

Deputy Chairman; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Nick Griffiths; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon Frank Hough; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Graham Giffard; Hon Robyn McSweeney

Division 45: Police Service, \$617 119 000 -

Hon Jon Ford, Chairman.

Hon Nick Griffiths, Minister for Racing and Gaming representing the Minister for Police and Emergency Services.

Mr B.E. Matthews, Commissioner of Police.

Mr B.J. Brennan, Deputy Commissioner (Operations) - State Commander.

Mr P.M. de Mamiel, Director of Finance.

Mr I. Johnson, Superintendent, Strategic Information Management.

Mr A. Taylor, Director, Asset Management.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Hon Jon Ford): On behalf of the Legislative Council Estimates Committee, I welcome you to today's hearing. Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The Committee values that assistance.

For the information of members, these proceedings will be reported by Hansard. The daily *Hansard* will be available on the following morning. Hansard will distribute documents for correction, which must be returned on the A4 documents sent to members. The cut-off date for corrections will be indicated on the bottom of each page.

Members are asked to sit towards the front of the Chamber where practicable so that witnesses will not have to turn their head when answering questions. It will greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated fund estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount, and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the Committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to your advisers.

The Committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations. Have all witnesses read, understood and completed the Information for Witnesses form? For the benefit of Hansard, all witnesses have indicated in the affirmative. Do all witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of the document? All witnesses have indicated in the affirmative.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I shall begin with the obvious question. Although the commissioner's answer was reported in the Press, I would like the answer on the official record.

I refer to the output and appropriation summary on page 683, which indicates in 2002-03 variations between the budgeted amounts and the estimated actuals as follows: output 1, a variation of \$2.3 million; output 2, \$98 000; output 3, \$1 million; output 4, \$2.2 million; and output 5, \$619 000. This might be characterised by some as underspending; nonetheless, it is a variation.

I refer also to page 93 of the 2002 annual report, which indicates variations to the amounts allocated in that year to emergency management and coordination of \$2.2 million; investigation of offences, \$4.1 million; and services to judicial processes, \$8.9 million. Will the minister explain those variations that are characterised as underspending in the police budget?

[10.50 am]

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: That is an interesting characterisation. I invite the commissioner to respond, as there is a very simple explanation for the figures.

Mr MATTHEWS: The *Budget Statements* do not reflect an underexpenditure but, rather, the transfer of \$7.4 million from recurrent funds to capital works for the purchase, rather than the lease, of equipment required for computer aided dispatch and communications services 1A and 1B; that is, the computer system at the police operations centre at Midland. The decision to purchase, rather than lease, the CADCOM equipment will save the Government approximately \$7 million over the life of the project. The estimated actuals for 2002-03 reflect an adjustment to the original budget for each output as follows: output 1, \$2.788 million; output 2, \$103 000; output 3, \$1.256 million; output 4, \$2.577 million and output 5, \$706 000; that is a total of \$7.438 million. The Police Service post preparation of the *Budget Statements* has an estimated cash surplus, which is not directly related to that figure. There has been a lot of debate about a surplus, as distinct from what are, in fact, accounting adjustments.

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Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I have read press reports that indicate there has been a delay in DNA collection, characterised again as a backlog in the PathCentre. I do not know whether it is a backlog of the back capture or a backlog of the current capture, but it is characterised as a backlog. If that is so, some significant issues and trends that are highlighted in these budget papers need to be explained. The second dot point on page 682 states -

Legislative reforms, including the *Criminal Investigation (Identifying People) Act 2002*, have enhanced criminal investigative powers.

A significant part of that statement relates to what is called the DNA legislation. The third dot point on page 682 states -

The success of the DNA back capture project has realised the potential for further investigation of historic crimes and clearance of currently unresolved matters.

The percentage of reported and detected offences against the person cleared, under outcomes at page 685, has a note that states -

The impact of the Western Australian DNA database on clearance rates cannot be quantified at this point in time.

Apart from the grammatical infelicity of that statement, it is repeated several times. There has been significant legislative progress with DNA, but it would appear that there is a lag between the legislative opportunity and the use of this very valuable investigative tool. Will the minister please explain the lag?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: First, the honourable member used that remarkable phrase if so. I have often said that the biggest word in politics is the word if. The member also used the word appear. The commissioner will comment on the issue concerning DNA and I trust that will put the member's fears to rest.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: No, I asked for an explanation.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: Certainly, and he based it -

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I based it on a proposition.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: That is perfectly reasonable.

[11.00 am]

Mr MATTHEWS: Inevitably, the collection of samples must follow the legislation because that is where the empowering comes from. It is true that the DNA legislation has enhanced criminal investigative powers, and they are quite significant powers that we are using. We estimate that the database will ultimately have 25 000 samples, and we have already had considerable success with the samples on that database. When the legislation was enacted, we had to estimate the allocation of funds that would be necessary for the WA Centre for Pathology and Medical Research - PathCentre - to undertake analysis of the samples collected. We endeavoured to persuade the PathCentre to employ staff at a certain time and to train those staff so that they would be qualified to undertake that analysis. Unfortunately, those staff were brought on several months later than we intended. In the meantime, we were collecting samples once the legislation came into effect. Until recently, we were forwarding samples at the rate of 400 per week. We have now increased that to 1 400 per week, because the scientists who were brought on are now fully qualified to undertake all the sampling. We have had a backlog because we have held samples at our police exhibits laboratory. As scientists have come on stream we have increased the rate at which samples have been passed over to the PathCentre. Notwithstanding that, we have had considerable success in cold linking - that is, linking unsolved crimes from some time ago and crimes that have been carried out in different parts of the State, so we know that the same offender is involved - and in hot linking crimes, in which a current offender is operating or a current crime is under analysis. As a result of not being able to put through as many samples as we would ideally have liked, we had a surplus, and we identified around January the allocation of DNA money would not be expended. Because the allocation was for a specific program, we went back to the minister, advised her of that and sought approval to expend that money in different ways. We have had some approvals for that just lately.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: If I may ask a supplementary question, there is a budget allocation for forensic facilities located in Midland. Is it still the intention that the PathCentre will be collocated with the police forensic facilities at that site?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: That has yet to be determined. It is not a matter within the say-so of the commissioner.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: There was a memorandum of understanding.

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Mr MATTHEWS: The police are very keen for that to occur, but of course it is for the determination of another department and another minister. We are proceeding with the building of a forensic facility at Midland. We hope that the PathCentre and others will join together there. If they do not, we will carry on regardless.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: The commissioner must encourage them to leave their green, leafy suburbs. I refer to page 682. This is again controversial, and the minister should be given an opportunity to explain. The third last dot point states that compared with other Australian States and Territories, Western Australia has consistently recorded the highest victimisation rate for burglary between 1993 and 2001 and that overall during 2002-03 there has been a decrease in the number of reported burglary offences and an improvement in the clearance rate. It still holds true that the reported offences for Western Australia compare very unfavourably with the national record. It also holds true that the clearance rate for those offences compares unfavourably with other States - the higher the clearance rate, the lower the reported offence rate; the higher the offence rate, the lower the clearance rate. Could the minister indicate, perhaps through the commissioner, what initiatives are being taken to address the situation?

Mr MATTHEWS: I acknowledge that there is a correlation between clearance rates and the level of offending. There is no doubt that police can influence the level of crime that occurs in a community. We obviously do that in conjunction with others in the community. It is true that we are not happy with the status of having the highest burglary rate compared with other States and Territories in Australia. We are not satisfied with the clearance rates for burglary, which are running at about 14.8 per cent for the total category of burglary. We aim to both reduce the number of burglaries being committed and improve the clearance rates. Obviously taking action on both those aspects will add to improvements on either side.

The police strategic executive has considered some of the perceived successes and looked at some of the other States and the strategies we could implement over and above those that we are currently employing. One strategy is to allocate problem areas to a particular portfolio, invariably to an assistant commissioner. We have agreed to do that with Assistant Commissioner Atherton. He has been given the task of getting the burglary rate down below the Australian national average and making a significant dent over the next 12 months in the level of offending and burglary and, in correlation with that, increasing the clearance rates. We will be looking at the resources we need to put in, whether they be forensic officers, scene-of-crime examiners or whoever, to ensure that we respond appropriately to burglary when it is reported, and continue to attack offenders, particularly repetitive offenders. A good example is an operation that we have been running for three weeks and which has a further week to run. It is called Operation Crossover. We have apprehended 212 offenders and laid more than 600 charges during the three-week operation. Assistant Commissioner Atherton displayed some of the stolen property this morning at Mirrabooka and asked people to come in and identify it. The way that policing is going is not just to respond to and follow up on complaints of a burglary, but to use collected intelligence from the community through the whole of the organisation to identify and target those people who are engaging in crime, particularly burglaries. It obviously involves searching houses, stopping people in the streets, checking pawnbrokers, looking at receivers and all those types of things. We have been undertaking a range of strategies. I must say that we are getting better at it, because there has been a reduction in the rate of offending and an improvement in the clearance rate, but it is not what we intend it to be. We are therefore engaging in some additional strategies to better improve on those two figures.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Page 684 refers to outcomes and key effectiveness indicators. One outcome is that the community has confidence in the level of public order, safety and security. The assessment of public opinion indicates that 87 per cent of people feel safe at home alone during the day; 74 per cent feel safe at home alone at night; 87 per cent while walking or jogging locally during the day; and 36 per cent while walking or jogging locally at night. Some 54 per cent, or half the passengers, feel safe while travelling on public transport during the day; only 17 per cent feel safe while travelling on public transport at night. When we look at the targets we find an increase to 88 per cent for people feeling safe at home during the day and 74 per cent for people feeling safe at home alone at night, which is the same as was achieved in 2001-02. We find a target of 40 per cent for people feeling safe while walking or jogging locally at night, which is the same as 2002-03; 78 per cent for people feeling safe while travelling on public transport during the day, and some aspiration to improvement there; and 25 per cent for people feeling safe while travelling on public transport at night. Those are not very encouraging figures on the face of it. Perhaps the minister could explain why those figures are so apparently depressingly low and why the targets are not higher for the encouragement of the public to feel safe in all those places and in all those circumstances? I would have thought that something closer to 100 per cent would have been more desirable.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: These are matters of people's attitudes and perceptions. The aim is certainly 100 per cent, but unfortunately realism says otherwise. I will ask the commissioner to elaborate in a moment, but I understand that what is set out is a realistic assessment of what is achievable. The 100 per cent figure is a target,

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but people's perceptions are affected by many things over which those of us in this Chamber have no control, such as world events. The world today may seem to be somewhat less safe in the minds of many people than it was until relatively recently.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I acknowledge what the minister is saying, but the mission statement reads "In partnership with the community, create a safer and more secure Western Australia by providing quality police services." If there is a gap between the public's sense of security and that mission statement, then an explanation that a lot of things are happening in the world to cause people to feel insecure does not address that issue.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: The answer is in part the difference between perception and reality. The community can be assured that the Police Service is very concerned to achieve its mission.

Mr MATTHEWS: The measuring of people's perceptions is interesting, because it is really an attitude of mind, and that is what the survey reflects. People's perceptions are influenced by events that are occurring at the time of the survey. It is probably difficult for people to be sure that their sense of insecurity is related solely to the particular area that is aimed at in the survey, and I think that is what the minister is referring to. If there are times of uncertainty and the nation is at war or whatever, that has an impact in a subconscious way on what people think and feel. The intention of the mission statement is to achieve the reality of creating a safer and more secure society. That deals with a range of aspects, such as crime, offending and road trauma. The mission is not an easy mission. It is what we are aiming for over the period of operation of the Police Service. A number of the Police Services in Australia have debated whether they should conduct a perceptions survey, because people's perceptions are influenced very largely by the media rather than by what is actually happening on the ground. We might be doing brilliantly in a particular area but that might not be reflected in what we are portraying to the public. In that sense we have to acknowledge that people's perceptions may not reflect the reality on the ground. There is no doubt that if we are being successful in reducing the incidence of crime and in clearing crimes, then we would expect an improvement in people's perceptions of crime. One example that I have often quoted in the paper is if an old lady is attacked in a southern suburb of Perth or even in the south west, an old lady in Joondalup may suddenly feel afraid or less secure in her home. There is no reason for that to occur, but that is the reality, particularly with older people. It does not really matter what is happening and what the commissioner says about it all, but if that person feels insecure and is surveyed then that is what she will reflect in her answer. That is why a lot of Police Services are questioning the value of having a perceptions survey, because all it does is reflect a beat-up in the media or whatever.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: But it also indicates that you should not use those perceptions as a measure of output both in your annual report and in the budget.

Mr MATTHEWS: Exactly.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I refer to page 687. One of the major achievements for 2002-03 reads "Conducted Operation Atone". As an ignorant politician can you tell me what Operation Atone has achieved and why it is significant in the context of the *Budget Statements*?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: Operation Atone commenced in June 2002 after conflicts had been highlighted between two groups of Vietnamese youths. The operation resulted in 126 apprehensions on charges including murder, drug trafficking, numerous Weapons Act offences and breaches of bail conditions. One of the main strategies of the operation was the active policing of bail conditions for group members. During the operation there was a five-month period in which there were no reported serious incidents between members of the groups, which was the first such period since the groups first came to prominence some years ago. More recently, officers attached to Operation Atone have charged two youths with causing grievous bodily harm after a stabbing in a Northbridge laneway on 28 April this year.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I refer to page 681. It is pleasing to note the increase in the operational police budget from 2000-01. I ask the minister to comment on how the Western Australian community has benefited from that increase.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: The benefits to the community are considerable. More police are available to respond to calls for assistance. The police are better equipped; for example, with improved information technology systems that will ensure that police officers can get the information that they need when they need it. There is a new radio dispatch system, the computer aided dispatch and communications services - the CADCOM project. There are new hand guns. There are two new booze buses for country areas. There will be a new state-of-the-art police academy, and new police stations in Kensington, Wanneroo Newman and Laverton. That is across the state, not just in a particular region. More crimes have been solved and, importantly, deterred through the DNA legislation that was referred to earlier. The establishment of the transit unit has improved the policing of the urban rail network. There will be eight domestic violence officers and the commencement of nine new police

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stations in remote Aboriginal communities in response to the Gordon inquiry. That is a range of things that will take place across a variety of areas in Western Australia that will be to the overall good of the community.

[11.20 am]

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Given that this session lasts for only an hour, if all the lead speakers ask long, lengthy questions and get long, lengthy answers, not everybody will get a chance. I ask members and witnesses and the minister to keep their answers succinct.

Hon SUE ELLERY: The second dot point under major achievements for 2002-03 on page 867 refers to Aboriginal police liaison officers. Will the minister provide advice on whether we are on track to recruit the additional 40 Aboriginal police liaison officers? I think I have asked the next question in each of the last two estimates sessions. What specific initiatives are being undertaken to attract indigenous people to join the Police Service?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: My understanding is that an additional 10 officers will be recruited in 2003-04; and by 30 June 2004, 134 will be employed, compared with 104 as at 30 June 2001. I invite the commissioner to comment on the increase in the representation of indigenous Australians in the Police Service.

Mr MATTHEWS: We have been very keen to engage Aboriginal people in the service. Traditionally we have done that through two streams, both coming in as sworn police officers and as Aboriginal police liaison officers. To do that we have engaged in advertising. We have used some of the indigenous media outlets for that purpose and we target career talks at schools and areas where young Aboriginal people are located, encouraging them to become either police officers or Aboriginal police liaison officers. Those campaigns have produced the numbers necessary to fill the vacancies. We will have 134 by 30 June 2004. There is a transition process to increase the number of mainstream Aboriginal police officers, taking them from being APLOs to officers, and obviously we will then fill the gaps; and we have a partnership with the Unity of the First People of Australia which has been very successful in providing an up-skill for those applicants to make that transition to the Police Service.

Hon SUE ELLERY: At page 683 in the table under major policy decisions reference is made to the Gordon inquiry. Will the minister outline the specific initiatives funded as a result of the Gordon inquiry, and at what cost?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: I will try to be succinct. They include the establishment of sergeant positions as domestic violence liaison officers in eight regional locations by 30 June 2003 at a cost of an additional \$0.04 million over and above salaries; and capital funding of \$10 million over three years, commencing in 2003-04, for nine police facilities in remote areas. Upon completion of those facilities, \$3.2 million has been provided for operational costs at Warburton; Kintore, which is in the Northern Territory; the Docker River project quadrant, involving Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia; Kalumburu; Balgo; Jigalong; Warburton; Bidadanga; and the Dampier peninsula where capital funding of \$315 000 was provided for the set up and implementation of a video evidentiary unit to deal with interviewing children; and a further two at the Police Service reviewing procedures and implementing corrective action in a number of areas in response to family violence and developing a family violence and case management database.

Hon SUE ELLERY: In answer to the first question, the minister referred to CADCOM. Can the minister provide a bit more information about that? The transfer of funds is referred to in the same table on page 683. Can the minister explain the purpose of the transfer and what results are expected from the CADCOM project?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: I will let the commissioner do that.

Mr MATTHEWS: The project continued to be funded by way of a lease arrangement with private funds. It was decided after an independent review to convert that arrangement to a traditional capital works project which was fully funded over the life of the project. It is a very important and critical project in terms of voice management - managing calls being received and then allocating resources to attend. In that sense there are really three components: the voice management system, a computer-aided dispatch system and a digital trunk radio. In effect, the full funding has now been provided in the estimates. In February last year, BAE Systems Australia, the prime contractor, advised there were difficulties with Simoco Telecommunications Ltd, the subcontract for the radio system. That has been reviewed. It is no longer in the contract and we will be going to tender shortly, initially for an engineer consultant and then subsequently for a new digital trunk radio network. I am not sure at this stage who will be providing that, but when it does come it will be up and running within four years and it will provide for the first time a modern, secure encrypted radio system which criminals and others will not be able to listen in to. It will also permit us to use computers in cars and transmit data back and forth. We currently have the voice management system operating and we anticipate by the end of the year that we will have the CADCOM process going. In that sense, two-thirds of the project will be completed by this calendar year. The third project will take much longer through the tender process and the establishment of the digital trunk radio network.

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Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: I refer to outputs 1 to 5 on page 683 under output and appropriation summary. The indication is that we are below budget spending of \$6.3 million. How many country police stations are currently vacant or unfilled; where are these positions located; how long has each of these positions been unfilled; will the positions be filled, and when; and, if not, why not?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: The honourable member has sought detailed information that I will take on notice, and the answer will be provided subsequently.

[Supplementary Information No 57.]

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: My next question relates to Geraldton. The third dot point on page 688 refers to the mounted and canine sections. Has there been a request for the canine section to have a presence in Geraldton to assist with police patrols? Is there any intention to meet that request?

[11.30 am]

Mr MATTHEWS: It is true that a number of towns are keen to have a canine section, and particularly some of the provincial cities. In an ideal world that would be desirable. In the meantime, we are building up the canine section in Perth. We have a dog and handler in Bunbury and that has worked very well. We send dog patrols across the whole of the State to assist with specific operations or searches and, again, they have had some great success. There is a shortage of German shepherds across the world. We advertise and take them in as fast as we can. It is desirable to keep increasing the numbers of handlers and dogs of good quality stock, and we will also engage in breeding dogs when it is appropriate. At some future point I anticipate that we may have dog handlers in some of the major provincial cities across the State, but we do not have enough dogs at the moment. It is a matter of time to build up the numbers.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: Have you had a specific request from Geraldton?

Mr MATTHEWS: I cannot say that there has been a specific request from any particular place. Kalgoorlie is one town that comes to mind. A number of police would like dogs in the area and a number of local authorities are keen to have them as well. When there is a specific operation or need, we try to address that by sending dogs to the area. At some point it would be desirable to have a dog section in at least the five major provincial cities, but that is some years away.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: I refer to page 688. Hon Sue Ellery has already mentioned the computer aided dispatch and communications project. I would like some specific information about that project. The minister may want to deal with this by way of supplementary information. Can he provide a brief description of each stage of the project, the current status of each stage of the project, the total estimated cost of those stages for each year, how much that expenditure is under budget in each case, and the expected implementation time frame for those stages?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: Hon Murray Criddle has asked a number of questions. It is probably more efficient that the answer be provided by way of supplementary information. It will be more efficient to take it on notice.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: I am happy to have it provided by way of supplementary information. I also have a number of other questions that I will put on notice.

[Supplementary Information No 58.]

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I refer to the second dot point under major achievements on page 687. My question relates to the original question of Hon Derrick Tomlinson when he asked about the morale in the broader community. Do you have a percentage figure for the morale in the Police Service at this stage?

Mr MATTHEWS: I think morale is good, considering that we are in the midst of a royal commission, which is not an ideal time for any police service. We have recently done focus surveys of the public in an endeavour to estimate and assess the level of morale. My assessment is that the morale of the vast bulk of officers who have not been touched by the royal commission is good. Their morale varies with their level of concern about what has come out of the royal commission. They are all concerned that it is affecting the reputation of the service as a whole, but not them personally, and their morale is good. There has no doubt been a loss of morale for those officers who have been mentioned, whether adversely or otherwise. That fluctuates depending on what stage they are at in having their allegations aired and tested. In the service overall, most of the police officers are endeavouring to deliver core functions as best they can. The vast majority have not been touched by the royal commission. In that sense, I think the service is in good heart. Having said that, it is a difficult time for the service. We have some issues to work through and we will work through them.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I refer to page 687. This is a question about police that needs to be answered by the Premier and the Minister for Police. It has been reported in the Press that an additional 250 police officers have

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been promised in the system. What is the incremental increase in the number of police officers? On page 80 of the human resources information on sworn members by rank, it states that in 2001 there were 4 993 sworn officers and currently there are 4 955. In fact, that is a decrease of 38 personnel, but there was to be an increase of 250 officers. If there have been 250 resignations and there are 250 new officers, there is a problem with the attrition rate.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: Before I invite the commissioner to go into those matters in detail, I have been provided with a chart that demonstrates quite clearly how matters have progressed. The columns show that in 1997-98 there was a very flat number of police officers in both approved strength and actual full-time equivalents. Around the time that the current Government came to power, there was a jump in recruiting to accommodate the move to the new academy. That was necessary because there was envisaged to be no intake during the period of the move. Very early in 2001 - I think in the life of the current Government - there was a jump. However, after the current Government's election, the progression shows a significant upward trend in both the approved strength and the actual FTEs.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Can you explain which column is for the approved strength and which is for the FTEs?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: This is as at 30 June. The approved strengths are indicated in the red columns on the left-hand side and the actual FTEs are on the right-hand side. The chart shows quite graphically a very significant improvement in police numbers during the period of the current Government. I contrast that with the very flat arrangements that existed previously. However, I invite the commissioner to go into the detail.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I ask the commissioner to make his answer as brief as possible, because four members have indicated that they want to ask questions.

[11.40 am]

Mr MATTHEWS: Talking specifically to the 250 new officers, members can see that the red column is the approved strength in each of the financial years 2000-01 through to 2004-05. Obviously, the latter two years are projected.

Hon PETER FOSS: They are predicted, not current.

Mr MATTHEWS: Correct.

Hon PETER FOSS: The question was about what happened.

Mr MATTHEWS: I am explaining it. We are in the 2002-03 year. We have 100 new police, plus the extra 15 officers for this year. We will achieve the 4 841 police. We have 60 new police officers planned for next year, which will mean 175 new police officers. We project to achieve that figure. The 250 police officers will be achieved over the term of the Government, as estimated. We will then have 4 961 officers. The progression has been made. The numbers increased in 2000-01 because we front-loaded recruits into the old Police Academy. We made the transition to the new academy and did not recruit for seven and a half months. Attrition brought down the number and we did not quite achieve our target. We made up that number this year.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I refer to page 80 of the human resources section of the department's annual report. I do not know whether that chart was a smoke-blowing exercise. Since 1998, the number of 4 830 officers has increased to 4 955, which is an increase of 125 people in five years.

Hon PETER FOSS: Most of them were appointed by us.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: It does not matter whom it was by. There has been an increase of 125 personnel in five years.

Hon PETER FOSS: It went down on last year's figure.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: It dipped last year.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: I ask the commissioner to explain what he has already explained.

Mr MATTHEWS: One can take two positions in terms of the end of the year for the two respective years. That is why we increased police numbers in 2000-01 above the authorised strength. As we shifted to the new Police Academy, we stopped recruiting for seven and a half months. When the new academy opened, we commenced recruiting and made up for the attrition that had occurred. We attempted to increase to the authorised strength. We did not make it by six people. This year, in addition to the extra 15 officers, we will make up the number to 4 841 officers. I think the annual report was looking at the previous years and the last two years, which distorts the situation.

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Hon FRANK HOUGH: In my final question I refer to a matter of reported frustration for officers in police stations. Is the minister looking at getting police officers out on the track? The example I use is delivering summonses and restraining orders; that is, operating as delivery boys in police vehicles while fully armed. Also, officers have become clerks in the department. Would it not be better to have non-service personnel carry out that work? Therefore, trained police officers could do trained police officer work.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: I invite the commissioner to answer the question.

Mr MATTHEWS: We are not funded to increase the number of unsworn officers. Of course, some police duties involve recording data. Some officers must do it themselves as it is their data they need to record. Part of the role of police officers is serving summonses and a range of such duties. We are funded accordingly. Police officers are employed for that task, among a range of others.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: That does not answer the question.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: It just does not give the answer the member wanted.

Hon ED DERMER: My first question relates to the Wanneroo Police Station, which is listed under works in progress on page 698 of the *Budget Statements*. I note that the estimated expenditure for 2003-04 is significantly increased on that for the current financial year. I am interested to hear the progress to date, and the anticipated progress for 2003-04. What is the anticipated date for the new Wanneroo Police Station to be up and running?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: I thank the member for the question. The existing Wanneroo Police Station is over 30 years old. It is overcrowded and lacks the facilities required for effective policing. The new facility is very important. The purchase of land will be finalised and the construction of the replacement police station will commence in 2003-04, with planned expenditure of \$1.5 million. The total cost of the station is anticipated to be \$3 million, with occupancy planned for late 2004. The existing police station is at 942 Wanneroo Road, and the new complex is likely to be located in the civic centre precinct. The replacement facility will be designed to provide a safer and more appropriate facility for staff, offenders and the public, and it will be of great assistance in providing better policing services to the local community and the rapidly developing suburbs of the northern corridor. In particular, it will be designed to accommodate 20 general duties and traffic staff, with the capacity for expansion to meet projected medium-term growth.

Hon PETER FOSS: Before I ask my question, I clarify an answer given earlier. The chart seemed to be largely predictions for the future and partly historical figures. Secondly, the biggest increase was in June 2001 as a result of an initiative of the former Government to build the new Police Academy. The numbers dropped in the first year of this Government.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: The question has already been answered, with respect to the honourable member. Certainly, where the chart deals with the out years, it deals with the future; where the chart deals with the past, it deals with the past. I explained, as did the commissioner, that a jump in recruiting occurred to accommodate the fact that recruiting would not take place with the move to the new Police Academy. That recruitment occurred early in the life of this Government. It was a blip.

Hon PETER FOSS: It is curious that the minister is not prepared to let the commissioner answer on an operational matter.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: Absolute rubbish! The commissioner has already answered the question - so have I. It is a repetitive question.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: What about the separation of powers.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: The member does not believe in the separation of powers - he never has!

[11.50 am]

Hon PETER FOSS: On Radio 720 on 31 January 2001, the now Minister for Health stated, as recorded by the Government Media Monitoring Unit -

A police service needs two things. As I've already said, it needs appropriate resources and effective legislation.

He then went on to give an example of what I think was meant to show lack of resources. He said, "Do you know that last year 30,000 calls to police stations went unanswered?" Does the Police Service keep records upon which such a statement could be based? If so, what are they? Who has access to those records and for what purpose? Has the minister any idea whether the figure quoted was correct? Using the same basis for information, is he able to tell us whether the situation has improved or worsened? In either case, is the minister

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able to provide some idea of the number of calls to police stations that went and are continuing to be unanswered?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: The member refers to a media comment attributed to the now Minister for Health made on a day in January 2001. I have no knowledge of that media comment. That question is the sort of question more appropriately taken on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No 59.*]

Hon PETER FOSS: Okay. As long as I get an answer.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: You always get answers; you just do not like them.

Hon PETER FOSS: The minister knows the Press is watching. He hates answering that sort of question when the Press is watching.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: You just like asking them.

Hon PETER FOSS: It was a good question.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: It took you two years to think of it.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I refer to the works in progress on page 698. Can the minister provide more detail on the Government's commitment to spend more than \$12 million in 2003-04 on the police operations support facility? What is the nature of the work to be completed in the area of facility maintenance and occupational safety and health modifications?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: The development of the police operation and support facilities at Midland continues. The design work for the \$23 million forensic component of the facility has been completed and construction has commenced. Projected expenditure of \$12.3 million is planned for 2003-04. Occupancy is scheduled for mid 2005. The new forensic facility will accommodate 122 police personnel and encompass modern laboratories, offices, storage facilities, photography studios, a vehicle inspection facility and staff amenities. Police sections to be accommodated in the forensic facility include crime scenes, fingerprints, ballistics, DNA and exhibits coordination units, document examination, imaging survey and the drug receiving unit.

Mr MATTHEWS: In this coming year it is intended to spend just over \$4 million on addressing high-risk category work items that we identified in the statewide audit undertaken on occupational safety and health. The nature of the work undertaken includes additional power points and lighting, upgraded perimeter fencing, upgraded storage and handling facilities for hazardous substances, upgraded security systems to improve the safety of staff and improvements to the staff amenities area. Approximately 65 per cent of that will be carried out at regional stations.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: I refer to the royal commission in the second dot point on page 681. What actions have been undertaken by the Police Service or are planned in response to the royal commission's findings?

Mr MATTHEWS: We have made four comprehensive submissions to the royal commission relating to external oversight of the Police Service - corruption prevention strategies, unauthorised access to and disclosure of information and internal investigations and disciplinary processes. They have occurred through round-table discussions at which new initiatives have been raised that could enhance the Police Service culture in the fight against corruption. These include developing a more comprehensive audit function for information management and technology; continuing the strong emphasis on cultural change, particularly the focus on ethics training programs; implementing a new approach to enable the Police Service professional standards portfolio to work with the new Corruption and Crime Commission; and, consistent with the royal commission's recommendation, making further advances in human resource procedures, including recruiting and promotional advancement. It is a comprehensive package. I could refer to a range of other processes; however, we are working closely with the royal commission and we will continue that approach with the Corruption and Crime Commission. It is a matter of improving the integrity of the organisation and effectively the wellness of the service in addressing issues of corruption that have been exposed and that the Police Service has exposed through a range of strategies.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: This is a follow-up question to matters illustrated in the graphs to which the minister and the commissioner referred. I refer to each of the four output measures on page 687. The total indicates 40 fewer FTEs than were budgeted for. On page 689, output 2, emergency management, indicates two fewer; page 691, traffic management and road safety, 19 fewer; and page 693, response to and investigation of offences, 38 fewer. The total is 99 fewer FTEs. Does this 100, in round figures, reflect the number of sworn officers or is it a combination of sworn officers and civil service personnel? Does it reflect that the Police Service was 100 personnel understaffed?

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Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: The second part of the question reflects the personnel officers engaged in training.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Does the minister mean sworn officers?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: I am referring to the officers engaged in training.

Mr MATTHEWS: The variables that have affected the estimated actual FTE numbers for all the various outputs reflect the fact that a number of officers were on leave without pay, which is a further 20, giving a total of 50. The budget figure was overstated by 35 due to the 15 additional police officers being recruited. The original estimate was 50. The balance was deferred to 2003-04 and 2004-05. Estimates tend to be overstated as a result of the unknown timing of recruitment schools. The graph on recruitment that I showed members reflected the hiatus in recruitment. The need to catch up meant that 282 officers, for example, were in training this year. When they are in training they do not contribute to outputs. The figures referred to by the member represent a mix of sworn and unsworn officers. The number of unsworn officers has reduced, and the number of sworn officers has increased. However, the sworn officers have been in training and therefore did not contribute to output measures.

[12 noon]

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Both the budget papers and the annual report are virtually silent on the matter of training. Will the minister provide on notice some indication of the cost of training for police officers in the various categories of recruit, sergeant, detective, specific purpose training for DNA data retrieval and so on?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: That would be very useful information and the question will be taken on notice.

[Supplementary Information No 60.]

Hon ED DERMER: My question relates to page 687, which lists the major achievements for 2002-03. The second last dot point under output 1 refers to the outlaw motor cycle gang unit. How many arrests have been made and how many charges have been preferred through the work of the unit? I am interested also in the effectiveness of the unit in removing drugs and firearms from the community.

Mr BRENNAN: I can quote some fairly comprehensive statistics on the effectiveness of the outlaw motor cycle gang task force, but I will touch on the high spots, which may provide some satisfaction for the member. A total of 198 unlicensed firearms were seized in 1999-03. I refer to that period because the task force has been in operation since 1999. Police seized 37 631 rounds of ammunition for unlicensed firearms and 103 unlicensed firearms, mostly hand guns, from people who possessed them in unsatisfactory circumstances. We challenged the authority of those people to hold those licences and in many cases the licences were withdrawn. There were 44 kilograms of explosives seized; 510 search warrants executed; 51 weapons seized under the Weapons Act, including knives, swords, nunchakus and various types of homemade implements; 1 694 grams of amphetamines seized; 158 grams of heroin seized; 691 ecstasy tablets seized; 41.25 kilograms of cannabis seized; 263 grams of cannabis seeds seized; 946 cannabis plants seized; 16 hydroponic nurseries broken; \$295 405 in cash seized; 744 arrests made; 583 summonses served; 3 411 charges preferred against various people; 831 traffic defect notices and cautions issued; and just short of 1 500 traffic infringements issued. I can go on but that is a grab of the work done by the unit.

Hon ED DERMER: That obviously gives a very clear indication of the amount of work that has been done.

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: Good question!

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Good answer!

Hon FRANK HOUGH: The tenth dot point at page 692 refers to the 50 kilometres an hour speed limit in school zones. Does the Government consider that initiative to be a success, bearing in mind that Victoria and New South Wales have the same speed limit as Western Australia and road fatalities have increased.

Hon ROBYN MCSWEENEY: It is 40 kilometres in school zones.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: The tenth dot point refers to 50 kilometres. As I said, Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia have the same speed limit and all have had an increase in fatalities. Is the Government happy with that?

Hon NICK GRIFFITHS: The member asked whether the Government was happy. The Government is not at all happy whenever a fatality occurs. However, the 50 kilometres an hour speed limit is a very responsible measure and for the most part well received, particularly by people who are concerned about the safety of their communities, which includes matters to do with traffic. I invite the commissioner to comment on other matters of detail.

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Hon FRANK HOUGH: I meant whether the Government was happy that the speed limit was working, not whether the Government was happy.

Mr MATTHEWS: It is true that fatalities are up by four at this time of year compared with previous years. Interestingly, critical injuries are markedly down. I think that reflects on the fact that crashes are down. We are concerned that to a large extent fatalities occur in country areas, which is why we have increased the visibility of some highway patrol cars recently and why we are emphasising some of the operations there. It is early days for a full evaluation of the effectiveness of the 50 kilometres an hour speed limit. The evidence is that it has reduced speed, and therefore the incidence of crashes, and that it has reduced the likelihood of injury or fatality. However, it is an initiative that we should run with for a while and evaluate. I believe the WA Road Safety Council will do that and no doubt the Government and the Police Service will act on the results of that evaluation.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you, members. That is the end of division 45. I thank all the witnesses for attending and for their invaluable assistance to the Committee.

[12.10 pm]