Mr SHERLOCK: It is quite a complex issue in that there have been some legislative changes in relation to this. In simple terms, this legislative change indicates that young people are different from adults and have a right to attend court in person. Magistrates will decide, based on the circumstances of any particular case, as to whether that appearance can be conducted by way of a video link. In a sense, it is very early days and we do not know to what extent magistrates will make use of that technology. The department certainly believes it is a very valuable asset that can overcome the need to transport juveniles long distances to court appearances, in many cases simply for bail hearings or court mentions. That obviously poses a number of security risks and comes at a significant cost. The department certainly hopes that magistrates will make wide use of legislative changes that

have been passed through Parliament. At this stage it is very difficult to put a dollar figure on it but there will certainly be some savings.

The Hon. IAN WEST: I assume that that type of thinking would be incorporated in the new development that is taking place in the Hunter?

Mr SHERLOCK: Yes, it certainly is. We hope that in time there will be more accurate information as the process unfolds and that we can factor that into our future funding of those services.

The Hon. IAN WEST: Can you advise the Committee about the progress on the roll-out of the juvenile transport arrangements?

Mr SHERLOCK: We can provide some detailed information about that. It will occur over four years, as I said, and we are part the way down the track with the transfer. I will ask Mr Muir to give you some details.

Mr MUIR: The program commenced in July-August 2002 when the department initially assumed responsibility for transporting juvenile detainees in the Newcastle and Hunter areas, which is broadly defined as north of Wyong to approximately Raymond Terrace and the Hunter Valley. That was the trial on which the statewide takeover of transport from NSW Police was predicated. The department undertook that trial successfully. It not only took responsibility for transporting detainees but took over the staffing of Worimi Children's Court. This means that during business hours police are merely required to bring young persons whose bail was refused to the court and then the department assumes responsibility for the custody of those young people from that point. Until now that responsibility rested with NSW Police.

From 1 July this year, in a four-year program, the department will progressively assume all responsibility for NSW Police movements across the State. We have negotiated successfully a memorandum of understanding with NSW Police, which has been signed by both the director-general and the commissioner, that specifies responsibilities and the hand-over time frame. From 1 July this year the department has successfully assumed all transport responsibilities for young people from the Hunter area to the Queensland border—an area that is broadly defined as the North Coast and New England. We have hired and trained additional staff. We have purchased the appropriate vehicles and equipment for this function. As of today the department takes over a specialist Children's Court at Woy Woy, which will relieve the Central Coast commands of the same sorts of responsibilities. It will also alleviate previously difficult situations at Wyong Children's Court. This means that all Children's Court matters on the Central Coast will now be dealt with in a specialist facility, separate from adult prisoners.

The department has been able to ensure that in this rollout our vehicles are of the highest standard. We have reviewed our vehicle specifications, and we believe that, within the funds allocated, we have been able to design better transport vehicles for young people. We are in the process of tendering for those for the statewide rollout. The next phase will be in the next financial year, when the department assumes the whole of the Sydney metropolitan area; in 2005-06 any aspects of the Central Coast that we have not incorporated in the current takeover; then we will take over the western region of the State, and finally the Riverina and southern regions. The rollout itself takes a considerable amount of planning as we had to hire and train staff and ensure proper handover facilities with NSW Police. We have also successfully established a support infrastructure that co-ordinates movements of detainees across the State and operates in our central support office 16 hours a day, Monday to Friday.

CHAIR: The Department of Corrective Services has successfully used video conferencing to facilitate communications between inmates and their families where distance and other circumstances have precluded regular face-to-face visits. These have often been organised through the video conferencing services of community technology centres, of which there are approximately 150 scattered across the State in very small townships. Not all of them have video conferencing facilities, but quite a number do. Does the Department of Juvenile Justice use those facilities? If so, to what level of success? If not, would you be interested in taking up this opportunity?

Mr SHERLOCK: I will ask Mr Muir whether he has any knowledge of it being used in that particular way. I do not personally know.

Mr MUIR: We are aware of the facilities to which you refer. Our success in having families attend the community technology centres has been limited, but we have actively promoted it. I do not have the figures here as to the number of times we have used the video conferencing facilities for family contact, but they have been used. I know that we recently used them for an Aboriginal young person whose brother was killed. We were able to facilitate very speedy family contact, certainly much faster than if we had moved the family across the State. I do not have the figures, but I would have to be frank and say that the use has been minimal.

Mr SHERLOCK: We have been able to use the technology for young people to have contact with their legal representatives where they have been quite remote. For example, young people at Orana Juvenile Justice Centre in Dubbo have been able to have direct video contact with their legal representatives in Sydney. That is an example of the way in which we have used the technology at that location and others, beyond the original purpose—which was very much about court appearances as such. We have had to wait on legislative change to effect that. As I said earlier, now that legislation is in place we are starting to see a greater use of it for court appearances, in particular bail hearings and court mentions which do not require lengthy participation by the young person. It is far more efficient to be able to use that technology in that way.

Mr MUIR: It has been used for tele-psychiatry—psychiatric consultation. The other feature that may distinguish this department from the Department of Corrective Services is that our department also devotes funds specifically to ensure that families are assisted with travel and accommodation to visit their children whilst in custody.

CHAIR: Would you provide the Committee with an overview of recent developments in the educational and vocational programs being conducted in facilities run by your department?

Mr SHERLOCK: Every juvenile justice centre in the State has what we call an education and training unit that involves a range of programs provided by the Department of Education and Training, or TAFE, which of course comes under the umbrella of the department. I will ask Mr Muir to take you through some examples of those programs. I guess we need to understand that many of the young people coming into our centres have not attended school for a long time before they get there. Indeed, a recent survey indicated that 80 per cent of young people in our detention centres have not attended any educational program for six months prior to coming into custody. They also tend to have a record of having been expelled or excluded from school or other educational programs for a whole range of reasons. It is certainly quite a challenge to be able to provide for their educational needs, often in a very short period of time.

Mr MUIR: Against Mr Sherlock's background, those figures were again confirmed in the detainee survey. The department has had a very strong and proactive relationship with the Department of Education and Training to ensure that this very disadvantaged group of young people receive the best possible educational outcomes. We have recently seen achievements in some of our centres. For example, the Department of Education and Training has been monitoring very clear increases in reading age from the time the young person enters custody until the time they leave. This is only anecdotal, but this year we are certainly seeing the most young people I can remember receiving recognised educational qualifications, such as the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate. One young person in one of our larger centres completed university studies through distance education.

Certainly the provision of TAFE in our centres is at the highest level I can recall. The Department of Education and Training, as the provider, holds all those figures. This department does not hold the actual figures relating to the funds required to deliver those services. We are certainly very satisfied with the relationship we have with the Department of Education and Training. It is my view that given that the majority—or all—of these young people had no engagement with education and training outcomes, what they receive in our centres is probably the highest quality education many of these young people will have received in their lives, given the very disadvantaged backgrounds from which they come.

The department is working further to ensure that the gains made in custody are maintained through the funding of our employment skills training program, and the department contracts a number of services throughout the State to provide specialist employment training. The other service that will follow those through are post-release support services. The department again directly funds a number of agencies throughout the State to work with these young people when they are released to ensure that the gains commenced in custody are linked to the community and have some ability to be followed up.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Could you take on notice that we would like the salary levels of the centre managers?

Mr SHERLOCK: They vary, depending on the size of the centre.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I understand. Would it be possible to get that information centre by centre?

Mr SHERLOCK: Yes.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Thank you. Earlier we talked about an incident at Kariong last week. Were any staff or young people injured in that incident?

Mr MUIR: Two staff members suffered minor cuts to their hands, and one young person complained of some dizziness. The ambulance officers were there attending, and the young person was taken to Gosford hospital for observation. No treatment, to my knowledge, was administered. The young person was observed and released that night back to the department.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What implement was used to inflict the cuts on the hands?

Mr MUIR: One young person had a piece of glass, and it is my understanding that the cuts were the result of the glass that the young person was holding.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Was that glass obtained from the facility? How did they get the glass?

Mr MUIR: At this stage it would appear that it was a piece of glass from a television.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: You referred earlier to the Worimi site in the Hunter Valley. What was the value of the site?

Mr SHERLOCK: The value is approximately \$1.1 million. Treasury approved the department retaining those funds for the purpose of a community office in the Newcastle area.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Has the Yasmar site been valued?

Mr SHERLOCK: Not recently, to my knowledge. It is a site that the department owned, as I think you understand. It is a site that was occupied by Minda and Minali centres when they were operational.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am sorry, I meant the site at Haberfield.

Mr SHERLOCK: I am sorry, the current site at Haberfield?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes.

Ms CROSS: No. We would have it registered as part of the assets of the department. But there would be no register of what its market value or anything like that might be.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is the site going to be disposed of?

Mr SHERLOCK: The short answer to that question is that the department requires the site for approximately another two years. The future use of the site will have to be determined at that time. The Department of Juvenile Justice has requested from the Department of Commerce an options paper indicating what options there might be for future use of the site. There are a whole range of constraints about that particular site related to access and other problems. There has been some discussion between the department and Ashfield council about transfer of part of the site to the council for public and community use. We are establishing a working party to explore those possibilities. As you might be aware, the site is split into three different sections. The detention centre occupies two parts of the site. In the middle is a section that contains an old courthouse. That portion of the site is regarded as a heritage site. There has been some limited discussion about possibly transferring that part of the site to the local council for public access. But, at this stage, it is very early on in the process, and there needs to be some fairly detailed consideration given to what options there are for the total site and whether it can realistically be subdivided. Those discussions are yet to be had.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: It would not surprise you that Ashfield council has already got its eye on residential development on that site?

Mr SHERLOCK: I am not aware of any discussions on residential development.

CHAIR: It is a scurrilous rumour.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: In relation to the juvenile transport arrangements with police, is there any monitoring that you will undertake to see whether that affects the arrest rate of young people by police. Now that the police do not have the responsibility of driving them backwards and forwards to the detention centres, could this potentially lead to an increase in the number of arrests?

Mr SHERLOCK: The police will continue to have responsibility for transport from the point of arrest to a detention centre, so there is no issue about police being able to arrest young people and Juvenile Justice arriving to pick them up. It does not work in that way at all.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I understand that.

Mr SHERLOCK: Once they are in our detention, we convey them to court, supervise them at court and convey them back. We might take them to a medical appointment or something of that nature. So it is not something that should impact on the arrest rate.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is there to be any study of that? It is just that it will be a whole lot less hassle for the police. I know the police dislike doing that kind of work.

Mr MUIR: There are ongoing evaluations, but certainly in the Hunter and the North Coast today there is absolutely no indication of there being any increase in the numbers of young people coming into custody. This is something that, understandably, we have been fairly worried about. But there has been absolutely no indication that that will result in an increase in arrests.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: What is the value of the contract between the Department of Health and Corrections Health?

Mr SHERLOCK: I could give you the details of the budget transfer. The transfer was effected in about February this year. I think Ms Cross has details of the figures. There was a budget transfer last financial year, and then there is the recurrent budget that has been transferred from the Department of Juvenile Justice through the Department of Health to Corrections Health. Have we got the figures?

Ms CROSS: Yes. We transferred the function as at 10 February, and at that time the department had spent \$2.95 million in annual recurrent funding, and we transferred \$1.148 million across to that department. So it is a total of \$3.5 million.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am sorry, but I do not quite understand. What is the \$2.95 million figure?

Ms CROSS: That is the amount of money that had actually been spent on that function by the department up until February. So that was for that financial year.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: So you estimated the full-year effect to be \$3.5 million?

Ms CROSS: Yes.

Mr SHERLOCK: Can I add to that? There was the one-off amount last year, which was obviously not the full-year effect of the transfer. As to the amount of \$2.95 million of recurrent funds transferred, there was an additional amount of \$590,000 transferred from the Juvenile Justice budget to accommodate the transfer of some of the drug functions transferred from us to Corrections Health. You would be aware that we have had a Drugs Summit budget for a period of four years. There are a number of projects in that Drugs Summit budget that have been transferred from Juvenile Justice to Corrections Health. So there is another \$590,000 of funding for those projects transferred to them as well.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Is the ministerial office funded by the Department of Juvenile Justice or the Premier's Department?

Mr SHERLOCK: No. None of the funding for the ministerial office comes from the department.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: You referred earlier to the rate of young Aboriginal people in custody in the first quarter of 1994. Can you tell me the number of young Aboriginal people in custody in that first quarter of 1994?

Mr SHERLOCK: I would have to take that on notice. I do not have those figures with me. I only have the Institute of Criminology research that I mentioned earlier, and it speaks about the rate of detention for young Aboriginal people both in 1994 and 2001. But the actual numbers in custody at that time obviously would vary. We would need to pick a point in time to give you the figures in custody at any particular point in time. Would you like those?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I would like to know the actual number.

Mr SHERLOCK: For the first quarter of 1994, which is the figure I provided earlier?

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Yes. The figure I quoted earlier was taken from the green paper from Marie Bashir's report. It would appear to me, comparing that figure with the 110 Aboriginal people in custody, that the numbers have increased slightly: there are slightly more young Aboriginal people in custody. That is the issue that you were going to look into, the actual numbers.

Mr SHERLOCK: It was probably fairly difficult for us to access some of that, but we could do some more work. We have this research that gave us detention rates for the period. We could try to get that for you.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: Do you have an identified amount of spending on girls in detention or juvenile justice?

Mr SHERLOCK: Obviously, there is the cost of operating the Yasmar Detention Centre, which is exclusively for young women. Beyond that it would be difficult, I think, to separate out the cost of services to young women, given that they are provided to our community offices throughout the State. The cost of our community services to young women is, I guess, more difficult to identify. In detention, we can certainly identify the cost for you of operating the centre, if you wish.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: I am thinking more about the girls in custody strategy, and whether any funding has been allocated for that.

CHAIR: As we are almost out of time, that will have to be the last question asked. Mr Sherlock can answer it, if he has the information.

The Hon. CATHERINE CUSACK: He can answer it. I do not need an urgent answer.

Mr SHERLOCK: There is a whole range of strategies in that plan. I do not have with me a clearly identified costing attached to those strategies. The work that we are doing in that plan has been essentially resourced through the department's existing services. We have a close working relationship with the Department for Women. A lot of effort has been put into this by our policy staff in a central office. It also involves staff working in a detention centre at Yasmar. I guess the answer I have given you is what has just been put in front of me. It does not have a dedicated budget. The cost of implementing the plan is being met through the department's general business budget at central, regional and local levels. That is the answer, I guess.

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.