

**EDUCATION AND HEALTH
STANDING COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO MENTAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF
FIFO WORK ARRANGEMENTS**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 6 MAY 2015**

Members

**Dr G.G. Jacobs (Chair)
Ms R. Saffioti (Deputy Chair)
Mr R.F. Johnson
Ms J.M. Freeman
Mr M.J. Cowper**

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Hearing commenced at 9.36 am

Ms KAYE LOUISE BUTLER

General Manager, Human Resources, Chevron Australia, examined:

Mr MICHAEL TUNNECLIFFE

Clinical Psychologist, BSS Employee Assistance, examined:

The CHAIR: Thank you for coming, Kaye and Michael. On behalf of the Education and Health Standing Committee, I would like to formally thank you for your appearance before us today. The purpose of this hearing is to assist the committee with its inquiry into the mental health impacts of fly in, fly out work arrangements. I am Graham Jacobs, the Chairman. On my left is Rob Johnson and on his left is Janine Freeman. We have a couple of other members; however, they are coming later. This hearing is a formal proceeding—hopefully not too formal and you can talk with us—but it is a committee of Parliament and commands the same respect given to proceedings of the house itself. Murray Cowper, another member of the committee, has just arrived; welcome, Murray. Even though we are not asking you to provide evidence on oath or affirmation, it is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. This is a public hearing and Christina and Emily from Hansard will record the proceedings and a transcript will be produced for the public record. If you refer to any documents during your evidence, it would assist Hansard if you could provide the full title for the record. If you would like to give evidence in closed session at any time, please tell me.

Before we proceed I would also like to introduce the committee executive, Lucy Roberts and Daniel Govus, who are helping us with the committee proceedings. Have you completed the “Details of Witness” form?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you understand the notes at the bottom of the form?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Did you receive and read the information for witnesses briefing sheet provided with the “Details of Witness” form today?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you have any questions of us?

The Witnesses: No.

The CHAIR: Kaye, I do believe you would like to make a short opening statement. We are glad to receive that, thank you very much.

Ms Butler: Thank you. I will read it, if you do not mind. Chevron Australia is pleased to be appearing at the hearing of the Education and Health Standing Committee inquiry. As noted, I am accompanied by Mr Michael Tunnecliffe, who represents Chevron in our employee assistance program, so we work closely with him on health matters in our projects. At the outset we would like to restate that Chevron places the highest priority on the health and safety of its workforce. In addition to our own submissions to the committee in September last year, Chevron endorses the submission and comments of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy, who have already appeared before this committee.

[9.40 am]

Chevron has been present in Australia for over 60 years, and in addition to being a one-sixth shareholder in the North West Shelf venture it is building Australia's single largest resource project, the Gorgon project, which, combined with our Wheatstone project, represents over \$80 billion worth of investment in Australia. This investment delivers jobs, reliable energy supply, economic benefits, including \$50 billion in expenditure in Australian goods and services, and taxation revenue of more than \$60 billion. So far the Gorgon and Wheatstone projects have created more than 17 000 jobs in Australia. These jobs are spread throughout the Perth metropolitan area, including Fremantle, Henderson, Spearwood, Bassendean, Redcliffe, O'Connor and Wangara, and in the Pilbara and Dampier, on Barrow Island, and right across Australia. Today the Gorgon project has generated more than 10 000 jobs in Australia through the project and its contractors, including over 8 000 people currently working on and around Barrow Island and the Gorgon project. Today the Wheatstone project has generated more than 7 000 jobs in Australia throughout the project and its contractors; 3 800 are already based onsite in Onslow and are working on the project. These numbers will increase in 2015. These positions have been acknowledged as offering attractive pay and conditions, and I do not think there is any question of that. We believe that FIFO work arrangements are essential to the construction and operation of Chevron's projects, particularly given that both are located in remote Western Australia. Chevron is aware of the research that indicates that one in five Australians aged between 16 and 85 will experience mental illness in any given year, and almost half of Western Australians will experience mental illness in their lifetime, as stated in the Chamber of Minerals and Energy submission to the inquiry.

The complexity and size of the capital projects means that specialist contractors—I am keen to make sure we understand this—are required to successfully execute projects. These contractors are qualified through rigorous qualification processes. As employers these contractors owe a duty of care to their employees and they are required to provide their employees with appropriate access to workplace policies and programs. Some of Chevron's contractors on the Gorgon project are currently in enterprise agreement negotiations with construction unions. As Chevron is not party to these agreements, we are not part of their negotiations and we are not eligible to be a party to these agreements, and we are not eligible to comment on those negotiations at this point in time.

As outlined in the detail of our submission to the committee, Chevron has a range of structured programs, including fitness for duty processes, which include 24/7 medical care for all our employees and contractors, medical assessments prior to the commencement of new roles, drug and alcohol testing and return to work assessments. Employee assistance programs provide 24/7 service, which is provided to Chevron employees and their families with a range of specialist support and information, including face-to-face and telephone counselling. Chevron also supports various third party initiatives which are focused on mental health prevention, so we do a lot of work in this area. I really wanted to get those points across because I feel it is important to reflect on the size and complexity of the projects we manage in Western Australia.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Kaye. I did note your comments towards the end, but can I just ask—and I would appreciate what you could say about this—in awarding contracts to subcontractors on Chevron projects, what criteria does Chevron put in place with regard to health and safety concerns, specifically the contractor's record in managing employee's mental health?

Ms Butler: The first thing to understand is that we do not award subcontractors; contractors award subcontractors, that is their responsibility. We award major oversight contractors and Chevron has CHESM, which is an environmental, health and safety framework, which is used for qualification of those contractors. It is a set of guidelines that we use. We require anyone who is tendering as a major contractor to Chevron to be assessed against that framework and we audit people against that framework. It has a range of health, safety and environmental factors in it and these people are

assessed against that framework. So it is a set of guidelines. Those subcontractors are awarded by the major contractor.

The CHAIR: Let us just stay with Chevron and the contractors. In that relationship, is there a fatigue management plan?

Ms Butler: Various contractors have fatigue management programs themselves. Within that framework there would be a range of elements saying, "You must show us what your management process is on health and safety." It does not necessarily specifically mention fatigue management. In Chevron's operations we are certainly looking at fatigue management.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Do you have a fatigue management plan in Chevron's operations?

Ms Butler: We are developing it because, as you might be aware, we have not started operating the Gorgon project yet.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: You have direct employees on Barrow and Wheatstone?

Ms Butler: Yes.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: What are their fatigue management arrangements? How do you monitor their fatigue management?

Ms Butler: Through the health and safety systems and the ongoing management of those people with the medical department, and with the likes of Michael, if there is a fatigue management issue for the people who are working on the island.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: What swing are direct employees on?

Ms Butler: There is a range of swings. There is no one standard roster; there is every roster you could imagine. We have people working on the oil field as well as people working in offices as well as people working in construction, so there is not one standard roster.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: Do you have any input with your main contractors and subcontractors in relation to swings? Do you have any preferred length of swing that you pass on to your contractors?

Ms Butler: Let me say a couple of things about this: I am not prepared to discuss or make statements about the current negotiations on Barrow Island. It would be inappropriate for me to do that and it would be seen to be unduly influencing what is already in negotiation; in fact, it would be unlawful for me to say that. So I am not prepared to discuss that particular negotiation —

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: I do not think I am asking that question.

Ms Butler: No, no, I just wanted to say that.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I do not think they know about that in negotiations, so move on.

Ms Butler: Okay, so let me talk about rosters generally then.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: The question was whether you have any input in relation to those rosters through your contractors and then subcontractors.

Ms Butler: No. The correct answer is no; contractors have come up with their rosters with their employees generally as part of an agreement or negotiation that is between the employer and employees. Are there standard rosters across construction or general rosters across construction, and general rosters that are typical in operations? Yes, there are.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: But Chevron has no impact on those standard rosters?

Ms Butler: Chevron is not part of that negotiation and part of those agreements.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: And Chevron has no influence on those standard —

Ms Butler: Chevron is not part of those negotiations or agreements and ultimately the rosters that people work are part of an agreement between the people involved in that agreement.

The CHAIR: We have heard from other companies around the contractors and their swings, because we believe that swings and the roster is pretty critical when it comes to fatigue—high-compression rosters. We have been told that there are some projects where all the contractors on a particular project are, if you like, locked in to four to one—four weeks on, one week off. We have been told by contractors that, in fact, they might come with a two to one, but everybody onsite for that construction is on four to one. Would you like to comment on that?

Ms Butler: We do not have a —

The CHAIR: So what you are telling us is that on your construction sites you can have a contractor that is doing two to one, someone else is doing four to one and someone else is doing an eight on six? So, there are all variations on a particular construction site, because we have been told that, in fact, it does not matter what the contractor comes with as a swing and a fatigue management plan that they have worked out, but everybody on that site for the project, for that construction, is on four to one.

Ms Butler: I think there are obviously logistical issues with projects and trying to manage projects, so trying to come up with rosters that are similar in various scopes of work, so you can manage those scopes of work. Something as complex as Gorgon has many, many work fronts and many scopes of work which do impact on the work roster and the cost of those scopes of work and how fast those scopes of work need to happen. So to have general common rosters in various scopes of work would be quite conceivable. I can understand that and I can understand how people have a similar agreement on a particular construction site that gives them a similar roster. In fact, in construction across Australia there are similar rosters. Generally, the current rosters that are worked are similar across all construction and have been agreed on by employers and unions.

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[9.50 am]

The CHAIR: And that roster would be four to one?

Ms Butler: Not necessarily—it could be 28 and seven; it could be 26 and nine.

The CHAIR: But uniform across a construction site, is that what you are saying?

Ms Butler: I do not think it is uniform in every construction site. I know there are some construction sites where it is uniform and others where there are some variations for various reasons.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: A 28 to seven is four to one.

Ms Butler: Like I said, there is 28 and seven, there is 26 and nine, 23 and nine. I have worked in the resource sector for over 25 years and I have seen every roster under the sun and every reason for rosters.

The CHAIR: Would you like to comment on this one, then? If you were implementing a four weeks on, one week off roster for construction employees, which is a common swing in construction, what research and modelling do you know about or has been done into the impacts on fatigue and mental health?

Ms Butler: What I know and what I can give you is some work we have on Barrow Island right now. What I do know is that I have never seen any research that tells me that a roster or a work schedule is contributing directly to the increased risk of mental health. I would like to see the research; I have not seen the research that tells me it contributes directly to mental health. I invite Michael to talk about that as well, because I know that this is an area that he has looked at. I think there are a range of issues that will impact on fatigue; there are a range of things you can do about it. I have not seen the evidence to suggest that a work roster or a work schedule is directly linked to the increased risk in mental illness in the workforce.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Is that because it is not there and it has not been researched, or because it has been researched and —

Ms Butler: I can give you some research from our chief medical officer on Barrow Island that would suggest that we have a less than —

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: But that is not research; when we talk about research, you talk about —

Ms Butler: Well, I want to see the research; I have not seen any research —

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: There is research out there.

Ms Butler: I have not seen the research that says that directly leads to increased medical illness.

Mr M.J. COWPER: You say you have been in the resource sector for 20 years, so you are saying that you only believe that which you read?

Ms Butler: I have been looking for research to say that would increase —

Mr M.J. COWPER: You are saying that you are looking for research, but if you have been working in the resource sector, the notion of fatigue comes about because it is written on a piece of paper somewhere. If you have actually been working in the resource sector, like many of us, you would have seen fatigue and the impact it has.

Ms Butler: I have seen fatigue in every profession, including my husband's profession, who was a police officer. I have seen fatigue in farmers—for example, with my father. I have seen fatigue in underground miners—for example, my grandfather. I have seen fatigue in every section of the community. I am not sure it is particularly unique to FIFO workers.

Mr M.J. COWPER: But unless you see research, you do not believe it; is that what you are saying?

Ms Butler: I am not saying that, but I am saying that I do not think I have seen evidence to suggest that FIFO is causing increased levels of mental stress or mental illness.

The CHAIR: Kaye, let us put it this way: When you do see it, how does Chevron manage fatigue and working hours in its employees? Does Chevron require the contractors to set limits on shift lengths and monitor fatigue? What occurs when you find that that is deficient and there is significant fatigue in the workplace?

Ms Butler: You have been to Barrow Island, so you have seen the facilities there. A lot of facilities have been put there to help people relax after work. There are numerous opportunities for them to seek extra help to work through any fatigue issues they may have. The medical profession there sees over 1 000 a week in consultations and have every opportunity to help understand whether there are significant fatigue issues. There are regulations about maximum lengths of work as well. We obviously are very concerned about the health and welfare of our workforce and, in fact, our contractors' workforce. If you want to know what contractors are doing about fatigue management—I know we have given you the list of contractors and I am sure you have talked to them about that, because we do not manage the employees of other people. That is for them to manage.

The CHAIR: Let us talk about your people, though. Do you apply a fatigue management assessment tool, and when do you apply that?

Ms Butler: Are you talking about the people on Barrow Island?

The CHAIR: Your people.

Ms Butler: People in Perth? On Barrow Island?

The CHAIR: No, your people—at the workplace.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: FIFO workers.

Ms Butler: At the workplace. Do we look at them and assess their fitness for duty on a regular basis? Are our supervisors constantly monitoring the fitness and fatigue and any other medical issue of their workforce? Absolutely they are. Are we developing a fatigue management program that will make sure that we can eliminate all possible risks around fatigue? Yes we are. But we are not in operations with Gorgon yet.

The CHAIR: Tell us what happens when fatigue is suspected by a supervisor or a workmate. What assessment tool do you have to identify that person as being low, moderate or high risk, and what is done?

Ms Butler: I think you cannot put one template over every situation; it will depend on what is causing that fatigue and often we will have people like BSS involved, helping us to understand whether the fatigue is coming from a sleep apnoea problem or whether it is coming from a relationship issue. It will depend on the circumstances, so the solution to that will depend on the circumstances as well.

Mr Tunnecliffe: I get involved with a group called the supervisor essentials workshop, which is run for all leaders and supervisors through Chevron. It is run on a regular basis for two or three days. I do only one section and my section is on mental health and the awareness of the EAP. We also have one of our people who has extreme expertise in fatigue management. Peter Simpson is very well known in that field. He provides information on fatigue. Because it is for supervisors, one of the aspects covered is how to observe people who have fatigue issues and fatigue problems. I talk about how to observe people who have mental health issues and mental health problems; how to approach them, how to talk to them, and how to link them into the service. I am assuming it is a requirement of all supervisors at Chevron to go through the supervisor essentials and part of that is training them in exactly what to look for and what to be aware of so that if they see something, they have an avenue to refer them to straightaway.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Michael, how many mental health evacuations have happened at Barrow and how many have happened at Wheatstone, and what are the triggers?

Mr Tunnecliffe: I will have to ask Kaye to answer that.

Ms Butler: As we said before, these are the sorts of statistics for Barrow Island. There are 8 400 people on Barrow Island. As you have observed, we have three doctors, seven paramedics, four nurses, one physio, two health screeners and a back-to-back psychologist starting this week. We have 1 000 consults a week on Barrow Island. Based on the national stats, you would think that the 1 700 people in that population should be suffering from mental illness in any given year. In the first quarter of 2015, 227—that is two per cent—of all the consultations were for mental health reasons. Less than one-third of those were actual mental illness, and of those only 33 were evacuated off the island for mental health reasons. In fact, mental health evacuations are less likely than dental evacuations; you are more likely to be evacuated off the island for dental reasons than you are for mental health.

The CHAIR: Over what period was that 33?

Ms Butler: That was for the first quarter of this year. We have been very clear to make sure that we are correctly validating it, and of those people who have been evacuated, over half have returned to the island—the window seat issue I have read about—of which one-quarter have resigned and the other quarter are still working for their employer, albeit not on Barrow Island at this point.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: You started collecting that data at the beginning of this year. If nothing else, that is a great outcome of our inquiry.

Ms Butler: Yes, I think so too; I absolutely agree. Please do not get me wrong: I am absolutely on the same page as far as making sure that we do something about suicide and mental health issues. I think it is a huge issue in our community and I am not denying that for one minute. I am not sure

I can find that it is related to work schedules and FIFO any more than it is related to anything else. So should we do something about it? Should every organisation do something about it? Absolutely.

Mr M.J. COWPER: You have just mentioned that you have 8 400 workers at Barrow and potentially there are 1 700-odd of those, if you work on the average, one in five —

Ms Butler: We have not got that number, but if we had —

Mr M.J. COWPER: If you work on one in five, then you suggest that there are about 1 700 potential people who have —

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[10.00 am]

Ms Butler: If you looked at the national statistics around how many people, given our population we would expect that 1 700 should experience mental health issues. We are not seeing that; we are seeing way less than that.

Mr M.J. COWPER: That is what I am getting to in my next question. I will just put that out there. You are saying that you are getting only two per cent.

Ms Butler: Yes, two per cent of all the consultations.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Do you have any suspicion as to why you are getting only two per cent?

Ms Butler: One could be that we do not have the prevalence of mental health issues.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Or?

Ms Butler: I do not have anything else to suggest that, but I am seeing 1 000 people —

Mr M.J. COWPER: We have heard, admittedly anecdotally, that people are reluctant to come forward because as soon as mental health is mentioned as an issue for them, they think they are going to lose their positions.

Ms Butler: And all evidence is to the contrary because in fact half the people who have been evacuated have returned to work —

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Only evidenced since the beginning of the year, though. I suppose that is what you have to start doing, is it not, because that is the concern. You have started collecting that evidence since only the beginning of the year and now you can say, “We can get you back.” But Murray Cowper is right: you cannot think that Barrow is different. It is a microcosm of the community; in fact, it is in a highly risky area because you are taking males from a certain age group and you are putting them there and they are at high risk. So if Murray is right, you have only the tip of the iceberg.

Mr M.J. COWPER: What I was trying to get to—I am trying to draw you on to this particular question—is if you are getting only two per cent, does that not make you suspicious? You may need to tease out why people are sitting in silence. If it is a toothache, I can understand it. A toothache is an apparent thing, and if you have a toothache—we have all had one at some time—you have to do something about it. But if you are having a mental issue or a relationship breakdown—whatever it manifests itself as—people have been saying to the committee that they would rather keep it to themselves or confide in someone close than to go to our supervisor to highlight it, because they fear that their job may be in jeopardy. Whether that is a real thing or a perception, the perception is out there and, therefore, it becomes a reality.

Mr Tunnecliffe: I will add some more statistics for you. We look after the major construction contractors on Barrow Island—not just Chevron—as part of their EAP. That was done totally independently of Chevron, simply because we work in industry; we work only in the resource sector and industry. The average figure for mental health presentation—whether it be related to relationships, depression, anxiety—across the board in that construction area is somewhere between

five and six per cent. I am talking about a conglomerate figure here. These are people who can come to us and it is totally confidential. It is against the law for us to disclose any names and any information about those individuals, even to their employer. The only time we would disclose information is if we feel that person is at risk of suicide or self-harm, and then under a duty of care we are obliged to act on that. I do not know if it is the same percentage or not because it all comes together, but our presentation in general of workers on Barrow Island—this is a lump figure including Chevron—is somewhere between five and six per cent. We do a lot of work to emphasise the Privacy Act, the privacy of information and the confidentiality of their data.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Michael, I take it you are a clinical psychologist.

Mr Tunnecliffe: I am a clinical psychologist, yes.

Mr M.J. COWPER: So you would have studied that the human being is a social animal, and when you isolate them in any circumstance, whether it be on a farm tractor, in a remote part of Western Australia or even in prison, it interferes with the normal function of that human being. Examples of isolation have been around for years, I admit; we have a host of examples in naval situations involving mariners and also situations with farmers. The nature of Chevron's operations, particularly offshore, is such that surely if you were going to isolate people, you would be very much on the front foot trying to deal with the unique situation that is working offshore.

Mr Tunnecliffe: Absolutely. Barrow Island is an abnormal microcosm of the society, especially the gender ratio and the age ratio. It might be something like the tenth largest population conglomeration in Western Australia. That is very atypical and abnormal. It is really interesting when you talk to people—I have done a lot of fitness for duty for not just Chevron but also the contractors, and I have done it personally, being a mental health specialist. When you talk to people about their support networks, there is a high reliance on their workmates. People talk about their workmates and their colleagues and how they get on with them. Of course it is atypical because they are away from their families, but I do not see it as being any different from the Navy or when I was with the police department working out in isolated areas of Western Australia. What is more, people adjust. One of the interesting points is if you look at the correlation between who has mental health problems and who does not, I think there is a big personality factor there and a big selection factor too; that is, who gets selected to work on this. Some construction workers are self-selective—they have done construction for years and they are used to doing it—but there are also a lot of people who are attracted to this role, and they might run into a problem or difficulty, and they are the ones we tend to see and we have to provide some service or help for.

The other thing I will mention that Chevron does do is make it clear to all its contractors that it has to provide an employee assistance program because, quite frankly, there are some organisations who would love not to put those peripheral things in if they can help it, or they will put in something that is very low key. We have been contacted by a number of people who have said, "I believe you do employee assistance and you have people going out to Barrow Island. Can we get your information? We would like to take on your services." We picked up a number of prime organisations through the Gorgon and Wheatstone projects.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Michael, you said something that really shocked and concerned me when we were on Barrow Island and I would like to put that in *Hansard*. You said that you had been involved in counselling following two suicides on Barrow Island—you can correct me, because memory is a difficult thing—and that in both cases you felt that there was nothing that could have been done to prevent those. I have put that to other psychiatrists and psychologists since then, because I was completely shocked by that; that there was this feeling from a health professional that there was no prevention. The differing view was that if they were functioning, if they were able to get on a plane and function and get to the island and work, then there must have been some capacity to prevent that. I am just wondering if you want to take me through that conversation again, if you recall it.

Mr Tunnecliffe: Sure. I have been directly involved in only one; one of our other staff was involved in the second one. I have to be very careful here because I am going to be disclosing people's personal information that we were given. One of the things that really concerns me is that of the cases I am aware of, there were mitigating factors that were well, well outside of the workplace, they were well beyond the workplace, and there were causative factors that had a lot to do with the individuals' personal life. In fact, I would like to add here—I would rather stick it on *Hansard*—that to look for a correlation between suicides in the workplace that we are seeing, I am seeing far, far more incidence of contact with the Family Court of Australia than I am seeing with FIFO roles because in many cases there are relationship issues, which are longstanding, they are complex, they are high stressful. What I find happening is that we usually get to see people, a bit like Murray said, because a lot of people do not want to tell people about their personal life and their personal business. They are highly protective and it gets to a really difficult stage in their life and people see no other option. These are often people who will not reach out for help and will not ask for assistance and that, for whatever reason.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: And do not have mental illnesses in the first instance.

Mr Tunnecliffe: Sorry?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: The other thing that we have found really challenging—I have found very challenging—is that you do not necessarily have to have a mental illness to attempt suicide or to suicide —

Mr Tunnecliffe: No.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: — that it is a range of circumstances and factors and it is sometimes a spur of the moment thing or ideation.

Mr Tunnecliffe: I would like to also have it on record that I am an accredited suicide counsellor. I have done training with the police in suicide negotiation and I have trained mental health professionals around Australia in suicide prevention and suicide negotiation, so this is not something that I do not have a lot of knowledge on. When I say that they cannot be prevented, what I am really talking about, once all those precipitating factors are in place, is that the intervention is particularly difficult, simply because there are so many causal factors going on with the individual.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: So the intervention should have been earlier?

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[10.10 am]

Mr Tunnecliffe: The intervention probably should have happened a lot earlier, even in terms of pre-employment intervention. In other words, these are people sometimes who should have got help a lot earlier in their life but have avoided it, albeit that we see some individuals who self-medicate, they do not try to seek any professional help or even talk to their GP. I tell people quite often, “The best thing to do is go and have a talk to your GP about it and at least get something underway.” And there are people who will not even do that.

Mr M.J. COWPER: We are all wired differently, aren't we?

Mr Tunnecliffe: Yes, we are; of course we are.

Mr M.J. COWPER: And you have got to put that person in a different environment, whether it be in a fly in, fly out or the mother-in-law's for a Sunday roast, it is going to be a situation whereby people are going to be tipped over. I mean, it is just the nature of human beings.

Mr Tunnecliffe: That is right.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: But if you put them in a situation and—Murray said this before—if you take them and you isolate them, which is another factor in terms of mental health, so you isolate them from family and friends and social networks, and you place them in a situation of long rosters and

fatigue, then I would think that that is the difficult situation. You cannot stop that with Barrow Island, because that is off the thing, but you could have stopped that with Onslow. I mean, that was one of our concerns when we went to the Wheatstone project; that those sorts of physical infrastructures and, you know, the aspect of being able to be part of the community is not present at Wheatstone.

Mr Tunnecliffe: I am not aware of having dealt with anything at Wheatstone, but if I can just go back to one particular incident on Barrow Island which did result in the death of an individual, a suicide. One of the things I would like to say here is that—and this is second-hand information; I have either got it from one of my staff and that—the individual involved had a very close and very good social network of workmates and colleagues and things like that. The precipitating factors were well away from the workplace and well away from his mates and everything else. That was the trigger for this individual. And I tell you, as Murray said, we are all wired differently, we all have different things, and you never quite know what is going on in a person's life. So you try to put the best possible blanket assistance across, but for some individuals that is going to be helpful; for other individuals it is not going to help them at all. No matter how much assistance and what you do, that individual is going to be pushed over the edge by certain factors.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Other factors at Barrow Island are motelling, if motelling is operating, and if you are someone who needs that close network and friends and stuff like that to be able to achieve that, would motelling not undermine good health practices?

Mr Tunnecliffe: It is interesting you say that because I had a person in last week for a fitness for duty assessment from one of the contractors, and this person had had a couple of personal mental health issues, and I said to the individual, "Tell me about your accommodation on Barrow Island." It is not motelling; they share a room. They are actually shared accommodation in the fly camp. And I said, "Well, how do you manage that?" He said, "Oh no, that's good. I want to do the shared accommodation." I said, "What if they said you can't go and live in Butler Park?" He said, "No, no, I want to do the shared accommodation." And this person, really, I saw no indications of stress with this individual. Surely he was being paid extra money, but there was an incentive for him to do it. But this particular individual was very happy. He said, "My back to back that I share with is never there when I'm there."

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Have you seen other individuals that are not happy?

Mr Tunnecliffe: Personally? No, I have not.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: But your staff or other EAPs?

Mr Tunnecliffe: I would have to ask them.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Have there been complaints to the EAPs about motelling?

Mr Tunnecliffe: No staff member has ever come to me at the EAP and said, "Look, I've got really concerns about what's happening on the camp." And we are not just talking about Barrow Island; we are talking about all the iron ore camps everywhere else. I have never had a staff member come to me and say, "I've got concerns about motelling or the mental health impact", or they have never said to me that anyone has said that to them. I am not saying it has not happened, but it has never been raised as an issue in the EAP.

The CHAIR: Can I ask about accommodation? We did go to Barrow Island but we did not see *Europa* and we did not get a feel for what that accommodation provided. So, Kaye, could you provide us with a bit of a summary of that?

Ms Butler: I can give you a very high level summary. And, again, *Europa* is managed by the contractors that use *Europa*, so if you want to know what sort of work—and I read your question relating to this about what sort of roles are people covering, and I think that changes from time to time. But what I can say is that *Europa* was built as a luxury ocean liner that people paid money to

go on to. It had, I think, a passenger capability of over 3 000. It currently has only 1 400 on it, and Chevron or the project has done significant upgrades to that vessel to create more space in that vessel for the people that are on it. In fact, we have examples where we have offered people to come off *Europa* and go into Butler Park, and they have refused to do it because they would rather stay on *Europa*. Now, if you want to get into specific details, you would need talk to the contractors involved.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Who is the contractor that does *Europa*?

Ms Butler: I would have to go back; I think it is on the list, but there are multiple contractors. But CJKV, the oversight contractor of the whole project, would be the best one to ask. I am sure you have probably asked them those questions.

The CHAIR: Can I just ask a little bit about it. Compared to Butler Park, the accommodation would not be as high a standard?

Ms Butler: Again, I would have to go and get you the specifications of the vessel. I have not got them with me, and I have not got the exact detail, but there are gymnasiums in there, there are spaces for leisure activities, there are upgrades to rooms that creates more space. I think there are a lot of elements that are very, very positive. And as I said already, people are refusing to come off the vessel when there are the opportunities.

The CHAIR: We gave you some of these questions previously.

Ms Butler: Yes, and one of them on the *Europa*, I have got to say. There are multiple contractors using that vessel, so we would need to go and get the actual details.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: There is *Europa* and there is another one, is there not? What is the other one?

The CHAIR: The barge.

Ms Butler: The barge: the *Bibby*.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Is that the same?

Ms Butler: Is it the same? No. The *Bibby* is a barge that is sunk onto the ground, onto the ocean floor. It has been there for quite some time.

The CHAIR: How many are accommodated there?

Ms Butler: Honestly, off the top of my head I cannot recall the numbers. I have not got them with me.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Is the *Bibby* air-conditioned?

Ms Butler: Yes, the *Bibby* is air-conditioned.

The CHAIR: *Europa* is air-conditioned?

Ms Butler: Yes, it is.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: We had some people who had gone on there as EAPs, I think it was the *Bibby*, was it not, and they were commenting on how cramped the accommodation was. For them it was fine because they were there for a couple of days, but they thought that it would be difficult, but they did get that sense of camaraderie-ship that their city brings.

Ms Butler: Can I make one statement?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Yes.

Ms Butler: While we can talk about all this adversity, as you call it, I think a bigger adversity would be not having any job at all. And every time we look at trying to create yet another condition, that adds cost to what is already the most expensive construction environment virtually in the world. We are 40 per cent more expensive for major capital projects in this state than we are in the Gulf of

Mexico; 20 to 30 per cent more expensive than Canada. Every time we put in yet another condition that adds cost, we bang the nail in the coffin of resource projects in this country and indeed in this state, and we are going to not see expansion of Gorgon —

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I thought iron ore prices do that, but in any event —

Ms Butler: I have to tell you that construction prices do too. We are not going to see the expansion of Gorgon and Wheatstone in the current price environment; we are not going to see marginal projects in the current price environment; and people not having roles is going to be more distressing than having a FIFO environment.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: So Barrow Island is currently running over time, isn't it?

Ms Butler: Yes.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: It is not meeting —

Ms Butler: It was meeting the initial schedule, the schedule that it has currently got in it is meeting.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: So the schedule has changed.

Ms Butler: The schedule has changed.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: And has that meant that there is any push on contractors to deliver in a shorter time period to meet a different —

Ms Butler: We are not going to put health and safety at risk; that is an overriding factor of Chevron right around the world, and the safety record of the Gorgon project stands for itself in that regard. But, having said that, we obviously want to get that project finished as soon as humanly possible because we need to. I mean, extending it for any period of time is not good for anybody. And in fact once we are in operations, it will be completely different. The number of people on the island will reduce. The conditions for people living on the island, you know, there will be more space, I guess, instead of having 8 000 people on that island; no-one is suggesting that is an ideal situation that we want to continue for any longer than we have to.

The CHAIR: Kaye, I understand all the comments you made about cost pressures in the mining space and the construction space and getting the operation of a mine up and running for an LNG plant or whatever. But would you not agree, though, that you have a workforce that you take away from home and they work for an extended period of time and they do not go home for an extended period of time. So they go home but they go home to an accommodation facility; they do not go home to their real home, if you like, their proper home. So, having said that, would you not agree, though, that the employer has a responsibility in that accommodation space to look after the worker?

<005> R/4 [10:20:37 AM](#)

[10.20 am]

Ms Butler: So I —

The CHAIR: You might say that the more stipulations and criteria we put on, if you like, in and around the work safety, occupational health area, that makes it harder for you as a miner or as a company. But where we are coming from, and I would like your opinion on it, is that there is a responsibility of the company—you have said it yourself—to look after your workforce.

Ms Butler: Every company has a responsibility to look after their workforce; I do not deny that for one minute. Chevron is not the employer of the majority; we employ about 300 people on Barrow Island. We are not the employer of the 8 000 plus people on Barrow Island. Those employers are probably the people you should be talking to about their work schedules and about the health and safety of their employees. It is not up to us.

The CHAIR: Could I just make one point about that. When we went to talk to some of the contractors—we have talked to some—some of them were rather loath to actually speak to us. Some of them were loath to speak to us, I think, because they felt that there might be some consequences from the bigger company for them to come and appear before us.

Ms Butler: I am not aware of that, so I cannot comment on that.

The CHAIR: So, you can be quite clear with us that you gave no instructions to your contractors to not appear before us?

Ms Butler: We absolutely did not give any instructions to our contractors not to appear in front of this committee; absolutely did not.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Can I just take us back to suicides. We know there were two suicides on Barrow Island. Have we got any other data on how many suicides have occurred on Barrow Island?

Ms Butler: There has only been one —

Mr Tunnecliffe: We are only aware of one on Barrow Island.

Ms Butler: One in the term of the project. There was one many years ago before the project started, which was nothing—in fact it was, again, I am not going to talk about the individual or the circumstances around it, but I can guarantee you they were not in relation to anything to do with work.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: So there has been one suicide on Barrow Island, and then how many in terms of attempts of suicide?

Ms Butler: Talking with the medical profession and with Michael, I am loath to say what is an attempted suicide, because I am not sure what you would mean by an attempted suicide. I think that if you talk to professionals in that area, including the coroner, they will have a hard time —

Mr M.J. COWPER: The nature of fly in, fly out in recent years has changed. Going back to the mid-80s, we probably had 30 per cent fly in, fly out—the vast bulk, majority, were people who lived in the towns. Now it is probably the other way around. There is probably about 70 per cent who fly in—I think there is 80 000 that fly out of Perth on a daily or weekly basis, whatever. What we actually have now is, rather than having FIFO as a minor phenomenon, it is a major phenomenon. Therefore, if you like, it ramps up all those various issues and that is probably why we are here right now talking about this particular issue. Is there any consideration being given to looking at, given that you are going from construction into a production phase, as Woodside do, they provide residential accommodation for their workers going forward. Is there any plan by Chevron to accommodate people locally working at Barrow and Wheatstone?

Ms Butler: On Barrow, obviously we cannot; it is an A-class nature reserve and we cannot have —

Mr M.J. COWPER: Okay, what about nearby Karratha?

Ms Butler: In Onslow, part of the social infrastructure program is the construction of over 100 residential houses for Chevron employees of one sort or another. So that is there. We are part of the Onslow community; obviously, we are very aware of that small community. I have personal friends who live in that community that do not want their community destroyed by having a huge influx of people into the community. So we are trying to work very carefully to manage the footprint that Chevron has on Onslow, but we have put in a plan and the shire of Onslow is very aware of this. Part of it and part of us constructing residential houses in that community, and indeed, contributing significantly to the social infrastructure of that community —

Mr M.J. COWPER: When you go into production, how many people will you have working?

Ms Butler: In operations—how many people do you require to operate an LNG plant the size of Onslow? About 300.

Mr M.J. COWPER: About 300. And Barrow?

Ms Butler: About the same.

Mr M.J. COWPER: So you will have about 600 employees —

Ms Butler: Six hundred operation personnel.

Mr M.J. COWPER: — during production. Operations or production, yes.

Ms Butler: Operation—maintenance personnel, yes.

Mr M.J. COWPER: You are saying about what percentage of those would be residential?

Ms Butler: As I said, we are building about 100 houses.

Mr M.J. COWPER: So about one-third.

Mr Tunnecliffe: If I could pick up on that because I think it is quite relevant. We look after all the major companies in the iron ore industry as well. One of the things that I have been told many times by workers is that they do not want to go and live in the communities. They prefer to do FIFO and the major reason they prefer to do FIFO—I am talking about big communities like Newman. We put a psychologist there two days a week into Newman and we get constantly asked by other people in the community—even though the psychologist is paid directly by BHP Billiton and is for BHP Billiton workers and families; the same thing happens in Port Hedland where we have a full-time person in Port Hedland—can they see our people, simply because the health department cannot provide the level of psychological expertise in the form of clinical psychologists that we can into regional areas. I also get told by people that they would prefer to keep their families in Perth because of the schooling that they can get and the fact that in country schools—I am only giving you second information here as I have been told—you get a lot of junior teachers, young teachers and you do not get the level of education. I have no expertise in that area so I am not saying it is true, but this is the rationale for people. Many people are saying, “I’d far more prefer to do FIFO and have my family at home and do FIFO rather than move to Newman, Port Hedland or Pannawonica and all these places.” I think therein lies a real difficulty in terms of developing up the communities and I have no doubt we will have the same problem at Onslow.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Newman, once upon a time, had three football teams. It now has one. These community groups are the ones that actually form the social network that keep people sane. Now, there are two edges to this. In my electorate, we have a junior footy team where I was the vice president and we had 11 coaches. We could only get three male coaches and the reason they gave is because, “We’re fly in, fly out” or “We’re not able to be here.” So there is a gilt-edged sword. Not only does it impact on the communities in the north, it impacts on the communities down here. They are not engaging with their own communities, wherever they are.

Mr Tunnecliffe: As the senior psychologist for Western Australia Police for four years, I was never able to get psychological services for police officers in Newman because the health department said they could not provide a psychologist up there. All they could get is the services of a mental health nurse and that was inadequate for what we needed. We had got to the stage where I flew to Newman on occasions to provide support to some of our police officers up there. So it is a constant issue, but it is a primary issue why people often prefer to do FIFO rather than take their families to those locations.

The CHAIR: Could I just make the point, because Janine and I did go to Onslow and Wheatstone, and we thank you for facilitating the trip. In establishing accommodation, Kaye, what was the reasoning behind Chevron’s decision to—I do believe there was a plan to establish the accommodation facility for the Wheatstone project in or close to Onslow?

Ms Butler: No, I think you are talking about the operations accommodation village, not the construction village. There was never a plan to put the construction village anywhere near it.

The CHAIR: What is the plan? Is the plan that those 100 houses that you were talking about are to be built in Onslow?

Ms Butler: In the town, yes. There is a plan for the 100 houses to be built. There was never a plan for the construction village to be built in Onslow. There was some discussion earlier about an operations village to be built near or in the town. Eventually that was a decision with Chevron and the shire to move that village back to the project, back to the asset base.

The CHAIR: Under the original plan for the operational component workforce, the 300 or so that you —

Ms Butler: The 300 were always there. The houses were always in the plan, but there was also an accommodation village for the people that were FIFO-ing—the operators, if you like—into the project as well. There was a plan to have their long-term operations camp in the town. That was changed in consultation between Chevron, the Wheatstone project and the shire of Onslow to move that.

<006> M/D [10:30:24 AM](#)

[10.30 am]

The CHAIR: What was the reasoning behind moving that?

Ms Butler: I have not got all the details.

The CHAIR: Tell me, to your knowledge, was that plan part of the state development agreement?

Ms Butler: I would have to get the details of that.

The CHAIR: Was there any view that the travel between Onslow and the operational site was perhaps too far and would add to the occupational health and safety concerns?

Ms Butler: Certainly there are issues about the amount of travel people have to do driving in and out of work, and the amount of travel people do on roads—roads in any situation add a level of risk, and we obviously try to minimise it. I can say right now—and we have a very large Aboriginal employment program in Onslow and in Gorgon—we are employing local people. I had a discussion with our operations manager last week about how we would manage the travel of people that live locally in Onslow that are going to work for us on the project, and how we will manage the travel between the project and potentially provide buses et cetera for people to travel from town or from their residence to the project.

Mr R.F. JOHNSON: How long does it take to get from A to B?

Ms Butler: I think it takes about 40 minutes or something; I am not absolutely sure, actually.

The CHAIR: It is 25 kays.

Ms Butler: Yes, and it is a gravel road at this point in time.

The CHAIR: What would be the time frame/distance that you would consider would be a significant addition to the shift and fatigue on a worker, as far as the distance from the accommodation to the actual operational site?

Ms Butler: I guess you are trying to get me to answer why we did not put the accommodation in town and I cannot answer that.

The CHAIR: Absolutely, because, if you like—and Murray makes a very strong point—if you can have the people that are working on your site operationally interact with the town and the town to interact with the workforce, everybody benefits.

Ms Butler: I am not sure that the town necessarily wants a whole influx of people right now in the town.

The CHAIR: How much influx would we have been looking at?

Ms Butler: Hang on; sorry. I am not sure—well, right now?

The CHAIR: No, not construction—you were talking about operational.

Ms Butler: In operations, there are two factors. One is that we are going to put at least 100 houses in town once we have finished building them. The other side of it is that we have to employ LNG operators. These are skilled employees; they actually have a skill, most of them. Right now, we have just finished employing all of our Gorgon operators. We are currently starting—in fact, we are on about our third campaign of Wheatstone operators. They are coming from all over Australia; they are not prepared to move to Onslow. If we said, “You will live in Onslow”, they would say, “We won’t work for you.” They live on the east coast; they live in New Zealand. They live all around Australia. They live in the south of Western Australia. If we said—in fact, we have asked people to be residential and they have refused.

The CHAIR: Kaye, we understand that you are building some 100 residences, but there is a FIFO component to your operation.

Ms Butler: Yes, and if we asked those —

Mr M.J. COWPER: Eighty-three per cent.

The CHAIR: Yes. All we are saying is that the FIFO component of your operation, what we are talking about is having them sited close to the operation or having them sited in Onslow.

Ms Butler: And I think that that is a debate that needs to happen. That is a debate that has happened with the Onslow shire and there has been an agreement to move the village to the site, rather than have it in town.

Mr M.J. COWPER: What does it cost to build your house in Onslow and pay someone from operations —

Ms Butler: What is it going to cost us to build houses in Onslow? It is over a million dollars a house.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Over a million dollars?

Ms Butler: That is what we are going to be spending on each of the houses we build in Onslow.

Mr M.J. COWPER: We have had evidence to this committee from a major building company saying that the costs in relation to building in the Pilbara have come down significantly.

Ms Butler: I can tell you that the last time I saw the cost of the houses that we are planning on building, they were over a million dollars.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Compare that with flying someone. For instance, if I was working and living in Onslow, what hours would I be working?

Ms Butler: If you were working in Onslow in operations, it is a 12-hour shift.

Mr M.J. COWPER: What is the weekly roster there?

Ms Butler: What is the roster for operations for both Gorgon and Wheatstone?

Mr M.J. COWPER: No; if you live in the town.

Ms Butler: If you work in operations, we have an operations roster. That operations roster is two weeks on and two weeks off, and two weeks on and four weeks off. That is the operations roster, and even if you are living in the town, we are actually talking about having people in the camp through those rosters because, to your point, they miss out on the connection with their workmates if they are not actually part of that group that works that roster.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: So, they will be living in town, but during the two weeks they are on, they will be living in camp and then they will go home for the one week off.

Ms Butler: In fact, they want that; they have actually asked for that.

Mr M.J. COWPER: They are working a 12-hour shift, seven days a week for 14 days straight?

Ms Butler: Yes, two weeks on, 14 days straight.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I am just trying to do the math.

The CHAIR: While you do the math, maybe I can ask Michael, on a different tack—complaints of bullying and harassment, how many did Chevron receive in 2013–14, how many were investigated, how many were substantiated, and how many resulted in disciplinary action?

Mr Tunnecliffe: We have nothing to do with Chevron EEO or bullying complaints at all; they go direct to Chevron. The only time we will be involved is if Chevron make a formal referral for us for supporting someone who is going through it. That happens occasionally. I have no data on that.

Ms Butler: Are we talking Chevron here in Perth or Chevron on the island? Are we talking about the FIFOs?

The CHAIR: We are talking about the FIFO component —

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: The 300 workers, basically

The CHAIR: — in and around 500.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: You cannot talk about those for any of the contractors.

Ms Butler: No, I cannot.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Do you take that data?

Ms Butler: No.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Because you were taking the data for the contractors.

Ms Butler: It was being reported by the chief medical director, who you met. He is the chief medical director for the Gorgon project. That is why he actually has that data. But, as far as bullying complaints coming from the island, very, very few.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: But that is for your 300 workers?

Ms Butler: That is for our 300 workers. We do not manage the rest.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: You do not know what the complaints are for the other —

Ms Butler: Not unless it gets raised with us for some reason because a Chevron person is involved, but very rarely; in fact, we do not manage that because they are not our employees. If they came to us, we would refer them back, straight to the employer anyway.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: That is a question for each contractor then?

Ms Butler: It is.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: We can ask that question and they can give us those figures. We could write to them and ask them.

Ms Butler: Yes.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: They do not report up to you about that day-to-day stuff; they do it on a safety-case basis, do they?

Ms Butler: That is an employment matter—bullying and harassment is an employment matter.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: How does the reporting go from you in Western Australia up into the larger corporation?

Ms Butler: The wider Chevron system?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Yes.

Ms Butler: Chevron does not require me to say to Chevron on a regular basis, “I’ve had this many bullying complaints and this is how I have resolved them.” It is up to me to make sure that they are resolved, and I can guarantee you that every employee complaint at Chevron is addressed and resolved one way or another. Many of them are complaints about things that people do not like something and claim it is bullying. There are some that you would say are justified and need to be nipped in the bud. We do a lot of training with our managers to make sure that they can identify that behaviour and that they address it quickly; so, many of them do not even get to complaints. Workplaces all have those kinds of issues. We do have, within Chevron, a hotline that is a confidential hotline for anyone in the Chevron environment—and in fact for our contractors right around the world—that people can ring up anonymously and make complaints. We have not had a whole lot of complaints from Australia. We have not had a whole lot of complaints from the island on those.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: So the hotline goes nationally?

Ms Butler: It goes internationally.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: What happens once they have rung the hotline?

Ms Butler: It depends on what it is. It depends on what the complaint is.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Maybe it is a major, “I’m suffering very badly because of bullying.” What happens with the hotline then? What is the procedure?

Ms Butler: I can give you that. So, we get a hotline complaint; it will come through what is called the compliance line, which is a grouping in Chevron that manages that. It will get allocated to whichever business unit around the world—one of our many business units; typically the head of legal is involved and myself is involved to say, “What is this complaint about?” We will investigate it if we have the ability to investigate it. If it is a contractor that has made that, we will refer it back to the contractor company to say, “We have had this complaint and we are handing it over to you to deal with it.”

<007> P/D

[10.40 am]

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Do you have to give your name if you ring the hotline?

Ms Butler: No.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: It is confidential.

Ms Butler: Often you can say people will come up with all kinds of information that we can go and look at, and we will investigate to the best of our ability, but if people, you know—it depends on what they tell us.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Did you say that goes to your legal in the international office and you deal with what —

Ms Butler: It goes through a compliance group in our head office, and then it will get allocated down through the organisation and often come to the senior legal counsel in Perth for us, and she will then work out which area it is related to, because there are all kinds of matters that come through that.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: In terms of your health and safety in terms of the international corporation, do you just do it almost like on a safety case—these are the sort of systems we have in place? How do you report up how you do health and safety, or does it come down from Chevron?

Ms Butler: We report up on our incident rate and our total recordable rate, and a whole range of issues, or relevant issues, that the corporation has set for us. Motor vehicle accidents —

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: So they set the benchmarks, do they?

Ms Butler: They set the things that they want reporting on, and we can then report on other things. We report on environmental matters. When we were doing some of our ocean work, we reported on the environmental wildlife. We report on serious incidents, we report on motor vehicle incidents—on a range of issues. We take a focus on sprains and strains; we take a focus on trips and falls.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: What are your lost-time injuries at the moment; what are your LTIs at the moment?

Ms Butler: I would have to go and have a look, I'm sorry.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: All right. That is okay.

Ms Butler: It is best in business.

The CHAIR: Kaye and Michael, Rita Saffioti, has joined us as part of the committee.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Going back to the production or construction or operational group, are they working the same panel whether they are fly in, fly out or they are residential?

Ms Butler: Sorry? Which ones?

Mr M.J. COWPER: Are they working the same panel, the fly in, fly out?

Ms Butler: Production or —

Mr M.J. COWPER: No. The construction workers, you are saying you are going to have 300 on Barrow, 300 on —

Ms Butler: These are operations. These are the operators.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Yes, operations. Are they going to be working the same panel whether they are fly in, fly out or residential?

Ms Butler: Yes. That is the issue. Pardon? I am sorry.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I am just trying to establish whether it is worthwhile flying it in and flying it out. You are saying it is costing a million dollars for a house in Onslow. The cost of air fares—what I am trying to get to is a particular point. We had a person before us previously in this committee who said that it is actually now cheaper for them to have people residential than to fly in, fly out. I am curious to know, and I am concerned about the high incidence of fly in, fly out Chevron are operating on—83 per cent of your workforce in operations is going to be fly in, fly out.

Ms Butler: Yes, that is true. And one of them works on a remote location where it is an A-class nature reserve and they do not have any option to do that; is that what you are talking about?

Mr M.J. COWPER: No, what I am saying is that across these two projects, 83 per cent of your workforce is going to be fly in, fly out.

Ms Butler: Eighty-three per cent of the operations workforce, not 83 per cent of our workforce.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Eighty-three per cent of your operation workforce.

Ms Butler: Which is not a high percentage of our workforce generally. Our workforce in operations will be 2 500—around that number—in this state, of which 600 are going to be operations.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Are you saying that there are 2 500 workers here in Perth?

Ms Butler: Today—this is the complexity of making —

Mr M.J. COWPER: I am not talking about construction. Put construction aside.

Ms Butler: Yes.

Mr M.J. COWPER: When Chevron is operational at Wheatstone and Barrow Island, are you telling me there are 300 at Barrow and 300 at Wheatstone?

Ms Butler: Yes.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Of that 600, I have just established that 83 per cent of your workforce is going to be fly in, fly out, with the exception of 100 at Onslow.

Ms Butler: Yes.

Mr M.J. COWPER: They work a panel of two, two, two and four.

Ms Butler: Yes.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Which I have worked out is 356 hours for the 10-week rotation.

Ms Butler: Yes.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Or 35.6 hours per week on average.

Ms Butler: Yes.

Mr M.J. COWPER: So, for 35 hours of work per week on average, the cost of flying them in and out, compared to residentially accommodating them in a town like Onslow or Karratha—that is what I am trying to get at, because, for me, I have grave concerns that the nature of FIFO is not conducive to good mental health. It is the job of the committee here to try to determine if there is any veracity in the nature of FIFO being an issue. At this particular point in time, we have been having some considerable issues about trying to establish how many suicides there have been, and self-harm attempts and the like, and it has been very difficult to do that. But the sheer nature of how some businesses operate, how some corporations operate, I believe contributes to the phenomenon. So what I am saying to you is that I am just trying to establish now, given that the heat, if you like, has come out of construction in Western Australia, we see that there are a vast number of people coming out of the north west who have been working in mines and, with that, hopefully the heat will come out of the labour market and companies like Chevron may not be paying the top dollar in competition with every other. It is like any other commodity; labour is a commodity. If there is a shortage, the price goes up. So what I am trying to get at is: when we get down to a normal situation, stabilised situation, where you are in production, I am trying to establish where the use of FIFO out could be a lot more harmonious to family life.

Ms Butler: If we had 300 skilled operators who were prepared to live in Onslow tomorrow, we may in fact try to have them all reside in Onslow tomorrow. Unfortunately, to date we have not found skilled operators —

Mr M.J. COWPER: Woodside do it.

Ms Butler: Sorry?

Mr M.J. COWPER: Woodside do it.

Ms Butler: We have not found skilled operators prepared to live in Onslow.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: When we went to Barrow—I suppose the question there is: do you do apprenticeships to get the skilled —

Ms Butler: Yes. We do lots of apprenticeships.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: How many apprenticeships do you do?

Ms Butler: Currently on our books we have about 35 apprenticeships, and obviously you can understand, given that we are not in operations, apprenticeships are hard for us, so we have used people like Woodside to help us with our apprenticeships. But once we are in operations, we will be doing a whole lot more.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: To get those skilled people, maybe you could get them from the Onslow or some of the Indigenous communities.

Ms Butler: We are actually trying, you know. The first person we have employed in operations in Onslow is an Indigenous person from Thalanyji, and guess where he wants to live—in the camp.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Okay; I am sure there are many reasons around that as well. It is clearly challenging for you.

Ms Butler: Yes.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: When we went to Barrow we saw the cyclone big things that they pull across and they showed us how they could get that down in terms of a cyclone. Clearly, a cyclone on that island, which is pretty barren—it should be called “Barren Island” instead of Barrow Island. I suppose my question is: what are the evacuation procedures and were those evacuation procedures undertaken when cyclone Olwyn came through, and it is my understanding that there were a number of workers, around 1 000, who were not there at that time. I am wondering whether you can—I know that was the sort of question that we had here, but can you just take us through that from a health and safety perspective and a mental health perspective?

Ms Butler: I understand that was a question in Parliament and that there was a response to that question, and there was a comment about an inquiry.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Was there?

Ms Butler: I thought I had some notes on that, about that.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Did I ask the question?

Ms Butler: I thought there was. I just cannot find it right now.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I think maybe Fran Logan asked it.

Ms Butler: Pardon?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I do not think I asked a question. Anyway, if you can —

Ms Butler: Let me just see if I can find it, because I am sure I had some notes on it.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: It is all right. If you just want to tell us what you know of the cyclone. We saw it when we were at Barrow, so if you want to take us through what you understand it to be, that would be great.

Ms Butler: What I understand, I think that there was a question by the Minister for Commerce about the WorkSafe investigation around the cyclone, and there was a response around a WorkSafe investigation.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I am not asking about the WorkSafe investigation; I am just asking you about the Chevron procedures for that, and I would imagine that that is a particular issue you take very seriously in your contracts to people as well.

Ms Butler: Absolutely.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: If you just want to —

Ms Butler: Obviously, there are a number of people who are required; we do not require everyone to stay during a cyclone and we do evacuate a lot of people. Having said that, the park is built as cyclone resistant, and in fact there are some people who are required to stay during the cyclone, and did stay during that cyclone. So there were some that did stay during that cyclone.

<008> K/4 [10:50:04 AM](#)

[10.50 am]

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Were they all in Butler Park or were some of them left on the vessel or anything like that?

Ms Butler: I think *Europa* sailed at that stage. *Europa* is a seaworthy vessel—it is an oceangoing vessel—and it sailed off. That is the procedure that has been approved, to sail off.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Did Chevron do any investigations? Obviously there was a WorkSafe investigation, and you have the question and I could probably go and read the answer to the

question. But from a point of view of reporting backup, in terms of lost-time injuries and various other things, did Chevron do its own investigation into how it dealt with a category 3 cyclone? What lessons did it learn so it could do it better next time or did it do it at its best or what was Chevron's view?

Ms Butler: I think that every situation when we do an evacuation, we go through and say, "Are there things we can learn, are there things we can do better?" If we had worked out how to get all the birds that kept landing on the airstrip off the airstrip, we would have got the planes out a whole lot quicker. But, unfortunately, they kept landing on the airstrip, so that had an issue for us. We, unfortunately, could not control nature in that regard. So there are always some of those kind of issues that are going to happen. We do evacuate as many people as we can. Having said that, we do not evacuate every town on the coast when we have a cyclone either—well, we do not; we do not evacuate every community.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: We did, we evacuated a whole Aboriginal community at one stage, but anyway.

Ms Butler: Yes, but we do not evacuate every community, do we? We do not evacuate Onslow—well, I do not think we did.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I do not know; I will go back and have a look, but yes.

Ms Butler: But I think what we did was we did evacuate a large number of people; I think the birds on the airstrip during that cyclone created some issues for us around getting all the planes off at the time we wanted them to get off. There were some people who were on their island, but they were in very safe, cyclone-proof facilities through that period.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: In terms of any ramifications in terms of health and safety, are you aware of any?

Ms Butler: Not that we are aware of.

Mr Tunnecliffe: If I can just to add that: for four years I have been involved with what they call cyclone resilience training. We run five sessions a year—five days a year with two sessions each day. They are for leaders and supervisors, and we usually get anything between 20 and 50 leaders and supervisors to each session. The whole purpose of that is training up our leaders and supervisors, from contractors as well as Chevron people, on what to be aware of in terms of anxiety, people panicking, getting a bit upset, getting worried, and giving them skills and strategies to de-escalate and defuse the situation.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: What did you learn from cyclone Olwyn then? What new things have you put into your training now from that thing? We always learn something from the experience, apart from the birds and the —

Mr Tunnecliffe: Absolutely; and the thing I learnt is that when flying ants come out of the ground and the airport has tens of thousands of birds over it, there is not a lot you can do about it. Quite frankly, it was interesting because the last training I did up there was just prior to Olwyn, so —

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: So you have not done any training since Olwyn, so you have not added anything yet?

Mr Tunnecliffe: No, but I have been liaising with the emergency response people up there, and there will be things we will include in our training this year.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: What is that going to be?

Mr Tunnecliffe: I do not have the data from them yet. Every year we look at what has happened, what has been the examples, and we do modify the training. The training has modified enormously between 2012 and 2015.

Ms Butler: We are more than happy to provide you with what we are doing around that training if that would help you.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: Yes.

Has there never been a discussion about minimising it down to less than 1 000 workers? Was it around 1 000 workers you left?

Ms Butler: I would have to go and have a look the —

The CHAIR: Maybe you could provide that for us?

Ms Butler: The numbers that stayed?

The CHAIR: Yes.

We need to wind up very shortly, but can I just ask one question; it comes from my theme about the connectivity between your workforce and a town, if you like. What restrictions does Chevron place on its employees at the Wheatstone project and the camp or the accommodation facility visiting Onslow? When applying for access to company vehicles, what is taken into consideration before the access is granted? Are there private vehicles, such as taxis, permitted to be used for this purpose? To get over some of the rumour that perhaps when someone goes to camp they are in a prison and they have all these restrictions, we would just like you to document for us how a person on camp engages with a nearby town and community.

Ms Butler: I think you went to Wheatstone. The Wheatstone site is operated by Bechtel. If I could explain it briefly, it is a bit like when you are getting your house built; the builder owns that site and what goes on on that site while they are building it until you get the keys. Bechtel manage that site, they manage the conditions they put in that site and how that site is accessed. I do not have all the details of what the Bechtel guidelines have said, but I would strongly urge the committee to talk to Bechtel about that. I would suggest probably —

The CHAIR: Do you have any input into any of that as far as —

Ms Butler: That is a Bechtel-operated site. They operate that site on our behalf. Bechtel manage that way around the world.

The CHAIR: Yes, but my question is: do you have any input into some of these matters —

Ms Butler: No; Bechtel are managing that.

The CHAIR: As being the primary —

Ms Butler: No; Bechtel is the operator of that site.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: But if you saw something unsafe —

Ms Butler: We would go and talk to them, but Bechtel is the operator of that site and they are responsible for the conditions at that site.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: But if something was unsafe, that might break their contract. If you have a builder on your house and the builder was putting the roof down first before he puts the walls up —

Ms Butler: Yes.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: — you are going to be able to say, “Actually, you’re not meeting my contract.”

Ms Butler: Yes.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: So how do you do that? How do you go —

Ms Butler: There are constant conversations between senior Bechtel management and senior Chevron management about the contract and how the work is progressing and how the project is progressing, including areas of health and safety.

The CHAIR: And operationally? If you believed they were running it like a prison and your workers could not get access to go to town to get some relief in their time off —

Ms Butler: We would certainly hear about it.

The CHAIR: Could you say something about that?

Ms Butler: We would hear about it. So our workers are not saying they cannot get to town.

The CHAIR: But if you did—if there was some concern or issue of your workers in that facility—what avenues do you have as Chevron to correct those deficiencies?

Ms Butler: We would talk to the operator of that site. That is part of the contract that they have with us that they will operate that site.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So they have the contractor on the site; we understand that. But in relation to, for example, accessing the town site at Onslow, when Chevron sits down to negotiate the contract with a potential operator, are those items the items of discussion at the beginning of that contract about how they run the site, access, you know, people leaving or coming and going?

The CHAIR: Access to town, what facilities there are?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Surely that is something that is negotiated between Chevron and the operator at the beginning of the contract.

Ms Butler: I think there are certainly discussions between the town and the project at the start of that project. In fact, people can go to town, but we also do not want to have people brawling in the town, which has happened recently.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sure, but all I am saying is that as Chevron you are negotiating with a particular operator, so surely those conditions of whether people need permission, how they get to town, transport—all those issues—are you saying Chevron approves of or —

Ms Butler: Certainly Bechtel would put their proposal to us, yes.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So is that something you consider when choosing an operator—how they run their camps?

Ms Butler: Absolutely. Bechtel is well renowned in the construction of major capital projects and is doing it all over the world. They are one of the best operators in this space.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sorry, I did arrive late so you might have covered this, but in relation to being able to leave the town and have some flexibility in how people go about their business in the camp, it is not an issue that is often raised with you or raised with your company?

Ms Butler: So I believe that workers are able to leave the construction village; they are able to go to town for rest and recreation, but there are some guidelines. If I was living in that town, and some of my friends are living in that town, I would be somewhat concerned with having 5 000 construction workers descend on a very small town in a small space of time. So I think it is pertinent that Bechtel puts some limits around how many people can be accessing the town at any time —

Mr M.J. COWPER: I find that extraordinary.

Ms Butler: What—that you want a whole lot of people heading off into town?

Mr M.J. COWPER: As the officer in charge of Dampier Police Station, we had 4 500 construction workers at the Burrup coming into Dampier every night.

Ms Butler: Wow.

Mr M.J. COWPER: So it is not as if it is a new phenomenon; it has been happening for years.

Ms Butler: And you did not have problems in that situation?

Mr M.J. COWPER: We had some issues, but that was something we dealt with at that time.

Ms Butler: So you put some guidelines around it at the time to manage the behaviour?

Mr M.J. COWPER: No; in actual fact what happened is that we enforced the law. Those who were disorderly were dealt with. You have already said that you have been experiencing those problems within the camps themselves, so what happens in the camp and outside does not really make a great deal of difference.

Ms Butler: Okay.

<009> C/D [11:00:04 AM](#)

[11.00 am]

The CHAIR: And from what we saw at Onslow, some of the businesses were pretty sad and sorry, if you like, and they may have benefited from some economic stimulus by having some customers. Anyway, thank you very much for your evidence before the committee today. A transcript of this hearing will be forwarded to you for correction of minor errors. Any such corrections must be made and the transcript returned within 10 days. You do not have to do that, but if you do not do that, we deem it as correct. New material cannot be added via these corrections, and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you provide additional information or elaborate, we encourage you to do that. And, Kaye, you did talk about some work on Barrow from your medical officer.

Ms Butler: Yes.

The CHAIR: We would love to see some of that; local data would be good too.

Mr Tunnecliffe: Graham, could I just make a statement, if that is the case? Janine mentioned earlier that she had mentioned my comments on Barrow Island about some suicides are not preventable, and there were some mental health professionals who were shocked, I think was the word you used, Janine.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I was shocked, and I asked mental health professionals, and they gave me the response that they thought if they were functioning and on the island, that that seemed quite unusual.

Mr Tunnecliffe: That is not what I was told. Unusual, yes; a well-functioning person, yes. But there are some situations where there is such a circumstance and a background underlying pathology, you will never prevent a suicide.

The CHAIR: I thought you made that very clear, Michael.

Mr Tunnecliffe: I just wanted to clarify that. Okay; I am happy with that

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for your appearance before us today, and I hope we were not too hard on you!

Mr Tunnecliffe: Thank you.

Hearing concluded at 11.02 am