

Division 67: Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, \$3 147 000 —

Mr J.M. Francis, Chairman.

Mr D.T. Redman, Minister for Corrective Services.

Professor N. Morgan, Inspector of Custodial Services.

Mr B.J. Cram, Deputy Inspector.

Mr S. Helm, Principal Policy Adviser, Office of the Minister for Corrective Services.

Mr J. Partridge, Principal Policy Adviser, Office of the Minister for Corrective Services.

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard staff. The daily proof *Hansard* will be published at 9.00 am tomorrow.

The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. This is the prime focus of the committee. Although there is scope for members to examine many matters, questions need to be clearly related to a page number, item, program, or amount within the volumes. For example, members are free to pursue performance indicators that are included in the *Budget Statements* while there remains a clear link between the questions and the estimates.

It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee clerk by Friday, 10 June 2011, so that members may read it before the report and third reading stages. If the supplementary information cannot be provided within that time, written advice is required of the day by which the information will be made available. Details in relation to supplementary information have been provided to both members and advisers, and accordingly I ask the minister to cooperate with those requirements. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office. Only supplementary information that the minister agrees to provide will be sought by Friday, 10 June 2011.

It will greatly assist Hansard if, when referring to the program statements volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, items, program and amount in preface to their question.

I now ask the minister to introduce his advisers to the committee.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Cockburn.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I refer to the income statement on page 811 of the *Budget Statements*, which is the department's balance sheet. At the bottom, the line item states whether there is a surplus or a deficiency. Is the minister happy that he has left the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services with what appears to be a surplus of \$6 in this financial year?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It is \$6 000—the figures in the column are in thousands.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: The minister has left this office with a surplus of \$6 000 in this financial year and \$5 000 in the out years. Given that the prison muster has increased by one-third over the past two years, why does the minister not provide the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services with funding appropriate to the level of the prison population? The role of the office is to inspect conditions and inspect the provision of services to prisoners, and to play the adjudicator, or independent umpire, in assessing the health and role of prisoners. Given that the prison muster has gone up, why is the office not funded appropriately in accordance with that increase?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I thank the member for the question. The reference in the first part of the member's question was to the surplus–deficiency line at the bottom of the income statement. That is appropriate, because the member has applied that question to three divisions. I think we need to get information to the member about how that accounting practice works and any changes that have occurred, because there is very good reason that sometimes there is a deficit as distinct from a surplus. The member's broad question relates to funding of the independent Inspector of Custodial Services. Certainly, a site-based funding model has been used in that we have a range of prison sites in Western Australia. Yes, the prison population has gone up and we have catered for that

change. This government argues that the resources are appropriate to deal with the act that the independent inspector works under. Of course, as with all agencies, we would like more resources to deal with challenges.

Specific resources have been deployed in response to the Ward case. Perhaps I might ask the inspector to talk about resources that have been deployed in response to the Ward case.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: No, that is fine; I am just asking about funding of the department for its overall general role.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: In the total appropriations for part 16, there has been an increase from 2009–10 to 2010–11. Largely, that is around the response to the Ward matter, so there was an increase in that financial year. Again, the appropriations have been consistent into the out years with normal consumer price index increases going forward. The member is making the judgement that an increase in prison population should have a direct relationship or responsibility to the independent inspector's role.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I am.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I argue that site-based funding has the biggest carriage of deployment of that resource, and that is what this government has responded to. Of course, all agencies would like to have resources to better meet their needs. At the end of the day, cabinet, through the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee process and government processes, makes those decisions.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Just on the site-based funding—this is my last question—the minister is arguing the case —

Mr D.T. REDMAN: For prisons?

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Yes. Picking up the minister's argument for site-based funding, the minister has also argued strongly about the role that his government has in expanding the assets—that is, the size of those prisons. Therefore, that puts a greater requirement on the inspector, because although the sites may be the same, the number of sites has increased. The minister has already talked about work camps, so the number of sites has increased and the assets on those sites have increased—the number of cell blocks and the number of cells have all increased—but the funding for the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services has not increased commensurate with that.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The principle of what the member is saying about my response is right in that, in essence, a site-based funding model has been applied. As the prison population goes up, that certainly adds to some of the complexity of the role of the independent inspector. I expect that as the new prisons come on stream, it will give weight to the argument for me as minister to take through the EERC and cabinet process the resourcing of the inspector's role. The activities of the independent inspector are fundamental to our system. The independent inspector has the responsibility of inspecting prisons at least once in a three-year period, and he has the discretion, which he deploys, to inspect prisons on a more regular basis. At our regular meetings, the inspector provides feedback to me about concerns that he might have. In fact, at some recent meetings I have suggested—I do not ask—that the inspector comment on some prisons about which some concerns about prisoner activities have been reported to me. Indeed, that may well result in the inspector taking up some direct engagement with that issue and, hence, giving advice to me about how we should respond. Member, this department, like any other, is subject to the cabinet and the EERC processes. I like to think that, yes, as prisons open down the track, the inspector's role will broaden and we can resource it appropriately.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Girrawheen, you had a further question.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Can I have this by way of supplementary information, because I am conscious of the time? Can the minister provide some details of the modelling that has been done regarding the extra imposition on the inspector that will come from the implementation of the optional protocol against torture, and also the remaining coroner's recommendations about random audits?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Member, I am not sure that we can take information like this on the basis of not asking a question to start with.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I have asked a question.

The CHAIRMAN: I am required to put the division now, members.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Does that mean there is no supplementary information, Mr Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Girrawheen, I remind you that you have the opportunity to put those questions on notice.

The appropriation was recommended.

Meeting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm