

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE
STANDING COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO THE METHODS EMPLOYED BY WA POLICE
TO EVALUATE PERFORMANCE**

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

SESSION TWO

Members

**Ms M.M. Quirk (Chair)
Dr A.D. Buti (Deputy Chair)
Mr C.D. Hatton
Ms L. Mettam
Mr M.P. Murray**

Hearing commenced at 10.30 am

Mr DON CUNNINGHAME

Assistant Auditor General, Financial Audit, Office of the Auditor General, examined:

Mr VINCE TURCO

Senior Director, Financial Audit, Office of the Auditor General, examined:

Mr ANTHONY KANNIS

Executive Director, Western Australia Police, examined:

Mr MARK STRINGER

Strategic Planning and Performance Analyst, Western Australia Police, examined:

Mr LESLIE BECHELLI

Acting Director, Business Strategy and Finance, Western Australia Police, examined:

The CHAIR: Welcome everyone. I am going to get my colleague Dr Buti to do the preliminaries because I have left my glasses at home today.

Dr A.D. BUTI: On behalf of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, I would like to thank you for your appearance before us today. The purpose of this hearing is to assist the committee in gathering evidence for its inquiry into the methods employed by Western Australia Police to evaluate performance, specifically the performances related to traffic law enforcement and road safety. I will begin by introducing myself. I am the Deputy Chair, Tony Buti, the member for Armadale. The Chair is Ms Margaret Quirk, the member for Girrawheen, and to her left is Ms Libby Mettam, the member for Vasse, and then we have Mr Mick Murray, the member for Collie–Preston, and Mr Chris Hatton, the member for Balcatta. The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee is a committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia. This hearing is a formal procedure of the Parliament and therefore commands the same respect given to proceedings in the house itself. Even though the committee is not asking witnesses to provide evidence on oath or affirmation, it is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as contempt of Parliament. This is a public hearing and Hansard will be making a transcript of the proceedings 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.

Before we proceed to the questions we have for you today, I need to ask you a series of questions. Have you completed the “Details of Witness” form?

The Witnesses: Yes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Do you understand the notes at the bottom of the form about giving evidence to a parliamentary committee?

The Witnesses: Yes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Did you receive a read the information for witness briefing sheet provided with the “Details of Witness” form today?

The Witnesses: Yes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: We have a number of questions for you today. Before we start, do any of you want to make an opening statement at the hearing?

The Witnesses: No.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Madam Chair, I would like to make a statement before we start.

The CHAIR: Excellent.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Previously, we have been criticised when we have had groups in—especially by the police department—that not everyone got a chance or was asked to comment, which I found a bit insulting to be quite honest because it was not true, and *Hansard* proved that. I recommend that if you have something to say, say it.

The CHAIR: Thank you, member for Collie–Preston.

Mr Kannis: I have got some documents to table that might make the discussion a bit easier. They pretty much summarise the previous KPIs and the current KPIs.

The CHAIR: Excellent, that would be terrific. I do not know if someone from the police wants to talk about particular challenges or unique issues for police in terms of KPIs. Does someone want to take that on just to start the discussion?

Mr Kannis: I am happy to give a lead-in there. As you might be aware, I have been in the agency for just over two years, so what we have identified is that there would be many indicators that the police service could use as guides and public indicators. It is a challenge that we see and we actually discuss them monthly at all our corporate board meetings. It is fair to say that our KPIs evolve over time, so there are some KPIs that we have in here, and the one that I refer to is the one about officers' availability. In my view, that is a journey we are on to actually get to the point where we can demonstrate to the public and the Parliament our frontline effort in a better way than is currently done. Clearly, at the moment, people assess frontline effort by the number of blue shirts. We see that there are better ways of doing that, so that KPI is one that is evolving from a very low level of maturity that we expect will increase over time and improve so that we can actually demonstrate to all the stakeholders that there are better ways of measuring our effort than the number of blue shirts.

The CHAIR: With your former hat on, obviously police go cap-in-hand to Treasury every year and say, "Put a zero on what we had last year"—at the end of the figure, not the beginning! At that stage there is obviously a discussion about how the KPIs were fulfilled last year—or does that not occur?

Mr Kannis: Yes, there is discussion not only about how we achieved them last year, but every month we actually go through them. As a standing agenda item on our corporate executive, we discuss the trends of our KPIs.

The CHAIR: That is in your current position, but what I am asking about is: there tends to be more of a focus on next year's budget than how people performed in the last year. Would that be a true statement? Unless it is an underspend.

Mr Kannis: I guess the fortunate thing in the two years I have been there is that we have actually worked within our budget limitations, so we have not had the need to increase our budget beyond what the forward estimates indicate.

The CHAIR: Sorry, that was a bit of a flippant remark. From the Auditor General's perspective, is there anything unique or different or slightly problematic about formulating KPIs for police, from your perspective?

Mr Cunninghame: I do not think there is anything noteworthy that is extremely problematic from the point of view of auditing the police KPIs compared with other agencies. Certainly they are a very operational organisation, so perhaps just like doctors and nurses in an emergency ward, they are on the move, so things like when officers need to try to record their time, how much time they

spent on a particular service, can be really challenging so therefore it is difficult sometimes to report KPIs that rely heavily on an estimate by an officer of how much time they are spending on this type of service or that type of service. In general, to cut to the chase, perhaps that kind of indicator might often be an internal KPI that is very, very important information for management to monitor, but not necessarily going to produce data that is reliable enough for external reporting and to pass muster for an audit.

The CHAIR: Quite often the public claims that it is not about what is being done but what is not being done, so do you have to look at surveys of satisfaction? How do you determine those sorts of measurements?

Mr Cunninghame: I am not sure if you are referring to what is not being reported as a KPI and what is being reported —

The CHAIR: Well, how do you make a KPI for, say, police attendance or something like that?

[10.40 am]

Mr Turco: We do not really get involved in the process of formulating the KPI; it is up to the agency to do that. Our role is if it is relevant and appropriate to the outcome. If the police have got an outcome, their indicators, especially the effectiveness ones, need to measure that outcome. If the outcome is X amount of offences being dealt with and then measuring how many times people have gone in and out of the door, that indicator is not appropriate or relevant to the outcome. That is what we do; we go there and sort of look at what they have produced, and before it gets approved by the Under Treasurer, we look at it to make sure that it is on the right track—that the indicators that are proposed to be put up are relevant and appropriate to the outcome. We do not get involved in the operational side of things and all that; that is not our role. Our role is to have the independence to make sure—the reason we get involved in a bit of consulting like that is to make sure that when we get the indicators to audit, they are relevant and appropriate, because there would be nothing worse than them coming to us and we are of the view that what the indicator has been approved by went past the minister and also by the Under Treasurer, we do not think they are relevant and appropriate to the outcome, and they could end up with a modified opinion there.

Mr Cunninghame: We obviously look for bias. One of our tests is bias in the choice of the indicators. For instance, if an agency drops an indicator that perhaps is one that makes them look not so good, we would have to question that and look into that and see that that is not the case. We are always alert to that. Alternatively, if they decide they want to report something that makes it look more rosy, we are also mindful of that. We need to ensure that there is no bias in that, and I can assure you that that is what we are looking to.

Dr A.D. BUTI: But you are also looking at the validity and the reliability of the KPIs, right?

Mr Cunninghame: Yes, definitely.

Dr A.D. BUTI: There is always a debate between qualitative and quantitative data and research. Is there some discussion about the problem that a KPI narrows the way people operate to ensure that they meet that KPI, rather than doing their job? Does anyone have a comment on that?

Mr Kannis: I would expect that the Auditor General would review those sorts of aspects to make sure that we are not tailoring it so that we come out absolutely correctly. There are significant issues in there that we just identify. The measure for us is our stakeholders and their requirements. For example, one of our new KPIs is referenced to domestic violence, and clearly the community needs some measure of our performance in dealing with domestic violence cases —

Dr A.D. BUTI: When was that? Is that recently?

Mr Kannis: That is for the current year, and that would be measured and reported in the annual report for this year. That is dealing with what things we can influence and that is saying that we expect that we would process those cases within a period of time, which is a significant factor that

impacts upon the recurrence of that sort of event. We have identified that the stakeholders want reference to domestic violence. We then have to assess what impact we have on the KPI in that aspect. We have picked that the time we take to deal with these issues is the best way that we can actually help deal with them.

Dr A.D. BUTI: When you say “stakeholders”, who are the stakeholders?

Mr Kannis: Community expectations, those that come through the media, through Parliament and the minister’s wishes. The minister will, in some cases, say to us, “You can’t not have something like that in there”, so this is all a consultation process with the minister and the stuff that obviously comes through the Parliament and other things.

Dr A.D. BUTI: As you say, one of the stakeholders is the public. You made a statement earlier on about the public may see the number of blue shirts on the beat as being important, but you do not actually think that is necessarily a good measure. But if the stakeholders believe that is what should be the case, are you trying to change public perception to fit what you want to measure as a KPI?

Mr Kannis: What I should clarify is that we need to give them better information about the effectiveness of those people on the beat. We have identified through the last 18 months that there are a number of our police officers who are doing work in the back office that could be done by public servants. There is an expensive cost of having those there. We have approximately 5 800 police officers employed at the moment. To say that 10 per cent of those are working in the back office and not contributing to law and order outcomes directly is something that we need the community to know so that they can understand there is some value in getting those officers onto the front line rather than just employing more. That is the point that I was making.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I think the community would not have a problem. I do not think the community has expressed any problem about officers in the back room. Their problem is that there are not police officers in the front room.

Mr Kannis: My view would be that the commissioner should be able to demonstrate his effort by referring to frontline hours. That is what we are trying to do. We are actually perhaps educating the community and the stakeholders on where the best value is.

The CHAIR: Just on the frontline hours, there seems to be a bit of a dispute as to traffic enforcement hours. That was information that previously was available. Now, according to the RAC, they cannot get it. What is the issue there?

Mr Kannis: That is something I recall coming up. I think it might have come up last time I was in front of this committee. My understanding is that the information is still provided to the Office of Road Safety, but I am not sure how that was resolved.

The CHAIR: So it is still being recorded?

Mr Kannis: The information is still being recorded in terms of patrol hours; it is just not being publicly released. It is not being put into our annual report and other things, and my understanding is that it is provided to the Office of Road Safety. I am not sure if Mark can confirm that or not.

Mr Stringer: I believe so.

The CHAIR: Why is it not being reported on any more in the annual report?

Mr Kannis: The line that we are taking with the annual report is that it should be there to refer to our formal KPIs, and patrol hours are not formal KPIs for us. We are happy to have that information made available through other mechanisms, but not necessarily to bulk up the annual report. Our view is that the annual report should meet our legal responsibilities to measure financials and KPIs. That is a judgement that has been taken by our corporate executive, and we are not saying that information cannot be available; it just does not necessarily need to be part of our annual report.

The CHAIR: All right, I will get back to the member for Collie–Preston in a minute. Are there any additional IT applications or purchases, or anything that need to be made to refine these KPIs so you are getting the information you need in the form you need it?

Mr Kannis: As you would be aware from previous hearings, we are redeveloping our CAD system. We believe there will be some improvement out of that to allow us to monitor officers. Will we get to the point where—I think Don made a very good point—we can actually measure what officers are doing every minute of the day? It is very difficult.

The CHAIR: Good luck with the union.

Mr Kannis: That is right—exactly. If we were to require our officers to record every six minutes or 15 minutes we would come a cropper—sorry, we would be criticised for that. One day I am hoping that we can have some buttons that say “I’m doing operational stuff” or “I’m doing admin stuff” and all that sort of stuff. We are a long way from that. I do not believe it is available immediately, but that is the sort of technology that we would like to have in the future, when it becomes available. I am not sure there are cases where we can demonstrate that that is available without hindering the officers’ daily business.

The CHAIR: All right, I will get back to the member for Collie–Preston in a second. We have come across this before in this inquiry—anecdotal stories from people on talkback radio saying, “I drove from Esperance to Exmouth and didn’t see a single copper.” Would putting that information as to how much time is spent on the roads in the annual report, or making it publicly available go some way to dispelling the rumour? You know, there are three times as many traffic hours spent now as two years ago, or something. It seems to be the wrong time to be actually restricting the flow of that information.

Mr Kannis: Before answering that, I would say that there are better people in the agency to comment on that than I am, in terms of an operational sense, but the view is that there is not a direct correlation between patrol hours and safety outcomes, but I would defer to others to answer that. Sometimes the perception you hear on radio is just because of the situation that they were in and the roads they were driving on. I appreciate that you cannot ignore that, but if you ask our experts, I do not believe that simply spending time out there patrolling is going to allow us to actually meet our outcomes in a correlated way. I believe there are other more focused areas that we could deal with, like focusing on areas where trauma is occurring and other things like that, rather than just simply patrolling.

The CHAIR: Just one follow-up to that. Who are the experts who say there is no correlation?

Mr Kannis: The deputy commissioner of operations is our expert.

[10.50 am]

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Just going back a while, if all the information collecting is then disbanded, or not collected anymore, how does the public have a say? How do you get the public’s opinion if you are not questioning the public? Looking at your sheet, all that information will dry up because you are not going to question any more. How do you get the public’s view?

Mr Kannis: I should clarify that we are not stopping measuring it; it is ceasing to be a KPI. That is all this is saying. Any data that we have collected in the past will continue to be collected. If you are referring to the community satisfaction ones, that is done by a national survey of all jurisdictions every year, and is actually reported in the report on government services also. It is continuing to be measured, just not published as a KPI in our annual report.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I suppose my question follows on from that, and it gets back to my earlier question. I can understand because the public’s perception of policing is that it may not necessarily always be the right way to go, but as you say, they are one of the stakeholders. I think most of us would agree that the main role of police is to make the community actually safe, rather than necessarily the

perception. But perception is important. If people do not feel safe, that is a real problem. Surely that information from the public is important and maybe should be factored into the KPIs, so there is a KPI that we have reduced crime, number one, but there is also a KPI that people are feeling safer.

Mr Kannis: My judgement on that—this is my personal opinion—is that those perceptions are influenced by so many other factors, such as media and others, that I do not believe us putting our data out there would change that perception.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I would like to differ to some degree, because if a particular group does not understand or is not informed on what you are doing, it creates—the vacuum is there, and then the gossip system starts up, and away you go, and you have got, “They aren’t doing anything.” But even when you do produce a report, if it is not in the public arena with a KPI, who in the public is going to go and read public reports and dig into parliamentary reports? No-one, except probably us, with the red tape or some such. You then lose the public. The public then is over there and you have the police or whatever agency over here, because they do not understand what you are doing and they do not see a measurement you are putting out saying that you are doing a good job or not so good job in this area. Do you not see that there becomes a disconnect, because those people—the public—are not going to go out and read public reports?

Mr Kannis: I would agree with you if there was a level playing field in terms of, the media will always present the view—it will just be information that is out there. The media will get the next opportunity to actually refute or come up with another argument and my view is that if the perception is out there that someone wants to get that message across, that there is lack of patrol and lack of input, I do not believe—again I take your opinion, but my opinion would be that I do not believe it is going to change that perception. To answer the question that Dr Buti asked—do I think it is going to change perception—my opinion is that it is not going to change perception because of all the other factors that are out there.

Ms L. METTAM: One of the new KPIs relates to contacts made by police officers. Perhaps you are the best person to answer the question. Can you explain what the thoughts were behind that, and how that links with the community as one?

Mr Kannis: The main reason for that KPI is that we expect that contacts we made in cases that cause historically the greatest trauma—so the events that are there, and I think Mark might have in his head what they are. If you need to know them exactly, they are the ones that are being picked out to say that they are the things that will most likely cause trauma. I think we have a target of 95 per cent there, so 95 per cent of our contacts will be related to that, because that is where we think we will get the best bang for buck in terms of trying to meet our outcomes.

Mr Stringer: Were you not referring to the contacts in relation to category A offences?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes, exactly.

Mr Stringer: The focus of that was in terms of the key offences or types of contacts that the police do in order to further the outcome of making the public safe in terms of reducing fatal crashes and the like. Obviously, drink-driving testing and others, obviously speed, driving without a valid licence, reckless driving or mobile phone usage while you are driving.

Mr Kannis: We can get that list to you.

Mr Stringer: Yes, we can get the whole list to you.

Ms L. METTAM: What constitutes a contact? How would you define what a contact is?

Mr Stringer: A contact is a personal contact, so when a police officer stops a person and gives them a random breath test, for example, or stops them for speeding because they have detected that they have been speeding or they have detected that the vehicle, perhaps through licence plate recognition, is unlicensed. The contact is pulling over and either giving them a fine on the spot or dealing with that individual in some way.

Ms L. METTAM: We heard from an intelligence analyst earlier. What do we know about community expectations and how that is matched with these contacts? I guess I am just drawing on a question I asked earlier. Why is this an important KPI to include?

Mr Stringer: It is important in that the focus of the police in terms of its outcomes is to keep the community safe and one aspect of that is obviously road safety. Ensuring that police are spending the appropriate amount of time or most of their time in terms of their road safety or traffic enforcement contact on those types of offences or contacts that are most related to traffic crashes and fatalities in particular, rather than miscellaneous other offences that are under the Road Traffic Act, means the police can be seen to be focusing on those things or those activities that are most contributing to reducing the road toll.

The CHAIR: So, implicit in that criteria is the idea of deterrence and it reinforces the anytime, anywhere method. Would you agree with that?

Mr Stringer: I would agree with that.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Sorry to step back again, what I heard is that from now on you will produce a report without KPIs, then that is tabled, the media will then pick it up, analyse the results, put out their spin on it and then you will refute the spin if you do not agree with it. Is that where we are headed?

Mr Stringer: No, that is not the case. The situation is that we will have the same data available. There will be no more or less spin placed upon it than if we put it in our annual report. It would be the same data that would have gone in an annual report; it will just be there on our website for people to interpret themselves. That will not change. If it is the same data that was in our annual report previously, it will be on our webpage, so the capacity for someone to put spin around it is the same.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: But without you putting the end result there, it allows someone else to put an end result there; that is what I am trying to point at. You will still have to refute that.

Mr Kannis: We will put the same data there. It will not be any different to the information we have put out there previously, so there will be no greater capacity for someone to make their own interpretation than they had in the past. It is exactly the same data, it just is not going into our formal annual report. That is the only issue that has changed here.

The CHAIR: Can I look at page 3 of the document you have provided and the two last paragraphs, if you like. Previously, you had “percentage of drivers tested for drink-driving and who were found to exceed the lawful alcohol limit”, and I note that will be discontinued, as is the “percentage of vehicles monitored for speeding by speed cameras that were found to exceed the lawful speed limit”. Can you explain why they will no longer be with us?

[11.00 am]

Mr Kannis: I guess the OAG might have had a view on this one; I am not sure whether you would have one in this case, but I will give the argument from our point of view. There was a target for the number of drivers tested for drink-driving. My observation when I arrived at the department was: what is a good outcome and what is a bad outcome? Is the fact that more people are being found to be exceeding the blood level, the alcohol limit, a good sign or a bad sign? I believe that we should be aiming as an outcome to reduce the number of people who are found to exceed the limit, but someone else might have a very different view to say, “We’re catching more of them.” To us that was a confusing KPI.

Mr Stringer: It is just difficult to determine whether a given result was actually a good result or a bad result. It could be interpreted in either way and because of the ambiguity the OAG in their review one of the recommendations was to —

The CHAIR: What is going to replace it?

Mr Kannis: What is replacing those two KPIs are the ones about category A offences, so the percentage of our effort that goes towards contacts with category A offences, which are ones that cause the greatest trauma.

The CHAIR: So in other words the measure of effectiveness of RBTs will be diluted, effectively, because you will not even have any percentage of people who are found positive or negative however ambiguous that is.

Mr Kannis: Again, we still keep a record of the number of people, but it is not something that we believe we should be measured by.

The CHAIR: The whole drink-driving strategy, how are you able to say it is effective? I agree that that percentage is misleading for a number of reasons, but I do not know, the replacement does not seem to be any more meaningful; that is what I am saying.

Mr Kannis: The replacement covers the wider scope of things that can affect trauma. That is the basis for this inclusion. For internal management purposes we still keep all of this data, so we know how many were tested. We also keep data on how many car accidents involved alcohol. They are the sorts of measures that we talk about.

The CHAIR: And that is related to contact with members of the public?

Mr Kannis: Yes.

The CHAIR: There is a lot of argument about the effectiveness or otherwise of speed cameras. How is that measured or whatever then? It does not seem to be linked to any sort of indicator.

Mr Kannis: Again, in certain areas where we place the cameras, we know how many have exceeded the limit in those areas. Usually they will lead to advice about where we choose to put the cameras—where there have been some accident in the past or where there has been excessive speed.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Is that why you put them down the bottom of hills?

Mr Kannis: I cannot answer that!

The CHAIR: Do not go there, you are bitter and twisted! But again, you see, we will have statements made that the police have been successful in cracking down on speeding this year. If you do not actually have the full picture about speed cameras and what have you and link them up with maybe infringement notices, I do not see how those sorts of propositions can be made one way or the other.

Mr Kannis: They can be made because we have the data available where we can see where the effect has been made. Where we make those statements, we should be providing the data that supports it; that would be my opinion.

The CHAIR: This inquiry is about the fact that there were concerns about the level of accountability, whether the police were copping it sweet for the road toll and whether other people should in fact bear some responsibility. Without precise performance indicators, I do not see that there is going to be any other alternative but to go back to currently the road toll and the crash statistics. That is a concern because I know that there are other factors at force which are not within the purview of police.

Mr Kannis: WA Police is not absolving itself from any responsibility in terms of its role in what happens with the road toll.

The CHAIR: No; it is the other problem—you are going to be assuming responsibility.

Mr Kannis: No. The aspect is that there are so many other factors that affect the road toll.

The CHAIR: Exactly.

Mr Kannis: So, as the commissioner has said in recent weeks, there is driver attention and other things like that, the road structures and road planning. They are all things that contribute to the road

toll. We have a role in that in enforcement and we do keep data on it. There is not a meaningful target or KPI that we can provide that demonstrates how we can affect that. Given the most recent one, these most recent KPIs about alcohol and speed were confusing. There are no aspects that say how can we directly impact. The best way that we can directly impact on the road toll is by targeting those offences, not just alcohol and speed, that create the greatest trauma.

The CHAIR: My problem is that police need to be in a position that they can say to the Road Safety Council and the road safety commissioner or the media or whoever, “We’re okay. We’ve done better this year than we did last year.” I do not know, with these KPIs, that you are going to be able to do that.

Mr Stringer: We have representation on the Road Safety Council and each time it is attended, we produce a road safety report that contains all the sorts of things that you have mentioned in terms of speeding, drink-driving and fatalities and the like. So that information is provided to that particular forum.

The CHAIR: We have got a scenario where that is being abolished, and we have a commissioner that is going to report directly to the minister and does not have to report to Parliament, so it seems to me that there is going to be less information available, not more. Surely it is more on the Road Safety Council, or whoever has the interest; it is a matter of public interest. The commissioner has got to be able to stand in front of the public or go on talkback radio with his hand on his heart and say, “On this and this and this, we have done better than we did last year, but on that and that and that, we have had some problems because of X, Y and Z.” These are too diffuse, it seems to me.

Mr Kannis: The situation is that that data will continue to be available and will be kept. There needs to be a judgement made about which KPIs are the ones that we can manage effectively. We felt that in a period where you cannot just continue to increase the patrol hours, where you are getting greater bang for your buck out of the patrol hours and the contacts—I think we are saying we aim to achieve 95 per cent of our cases where we make contact will be those cases the nature of which cause trauma. The judgement that we have made in consultation with the minister and Treasury is that these are our premier KPIs, if you like to call them, but we do not hide from the fact that there is information that we keep that the public might want in the future that we will still make available.

The CHAIR: Am I to infer by your comment that patrol hours are going to either stay at current levels or go down?

Mr Kannis: No, you should not infer anything from my statement.

The CHAIR: Can I infer from some figures that we were given about infringements—that is in fact by a letter signed by you? In 2013 there were 182 000 plus, in 2014 there were 159 000 plus, and in the year to date there have been 27 500. So, if we are generous and say that is the quarterly figure, that is 108 000 or something, as opposed to 159 000 and 182 000 and your previous 210 000. Have the contacts gone down because there is more focus on cameras? What is the story there with those figures?

Mr Kannis: I would not mind taking that on notice if I can.

The CHAIR: It is in a letter from you.

Mr Kannis: I have not got it in front of me, unfortunately.

Ms L. METTAM: They are infringements, are they not, not contacts?

The CHAIR: That is contacts.

Ms L. METTAM: Is an infringement and a contact the same thing?

Mr Stringer: It depends on the circumstances. In terms of the KPI, a contact is an on-the-spot situation. An infringement can be issued for an on-the-spot situation, but it can also be issued when you go through a speed camera.

[11.10 am]

The CHAIR: So that includes both, does it?

Mr Kannis: These numbers are just on the spot.

Mr Stringer: The KPI is only in relation to on the spot.

The CHAIR: So, if you are pulled up for not having your seatbelt on, that would be there, but if it is a speed camera on the Kwinana Freeway, that will be sent to you in the mail. So that is the physical contact.

Mr Stringer: Yes, physical contact as opposed to a speed camera situation where you get an infringement in the mail.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: But that can be distorted terribly. As one who travels the Forrest Highway very often, you could put a speed camera at the turn-off to Old Mandurah Road and catch exactly the same amount as when we see the coppers sitting there every long weekend catching them, so your figures would be terribly distorted, because it is about a decision to have a speed camera—and you would probably catch more because you can see the coppers if you are looking. I just cannot see how you can work that about a contact, because they wave them down there and there are generally a few. But if there was a camera, there is no queue and no measurement as such. I find it difficult to understand how you measure that.

Mr Stringer: In terms of the contact KPI, the focus is on police officers actually patrolling and making contact in terms of traffic-related enforcement, whereas the speed cameras are operated by civilians, not by police officers. So, again, our focus on that has been more towards what police officers do as opposed to other enforcement activities that may not be actually conducted.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: But the point I am making is that instead of being a steel box with three legs, it is a human with two legs, but the same job is being done.

The CHAIR: It is arguable that there is a greater deterrent having a bloke or a woman in a blue shirt raising a finger at you and saying, “Don’t do it again” than just getting something in the post.

Mr Bechelli: You would probably need to clarify also what that is measuring. If that is just speed infringements versus seatbelts and that, it could be a combination of the officer standing by the side of the road or it could be an officer doing patrols actually via their speed cameras or the laser within the car actually speeding. So it could actually be a combination of sitting beside the road and it can actually be while they are patrolling.

The CHAIR: But there is physical contact with the individual in every case.

Mr Bechelli: Yes; correct.

The CHAIR: Presumably, just on those figures, if you are checking on them, Mr Kannis, it seems to me there will be some minor offences in there that would not come within your criteria of just the more serious offences that attract trauma.

Mr Kannis: So that would be distilled out of things statistically.

The CHAIR: What I am saying is that the contacts there will be something less than the 27 000 for the year to date because they would include—I know of one case where my constituent got done for having one of those smelly air fresheners on his mirror. Obviously, that is not a road trauma issue, so that would be distilled down. It will be something less than the 27 000 for the year to date.

Mr Bechelli: That is what the percentage is measuring. It is measuring what we define as category A jobs versus whatever the category is for that, so that is why they are 90 per cent. That example

you gave would probably fall into that more 10 per cent type of measures. We actually do have those counts of where we kind of separate them and eliminate them so we can actually work out what the percentage of our contacts are.

The CHAIR: That infringement is the full lot, is it not?

Mr Kannis: Yes.

Mr Bechelli: Yes.

Ms L. METTAM: What is the value of removing these two KPIs—the value in not trying to direct your resources towards, I guess, detecting a large number of drink-drivers or people who are over the speed limit? I guess I am pointing to utilising less than third measures in monitoring and being in contact with the public.

Mr Kannis: I should point out that the removal of these does not change our focus at all—there is absolutely no change in the focus of the officers—this is only about what we report. This is more us communicating to our stakeholders the things that we suggest they measure us by; that is it. I should say that this is probably external to an officer out on the street; it will not change what they do at all.

Mr Cunninghame: Can I say something about those two indicators? The discussion a short while ago about the amount of effort that the police officers put into an aspect of this is important, obviously, for the KPIs of the police department, but I can see the broader high level picture for government as a whole and the sometimes difficult decision as to which agency should report a particular indicator. I do not like to point the finger towards anyone, because we are not necessarily involved in the design of these KPIs, but the two indicators in question might well sit under the Office of Road Safety.

The CHAIR: Which is being abolished, so we are moving forward.

Mr Cunninghame: Sorry, yes.

It might sit with another agency, but it may not, and then the decision as well is the number of KPIs that you can report and the cost of reporting and auditing them. This kind of information can go in the annual report of this or any agency as an unaudited KPI and still get the same level of exposure. That might apply to a number of indicators. If the additional cost is not huge, if you have got the data, that is always an option. We quite frequently have that borderline decision—not decision—but from an audit point of view, if something does not totally stack up for an externally audited KPI, we certainly do not encourage agencies to not report that information. So there is that next step down elsewhere in the annual report, which is open to scrutiny.

The CHAIR: So we can see the whole area of road safety is not just police response. If you can imagine a pie chart: there is police, there is transport and there are other areas that are relevant. What we are trying to ask is: what portion of the pie is police and how do you measure that? Now, if that is not specifically precise, they are going to cop it sweet in relation to decisions and policies made by other agencies. That is really what we are trying to delineate without, I have to say, a lot of success.

Mr Kannis: I think our role is enforcement and we keep statistics on the enforcement and have that available publicly. Is it the only factor that is contributing to the road safety outcome? No, it is not. I appreciate that there will be—even though the Office of Road Safety is being abolished, I assume that the commissioner will be responsible to report to Parliament as the Office of Road Safety has in the past. I do not think there will be any reduction in reporting.

The CHAIR: No, he is reporting to the minister not to Parliament.

Dr A.D. BUTI: You said that your role is enforcement—no doubt that is the major role of police—but surely you also have a role in trying to change public attitudes. There was a study in Tasmania, 10 years ago, that states —

... the relationship between enforcement activities (outputs) and accident reduction (outcomes) is not as direct as is often claimed or implied. First, the immediate cause of accidents is the attitudes and behaviour of road users; what policing can do is to help influence these, so that the link between policing and road trauma is a two stage relationship.

Do you agree with that?

Mr Kannis: I believe we can be a visual deterrent as well as being an enforcer, and that is consistent with the view that they will be there anywhere, anytime to pick up people.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Okay, although I must say I think the police commissioner is a very public figure and he often enters debates in other areas trying to change attitudes, so it seems to be here that you do not have that view. Max Cameron, who has provided road safety expertise to WA for many years, stated that KPIs should reflect the research connecting speed enforcement methods with real reductions in crashes and injuries through decreases in speeding, especially high level speeding. He said the same about the link between drink-driving reductions and decreasing alcohol-related crashes. Was this considered when you designed your new KPIs?

Mr Kannis: I cannot answer that question; perhaps Mark can.

The CHAIR: Perhaps you can take us through the whole process of how these were developed.

[11.20 am]

Mr Stringer: They were developed during 2013. As a part of that process we considered the environmental context, such as the requirements of the minister and the balanced scorecard, which is a principle of measuring performance in a number of agencies, which contains aspects of customer service, finance, internal process and the like. But, yes, certainly in terms of traffic, we wanted to focus on what the police's contribution was and what we can control. We recognised at the time that there are other agencies, such as the Office of Road Safety, Main Roads and the like, who also contribute to road safety in their own ways. So we could have considered a KPI such as the rate of fatalities per 100 000, which is used by some agencies. Again, that would be a great indicator for the Office of Road Safety, for example, which is looking at the whole picture, whereas if we used it, certainly, we contribute to that as an agency from an enforcement point of view, but there are other factors, as has been mentioned previously, that also impact on that. If we were to include that, it would, sort of, suggest that police were responsible for all aspects of road safety when clearly we have not been, in the past anyway. We did not want to include something that we were not totally responsible for and could not totally influence because of all the various factors that do impact.

The CHAIR: Can I use an analogy: the police cop it sweet for the crime statistics—right—and quite often that is the failure of other agencies or the work of other agencies or the policies of other agencies that impact on that. For example, with juvenile delinquency it might have been a failure on the part of DCP or some offences might be alcohol related so that relates to decisions of the department of liquor licensing and the density of alcohol outlets and so on. Why is it in that area you just cop it sweet, and yet in road safety you are not prepared to?

Mr Stringer: Actually in the past we had not really reported on offences as a KPI because essentially police are not responsible for offences as such. Obviously, there are a number of circumstances that lead to an offence being committed.

The CHAIR: The safety of the community and the perception of safety directly correlate to the commission of offences, surely. What I am saying is that I cannot see what the distinction is between your arguments in that case and in relation to criminal offences.

Mr Stringer: I suppose one of the things we have done in terms of our current KPIs is to actually introduce two KPIs that are directly related to offences. We have gone from not reporting on

reported offences to actually reporting the rate of offences per 100 000 population. We have actually provided more information or taken responsibility or acknowledged responsibility that police do play a role in the number of offences that are committed.

Mr Kannis: If I can add, that would also be related to our new operating model in the metropolitan area. We feel that we can have an effect on the rate of offences by the work of our local policing teams and our response teams in metropolitan.

The CHAIR: Can I suggest on that—just off the topic—that you start gathering statistics about how many times people leave messages with their local policing teams and do not get their calls responded to? Anyway, that is just editorial; you can ignore that.

Mr Kannis: We are aware of that situation, and we have reviewed it in recent times. It is something that we have become aware of—that there has been that claim—and we have actually gone to research and to see where that is occurring so we can help fix it.

The CHAIR: My colleagues will have some questions. Can I just ask: are you aware of the commissioner's KPIs and whether by changing this you have also correspondingly changed the commissioner's KPIs?

Mr Kannis: You are talking about his performance agreement?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Kannis: He does not have a performance agreement. The Commissioner of Police does not have a performance agreement.

The CHAIR: That is interesting.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Maybe they should put him up for election every four years then.

Mr C.D. HATTON: If I could have a comment on this. We are looking into the performance measure relating to traffic law enforcement and road safety—that is really what we are doing. Some of us here at the committee have pointed out that the public perception of their community safety is sometimes related to the number of people in blue, the officers out there and the cars on the road. If we go to the outcome-based document—I think you have already answered this in part—down the bottom of page 2 you have taken out this year the percentage of the community who thought speeding cars, dangerous or noisy driving were somewhat of a problem or a major problem in their known neighbourhood. We are talking about public perception. Noisy cars is a huge issue in my electorate and other electorates too. We have complaints about it to our offices all the time—speeding cars as well. The trauma involved is that sometimes cars go through houses. That is something that has been occurring in the past number of years in Perth. There is trauma there, and yet you seem to relate some of your performance indicators et cetera to high priority trauma. The public are pretty scared; it has been an issue out there, so why would you take that away? Is that because you want more speed bumps, because that is not what the public wants—speed bumps are not police. I deal with complaints about speed bumps all the time. Just about every day there are complaints about speed bumps. As much as they are a good traffic-calming measure, they are also very annoying to people. Why take out something that seems to be complained about all the time—a percentage of the community thought speeding cars, dangerous or noisy driving was somewhat a problem?

Mr Cunninghame: I probably should not answer this question, but I can answer part of it. I think it is the same thing we were talking about a moment ago, it sounds like that indicator, the perception of the public as to their safety, is driven by more than just the actions of the police. It might be for that reason that it is no longer in the police indicators, but, I guess, government as a whole still has that dilemma: where does that get reported? In other words, we do not encourage or discourage indicators being reported purely because they do not fit with a particular agency. Some way or other, one agency does need to report important indicators, and I am not sure where that one sits.

Mr C.D. HATTON: I had to get that off my shoulders.

Mr Cunninghame: As I say, I thought about that one, that change, because it was an indicator of perception of the public as to how safe they were against burglars or, in this case, this kind of behaviour. Moving to ones that measure the public's satisfaction with their latest contacts with the police, that is a more direct link to the police's performance. However, what appears to be missing, probably, in the information that Parliament is getting is that higher level indicator of how safe the public feel, which is the one that you just mentioned. I am not sure where that one resides.

The CHAIR: Can you just let me know who was consulted in reformulating these KPIs?

Mr Kannis: Yes, Treasury, the Office of the Auditor General and the Minister for Police, at least. I am not sure if there are any other than that.

The CHAIR: Did you go to the Road Safety Council, for example?

Mr Kannis: No.

Ms L. METTAM: Anthony, did you want to add a comment to what was previously said as well?

Mr Kannis: I did want to say, it is probably restating stuff we have mentioned before, but it is about the capacity that we have to influence these factors. We have not ignored confidence at all; we now have a KPI in there which refers to the people's confidence in police. In my view, their confidence in police is about how they deal with some of these issues. So we have not totally ignored the public perception in this case.

The CHAIR: So you think that would be enhanced by giving them less information; is that correct?

Mr Kannis: No, I do not believe that.

The CHAIR: Well, that is what is in fact going to happen.

Mr Kannis: We are not giving less information.

[11.30 am]

Ms L. METTAM: From an auditor's perspective—this might not be something you can answer—we are going from looking at multiple subjective questions or KPIs to two more broader KPIs looking at satisfaction or whether the community was satisfied or not satisfied or very satisfied. Do you have any comments to make about that? About breaking, I guess, the value of being more generic in asking questions on public perception as opposed to questions about levels of satisfaction which are very prescriptive?

Mr Cunninghame: I will perhaps answer that, and Mr Turco may have something else to say as well to add to it. I take the point that that shift to perhaps a slightly higher level indicator is not giving you some information. The KPIs are intended to be relatively high level outcomes-based indicators, but it is a challenge to get that balance right between the measuring at the higher level for the audited KPIs, effectively, so there is not too much information sitting there to potentially confuse readers, because you can get conflicting messages from different indicators, so the aim is to be higher level. But it is a balancing act between not going too high level and not giving enough detail and that will vary in this area and it may be an area where you need a bit more detail.

The CHAIR: Can I just ask about the Productivity Commission reporting: how much influence have they had on developing the current KPIs?

Mr Stringer: Again, as part of that environmental context we included the "Report on Government Services", which reports nationally on not necessarily comparable but certainly national police indicators in the police services chapter. We certainly considered the types of indicators that are in there, and where perhaps we did not have an indicator that was reported in that that we could possibly include, then we have.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The 2012 Auditor General’s report “Beyond Compliance: Reporting and managing KPIs in the public sector” states —

... should clearly define the relationship between the KPIs, agency level outcomes and services, and government goals.

There appears to be only one outcome listed in the new performance measures. Should there not be more outcomes so that you can draw a clearer line between the services you provide and the impact of those services?

Mr Stringer: Previously, we had three outcomes: we had an outcome relating to community safety, essentially; one relating to apprehension of offenders; and the other relating to lawful road user behaviour. We decided that we could create a single outcome that covered all aspects of those previous three outcomes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The new target KPIs contain only two measures that are based on survey data, yet research would suggest that qualitative data reveals much more about the process that is involved in effective policing. Why do you not include more qualitative data? Is it about the cost of producing it?

Mr Kannis: I can answer that question. We have access to the national survey, so there is some data that we can receive through the qualitative assessment. As you can see, we previously had a number of qualitative assessments there. The fact is that while we still receive that data, and it is reported in the “Report on Government Services” I believe, we had to make a priority assessment about the KPIs that we had. We could not have many more than we have here at this stage, so it was a matter of priority. We would pick those qualitative assessment or surveys that we thought related mostly to our outcomes and goals.

Dr A.D. BUTI: I am not sure if this question was asked—we kind of answered it, but I think it is quite important—the role of the KPIs, are they there to guide your performance or to meet government requirements, transparency and accountability? What is the main purpose of the KPIs?

Mr Kannis: There are a number of purposes. KPIs, if they are effective, need to be ones that we can manage to, so that we can monitor on a regular basis and if we need to make adjustments to our focus, we will during the year. I can categorically say to you that every monthly meeting we have of our corporate executive, the KPIs are considered, the trends are observed, and if we need to make allowance or changes to things that we think we are slipping in certain areas, to meet our outcomes, we make those changes and we get detailed analysis from the team every month if there are issues that arise. It also has a role informing our stakeholders about how we are achieving or aiming to achieve the outcomes of government.

Dr A.D. BUTI: As a former Treasury official, does it also have a role to play in resource allocation?

Mr Kannis: I believe it does have a role in resource allocation. The effectiveness of using it in resource allocation across government is a difficult task; it is a significant challenge.

The CHAIR: How many analysts are there in traffic?

Mr Kannis: Analysts sitting in our traffic branch?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Kannis: Can we take that on notice?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Kannis: I have not got it off the top of my head.

The CHAIR: A corollary of that question is, we are looking prospectively forward to what might happen and how we prevent that, but what level of analysis—I know there is the report that comes

out every year, but that is kind of limited to 25 per cent of crashes are alcohol related. Is there any deeper analysis done in relation to strategies undertaken and how successful they were and so forth?

Mr Kannis: That is fine—we will take that on notice.

The CHAIR: The other thing is—you will have time for questions—if I could just hand these to you and these are on notice. This is the information which the RAC believes should be reported in some format or another. I will give a copy to the police and one to the Auditor General. If we get some sort of correspondence back from you as to how appropriate it may be and in what form that material should be presented.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The member for Balcatta has a quick question that I think is probably something you might agree with. There is well documented concern that basing performance on things that can be readily counted, rather than things that really concern the public, can result in resources being diverted to meet false targets and of statistics being manipulated. What is the potential of this to happen?

Mr Kannis: There are certainly cases where if there are KPIs that are there and people are focusing on them solely and are measured by them, yes, there will be a risk of that occurring.

Dr A.D. BUTI: And you are mindful of that, I assume.

Mr Kannis: We are mindful of it. In the development of our KPIs and also to make sure that the focus—this is where I would say to you that our corporate executive sees an alignment between our current KPIs and managing our business at the moment, and I think that is a significant step forward.

Mr Turco: Excuse me, Chair. That is the role of audit and all along this process we have always discussed that it is great having KPIs but you have got to make sure that you have got the systems and the data to support that. If you have not, there is no point putting them there because someone wants them.

The CHAIR: That is why I asked about the IT system.

Mr Turco: Because you know what is going to happen; the fact is that you will end up with a qualified opinion on KPIs. There could be some great indicators out there but, unfortunately, if the systems are not there to get that—as Don mentioned—and to cut the mustard from an audit perspective, you can still have them, but report them as other information but not as your key indicators because they are there. That is the message that we give across. The report we tabled a couple of years ago—“Beyond Compliance”—the main thing there was to get agencies to develop indicators that they use to manage on a regular basis, not just for year-end reporting. There is a process to go through; from our office, that is what we are trying to give and that was the whole purpose of that report. It is happening now with agencies trying to develop these indicators that they use and all that. There are a lot of other indicators out there, but some of them are just workload. Say for instance that you want to revegetate something and you plant 100 000 seedlings, what have you done? What happens if they all get wiped out? Has it been effective? No, it has not. All you have done is just workload. You have just planted them; they have not been effective until they start growing and the whole thing. Then you can look at it and say yes, we have been able to increase the vegetation by 20 per cent. That is what we wanted to do.

Ms L. METTAM: The work behind the review of the KPIs.

[11.40 am]

Mr Turco: There is workload and the TIs and all that that are there explain all that and that is why there is always this thing about how they are great —

The CHAIR: Sorry, TI stands for?

Mr Turco: Treasurer’s Instructions.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr Turco: That govern the roles of —

The CHAIR: It means telephone intercept to me!

Ms L. METTAM: Just on that point, what work goes on around the KPIs that you have in terms of review?

Mr Kannis: From our point of view?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes.

Mr Kannis: We look at those every year, so during a year we will even have had discussions that said we would like to finetune some of our KPIs to make them more relevant. We will review them every year. We have the opportunity, I think by December each year, to make adjustments to Treasury for our KPIs, so we will review them before then. If we think it necessary, we will make a submission to Treasury and the Under Treasurer and that is where the consultation would have happened with the OAG. That consultation probably needed to have happened earlier than December because we needed to actually understand whether they agree or support them or otherwise. Effectively, every year they go into our budget statements and before we do that we review them.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Can I just ask a question going back, Mr Kannis, to the analysis when you have your monthly meetings. What is the nature of the analysis? Where do you get it from, what is the breadth of it and is it about what the police do or is it about the outcomes and achievements? So, firstly, when you get the analysis, what is the nature of it, what does it look like and feel like?

Mr Kannis: We get a graph for each KPI, so we see the trends; we see the average over the last 12 months preceding that month.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Where does that data come from?

Mr Kannis: It comes from our business intelligence area. Mark actually gets that information. Generally, they will come in; we will see the seven or so graphs and we will see trends. If we see something that stands out, we will ask for an explanation as to why it has happened. In recent cases, we have done that and asked for the next meeting for them to come back with some analysis behind that and to see what issues are causing it. Is it something that is a one-off? Is it a seasonal thing? Is it something like that that we need to be aware of so that it does not just go through? Experience that I would have seen, probably five years ago, would have been an agency would have looked at these when they were putting their estimated actuals together for the budget papers. They would have thought, oh no, there are going to be questions in the estimates committee. We actually see those opportunities through and if it is necessary—we will not adjust just for the sake of it. If we think that it is a trend we cannot influence and it would sway things if we were to change things, then we would not do it, but we would make an assessment at that point in time; that is a judgement we make at that point in time.

Mr C.D. HATTON: I would assume you would not change it for appearance sake, to make it look good—you could not do that in this scenario.

Mr Kannis: That would be the case if our KPIs meant nothing to the management team. The management team has an alignment with those KPIs now.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: Can I ask then, we went from a hub system to a community policing system, what role in the middle did the KPIs play in that or was that just a political decision?

Mr Kannis: The KPIs are what we aim to achieve. The model that matches us achieving those KPIs in the most effective way is the one that we develop out of it. If you are asking the question of what comes first, the KPIs are what we are trying to achieve first. The model and the structure we use to achieve those are secondary to that, the second part of the process.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The closing statement, taking on the role of the —

The CHAIR: Short-sighted Chair!

Dr A.D. BUTI: With no glasses.

Thank you 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 from the date of the letter attached to the transcript. If the transcript is not returned within this period, it will be deemed to be correct. New material cannot be added via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence.

The CHAIR: Thanks very much. You are providing us with a response to that RAC stuff, and also a bit more information on the infringement notices, I think—and the number of analysts, too. Thank you.

Hearing concluded at 11.45 am
