

Division 75: Corrective Services, \$762 650 000 —

Mr N.W. Morton, Chairman.

Mr J.M. Francis, Minister for Corrective Services.

Ms H. Harker, Acting Commissioner.

Mr G. Kessarlis, Chief Financial Officer.

Mr B. Lawrence, Assistant Commissioner, Youth Justice Services.

Ms A. Dominish, Assistant Commissioner, Finance and Infrastructure.

Mr A. Robinson, Assistant Commissioner, People and Organisational Development.

Mr S. Robins, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Adult Custodial.

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

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 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. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item program or amount in the current division. It will greatly assist Hansard if members can give these details in preface to their question.

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, 30 August 2013. 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.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Warnbro.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I thank the minister and his staff for being so flexible. Unfortunately, the program inflicted upon us means that the two ministers I am shadowing conflict, so I appreciate their efforts. As discussed, at the outset I foreshadow that if it looks like we will not get through as many questions as we want, I hope that I can put some questions as supplementary and have them accepted as ready at that time, because even going through them may take time.

I refer to the last dot point on page 882 of budget paper No 2, which is about the cultural change program focused on accountability and professionalism. It is of public import. The minister will recall that not that long ago—last month—a series of media reports centred on the possibility of corruption and association with organised crime in the department. At that —

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: On a point of clarification, according to my sheet we are supposed to be doing division 73. Have we changed the order?

Mr P. PAPALIA: We changed the order; that was why I thanked the minister for being flexible. These are the corrective services people.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: So we are on division 75.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am not sure whether we need to pass a resolution to change the order of divisions.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Do we need one?

The CHAIRMAN: We just need agreement here, if that is okay.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: For the purposes of *Hansard* and the record, the member for Warnbro phoned me yesterday afternoon due to a conflicting schedule. I made some phone calls to the relevant agencies and agreed to bring forward the Department of Corrective Services. I am not quite sure whether we need a formal resolution to do that.

The CHAIRMAN: I just need agreement within here. If we have agreement within here to change divisions, we can change to division 75.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Sorry, I did not pick that up.

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 21 August 2013]

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Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Jan Norberger; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Fran Logan

This is division 75, “Corrective Services”. I refer to the last dot point on page 882. As I said, there has been some media coverage of, and public interest in, the possibility of organised crime and corruption infiltrating the department. At the time, some commentary was made by the minister about his lack of confidence in some sections of the department. I wonder whether the minister can now say that, in particular, the professional standards division and, very specifically, the internal investigations unit have his confidence.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The short answer is yes, absolutely. As the member would know, 16 to 18 weeks ago when I became the Minister for Corrective Services, I did not know an awful lot about the prison system. I had never been in a prison. Without wanting to take too long to answer this question—I am aware of the member’s time constraints—as a brand-new minister I asked an awful lot of questions about the Department of Corrective Services. The more questions I asked, the more answers I got and the more questions I wanted to ask. Clearly, I had significant concerns about the culture and certain aspects within the Department of Corrective Services, the culture within staff and cultural issues in the treatment of prisoners as well.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Media coverage at that time referred to what is known as the “target list” incident. The minister knows what I am referring to. Is that now resolved?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: My understanding is that that matter is being investigated by the Corruption and Crime Commission. I am happy to ask the professional standards division to talk to the member about that. Perhaps it might be more appropriate to do that outside of this place.

Mr P. PAPALIA: A couple of specific things reported in the media were of concern to me and no doubt to the public that I think probably need to be aired and resolved in this place. It was suggested that an individual within the internal investigations unit had found the document—the target list. It was subsequently released to a number of people. As I understand it, that person’s partner was on the target list. Did that person have any consequences? Is that person still in the internal investigations unit?

[3.10 pm]

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will ask the acting commissioner from the Department of Corrective Services to answer that question. As the member for Warnbro would know, my ability to involve myself in these things is restricted under the Public Sector Management Act.

The CHAIRMAN: Through the minister, please proceed.

Ms H. Harker: Thank you. The actual details the member is referring to go back to 2011. A number of the individuals were identified within the media—some of them still work in the department; some do not. The professional standards division has changed quite significantly since 2011, which some of this goes back to. As the minister says, the matter is still under investigation, and in particular, by the Public Sector Commission at this point in time. It is difficult to go into any more detail than that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the acting commissioner saying that the individual in question who gave the document to her, but claimed she never told her husband—that is reported in the media—is currently under investigation by the public sector —

The CHAIRMAN: Just a reminder to direct your question through me.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Sorry.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Ms H. Harker: The whole scenario is the subject of ongoing investigation.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not see it is an issue to confirm whether or not that person is still in the internal investigations unit. Is there any problem with that?

Ms H. Harker: In fact, I do not actually think that person is. It is not to say that they are not still working in the department.

Mr P. PAPALIA: You do not know, or she is not?

The CHAIRMAN: Through the minister.

Mr P. PAPALIA: You do not know? Through the minister, I am sorry.

Ms H. Harker: If the person still works in the department, I am not certain whether she actually works in the internal investigations unit.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can we have that as supplementary information to confirm whether that person works in the internal investigations unit.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Sure, I am happy to take that on notice; absolutely, I can provide that.

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Mr P. PAPALIA: If not, where specifically within the department?

The CHAIRMAN: If we could just deal with the supplementary; the minister has agreed to provide that information by way of supplementary information.

[Supplementary Information No B17.]

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I agree to provide the information where the person is employed within the department. Sorry, member for Warnbro, what is the second part of that supplementary request?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Whether or not the unnamed individual, who is referred to in the story as having found the document but refused to say who gave it to her, and her partner, is on the list whether that person still works in the internal investigations unit; and, if not, where does she work?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: We will tell the member where she is working. That is probably the easiest way to answer the question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The fact being that we only have an hour, I would appreciate it if we could have restraint on behalf of those trying to get the dorothy dixers up.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Mr Chair, we have not said a word, if the member would restrain himself —

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, I was referring to the Chair.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: — when giving those sorts of comments.

The CHAIRMAN: If the member could just move on and ask his further question, and then we will continue.

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is of some import to the Western Australia public. This is a suggestion that there is corruption and organised crime involved in our prison system. It is worth pursuing, and on behalf of the public it is essential that we do pursue and resolve it, if we can, here. I have a number of further questions about this matter because these were all canvassed in the media and are out in public.

The CHAIRMAN: You have the chance now to ask the question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: On another question, regarding the same incident.

The CHAIRMAN: Is this a further question?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is a further question.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It was recorded at the time that an investigator in the investigations and review unit engaged in bullying and divisive behaviour. Is that person still employed in the department?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I say to the member for Warnbro that I am not in the business of keeping secrets from him.

Mr P. PAPALIA: He was an investigator.

The CHAIRMAN: Member, the minister is trying to answer.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That is a pretty broad question. I have significant concerns, as the member knows, about a number of issues within the Department of Corrective Services. I have spoken about that within Parliament and publicly many times in the past four months. The member will have to give me a little more —

Mr P. PAPALIA: Do you want me to name the person?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Can the member read the reference.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The stories in the media suggested that there had been bullying behaviour by an investigator in the department. The story referred to documents that the reporter had, which gave a lot more detail, but he did not specifically name that individual, I do not believe.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Is it male or female?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is a male.

Mr J. NORBERGER: On a point of order, Mr Chairman, I am struggling to see how this relates to the budget. It seems to be more of a policy discussion.

Dr A.D. BUTI: You are not the Chair!

The CHAIRMAN: I have allowed the member to put the final question. I have stated it will be the final further question and then we will move on.

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Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Joe Francis; Mr Jan Norberger; Dr Tony Buti; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Fran Logan

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I think I can answer the member for Warnbro's question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: There was an investigator who found, as a subsequent inquiry as a result of the leak of the target list —

The CHAIRMAN: I think you have put the question already, member. We will wait for a response from the minister, and then we will move on.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I say to the member for Warnbro that I am fairly certain I know who he is talking about. I am advised that that person is no longer an employee of the Department of Corrective Services.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the minister know —

The CHAIRMAN: That is the answer to your question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: A further question.

The CHAIRMAN: Not at this point in time.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I refer to the last dot point on page 883 of the *Budget Statements* that states —

Construction of the new Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison will begin in August 2013, with operations currently scheduled to commence during 2015.

Could the minister provide an update as to exactly what is the status regarding the redevelopment of that prison?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I thank the member for Bunbury. This is a significant investment in prison infrastructure. It is a \$232 million contract to build the new Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison, a project jointly supported by both the Department of Corrective Services and the Department of Treasury. What is impressive about this project is that it is not just a 350-bed facility of which 50 beds will be for females, but it will cater for both low and medium-security prisoners. It will provide a net 250 beds extra on top of the current facility. If any member has ever visited that prison, they would realise it is well past its use-by date; it certainly was a very old piece of infrastructure.

I have always thought, as the commissioner believes, that people are sent to prison as punishment, not for punishment. If society wants to give people the best chance of rehabilitation, then it has to treat them with a certain level of human decency so they have a sense of self-worth and are less likely to re-offend when they are finally released from their term of imprisonment. As I have said, the prison will have both a low and medium-security rating. There will be 50 beds for female prisoners, which will be segregated from the male section of the prison.

Just in closing, what is also impressive is the design of the cells. The department went to an awful lot of trouble to get the design and the layout of the prison cells right. They tested them at Hakea Prison where the testing facility is situated. There has been much thought given to a lot of things. The prison designers tried to make sure that things inside the cells, such as basins, toilets and shower screens, have rounded edges so there are fewer things that prisoners can do to inflict harm upon themselves. Certainly, from an Indigenous point of view, one of the unfortunate things about our society is that a large percentage of Indigenous people are incarcerated within our prison system; it is something we are very keen to address. I know it will be a bloody hard job, but we need to give it our best shot. Nevertheless, there are a lot of Indigenous cultural sensitivities that have been built into the design of the cells such as the beds being side by side rather than bunked, and the view from the window is looking out onto their own country. What it will allow is more prisoners, who would have otherwise been kept in the metropolitan area and who are from that area, to serve their time in their own country. It will allow prisoners to have greater access to their families, friends and social support networks in the area because they will not have to travel the distance to Perth to visit their relative. Family is exceptionally important in Indigenous culture. I think the new investment is a great thing; I am actually quite proud of the previous ministry and ministers who got this project underway, although it took a little bit of time to get it right. I am also very confident that this will provide a large financial boost to the town of Kalgoorlie. It should not only promote a lot of small business opportunities, but also will create a lot of employment opportunities for people who live in that particular region.

[3.20 pm]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to "Program Rationalisation", the last line under "Spending Changes" on page 881. Can the minister explain which programs are likely to be rationalised?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The department has a number of programs within the prison system and also external to the prison system. As the member knows, about 10 000 people are involved in the corrections system. Roughly 5 000 are behind bars—although the number is down and I note again today it is just over 4 900—and about 5 000 are in the community either on parole or on community corrections orders. There are a large number of

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programs, not just for the adult prison population but also for juveniles. I mentioned before that it is important to do a stocktake on some of those programs. It is important for any department of government to sit back, have a look and see which programs give the best value for money to taxpayers, which ones work and which ones do not, and put more money into the ones that do work and maybe look again at investing in the ones that do not work. If the member wants details of the individual programs, I am happy to ask the acting commissioner to provide further information.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Yes, that is what I asked for.

Ms H. Harker: We are looking at a range of programs, particularly bearing in mind the fluctuations we have had in the offending population. We have experienced an increase in community-based orders, which has been a quite significant change in recent years. In particular the delivery of community work is one area we are looking at and putting, if you like, the responsibility for that back into the local branches, because as I say we are experiencing some changes there and want to make sure we are able to connect with the local areas as those orders start to increase. We are also looking at increasing the range of community work options, in particular individual placements that focus on employment, training and education opportunities for offenders. Work camps, as the minister has said, have been extremely successful. Most of them are now nearing capacity. Warburton is still a problematic work camp for us because of its distance, particularly away from the goldfields, but clearly once Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison expands, we anticipate that Warburton Work Camp will likely be full to capacity.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Minister, I think the acting commissioner misunderstood the question. I asked which programs are being rationalised—and I understand that means cut, not expanded.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Not necessarily. Rationalised —

Mr P. PAPALIA: Resulting in a saving.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: It is resulting in a saving, so it is a cut.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Rationalisation means in my language finding efficiencies and getting the best value for money for taxpayers. It does not necessarily mean we are going to get fewer services or outcomes. It means perhaps spending the money we have, courtesy of the taxpayers of Western Australia, in a more efficient way. I am happy to ask the acting commissioner to provide further information.

Ms H. Harker: Yes. We are looking at every area of service delivery to ensure that we are delivering services in the most efficient way we can. Inevitably in a large department there is a lot of duplication and there are often a lot of gaps, and it is about trying to plug those gaps, reduce that duplication and make sure that we use the resources that we have available to us to best effect.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Perhaps I could put it to the minister in a different way. How has the minister arrived at the figure of, say, \$3.325 million savings under this rationalisation program for the year 2014–15?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will ask Mr George Kessarlis, the chief financial officer, to provide further information on that.

Mr G. Kessarlis: The figure of \$3.325 million is basically around the design of the work camps, and also some savings to be made through our Riverbank Prison program.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Is that the sale of an asset?

Mr G. Kessarlis: No, that is rationalisation of the programs at Riverbank, not a sale of the asset. Out of the rationalisation of that program, we are looking at \$1.5 million, and the redesign of the work camps, \$1.8 million. Those two amounts together give the \$3.325 million.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Is the reference to redesigning work camps, minister, to do with —

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Work camps, that is part of —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Work camps; that is what I said.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: But part of this —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I have not finished the question.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Okay; go for it.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Does the redesign of work camps that both of the minister's advisers talked about deal with staffing issues or rosters or having fewer people there? What is contemplated by "redesign of work camps"?

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Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will ask the acting commissioner to answer that question, but before I do, the future of Riverbank was hinted at and if the member would like me to elaborate on Riverbank as well, that is a pretty simple issue. I went out to Riverbank a few months ago and had a look at it. As the member would know, Riverbank is a prison on the banks of the Swan River not far from the member for Girrawheen's electorate. It was built in 1963. It is a very, very old building that has well and truly passed its use-by date. It is absolutely obsolete. It cannot be used for anything anymore. It will never be used as a prison again. This is almost convict stuff. It is 1963 technology and design. The sewer is not connected. At the moment in some of the outbuildings the staff lived in many years ago are a couple of offices. About five people from the department run community programs out of there. Part of getting value for money for taxpayers is also having a look at the assets we have and the assets from which we can free up capital. It is, as I said, a very expensive piece of real estate that I do not think necessarily gives taxpayers the best value for money.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Just the work camps, minister.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I made a decision to recommend to the commissioner on the future of Riverbank that the capital invested in that building would be better used in providing services elsewhere in the Department of Corrective Services.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Okay, I get the message. Can we just proceed to the work camp issue?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Sure.

Ms H. Harker: As far as the work camp rationalisation is concerned, one of the other things we are trying to do—it links back to my earlier comment about community work—is bring together offenders resident in the work camps, which are usually obviously in remote areas, with offenders on community-based orders, in particular community work, so that we can join them together, rather than have one set of prison officers in the work camp and another set of community work officers running community work. Again, we are looking for efficiencies wherever we can and rationalising the amount of staff time involved in managing a relatively low number of offenders in the scheme of things. Bringing the two together seems to make strong economic sense.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Returning to the dot point on the cultural change program on page 882, in relation to the same series of stories that was made public —

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Is this the question that the member was asking before?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am fairly certain I know who that individual male person is that the member is talking about, and he is no longer an employee of the Department of Corrective Services. Is that where we left that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, this is in relation to the same subject and the same series of stories, although I would like to know whether that individual is employed by government still in another department. If the minister does not know that, we might have to follow it up. In relation to the very sad story of the suicide of prison officer Mandeep Singh, it was reported in the media that he had been subject to bullying.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Sure.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that a media request to the department regarding any information, evidence or report about Singh's experiences at Hakea Prison had been forwarded to the State Coroner and that the response to the request was that a search of DCS official databases had not revealed any such report. Is that true?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: The journalist involved in writing that story at the request of my office provided that information that he had in forming that story. So the answer was that there was more information than initially requested. I am not quite sure why it was not provided.

[3.30 pm]

Mr P. PAPALIA: Was the report passed to the coroner?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: It was passed to the coroner from my ministerial office. As soon as we became aware of this, we forwarded it all to the Public Sector Commissioner and to the coroner. From my recollection, the coroner then wrote back to my office, or contacted my office somehow. I am happy to provide the member with this information. I think the coroner was not aware of it at the time he made his coroner's report, but it is not something that would have influenced the outcome. Just to be clear, as soon as we became aware of the information from the journalist involved, we forwarded it directly to the coroner.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Was there a report by the department about Mandeep Singh having been bullied?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am not sure whether it was a report or an email chain. I am happy to take this on notice, unless the commissioner can add to it.

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Ms H. Harker: I am not sure whether it was a report. I think it was more of an email trail. It is fair to say as a result of the professional standards at the time and the level of the person involved in that investigation, they quite rightly, given their level, make an assumption that that had happened. However, on further investigation it did not appear to have happened, but obviously it has happened since then.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The suggestion is that whatever this report or email chain was, what it contained was not of great import to the coroner's report.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No. I did not want to be the person who judged the merits of that, as I should not. Our office forwarded it directly to the coroner the next day. My understanding—I may stand corrected on this—is that the coroner then contacted my office and said, “Thank you very much.” I do not think he was aware of the information at the time he made his finding—as I said, I may stand corrected—but I am pretty sure that the reply from the coroner's was along the lines of it would not have influenced the outcome of his finding anyway.

Mr J. NORBERGER: I will ask a budget-related question. I refer the minister to page 88 of budget paper No 2. Under “Asset Investment Program” is a reference to the GPS offender tracking system. Can the minister provide an update on the progress of the global positioning system?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Certainly. As the member knows, the GPS tracking is something that we have been rolling out since the end of May. There are 16 dangerous sex offenders being tracked with the GPS tracking technology. There are two variants of the device, as members would know from seeing me wear one into Parliament; one straps onto someone's ankle and another one looks like a watch and is far less obvious. It transmits to a box, which is about the size of a pack of cigarettes or a small phone, and sits in the user's pocket. It manages to track the user through GPS technology and the GSM network. Without going into too much detail, GPS is a tool and like any tool it has its limitations; it is important that we realise this. It is fitted to people who would have been released from prison anyway, so it is not an alternative to custody. It is another level of protection for the community.

There have been a couple of little issues. A couple of people have temporarily fallen off the grid, but the good thing is that once they come back online, the data can be downloaded and we can tell where they have been and when. It is important to note that it is a tool with limitations, like any technology. People fitted with the GPS technology must follow some strict rules. They always have to carry a phone, keep it charged and answer it if it rings, so that they can be contacted if there is a failing in the technology. Obviously, GPS does not work underwater and in the basements of buildings. Coverage can drop out in an elevator, just like coverage for our mobile phones. There are certain issues with the 100 per cent reliability of the tracking device, but safeguards are in place and so far they seem to be working. If people fall off the grid temporarily, they are accounted for when they come back online. There are also significant penalties, including being sentenced to an additional one year for tampering with the device.

It is great technology. As the member for Joondalup knows, the government is looking—I do not want to go into policy—at other options so that we can use this technology to add extra levels of security and comfort to the community. That could range from using the technology with arsonists to people under domestic violence restraining orders. It is a matter of thinking about what we can use it for. If it helps protect and save one person, it is certainly worth the investment that we have put into it. It is certainly worth the time and effort. It is not without cost; it costs a fair bit of money. It takes eight people to monitor the offenders. Someone is monitoring the location of the 16 dangerous sex offenders 24 hours a day. As we speak, someone in Midland is tracking them all live so that if an offender goes into an exclusion area, breaks a curfew or does not stay within an inclusion area, we will know about it.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The minister mentioned the 16 sex offenders that are being tracked by GPS. During the election the minister made a commitment and he mentioned the use of GPS for domestic violence restraining order offenders. Can the minister give us any details? Are any people besides the sex offenders being tracked by GPS?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: At the moment?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Yes.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: At the moment, no; it is being used only for dangerous sex offenders.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Why is that?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: They are the only people who have been approved and the only people protected under the legislation. I believe this is an issue that the Attorney General is looking at. I did not want to go into detail, because this is a policy decision that government is looking at and not necessarily relevant to the budget.

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Dr A.D. BUTI: At this stage does the government have a policy to put GPS technology on domestic violence restraining order offenders?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No. The Attorney General and I have said publicly that this is one of those areas that we can explore.

Dr A.D. BUTI: That is not what the government said during the election.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am trying to stick to the budget papers and not talk about policy. If the member wants to talk about policy, that is fine. It is a matter of exploring the opportunities; the legislative limitations requirements; what needs to be amended; and what does not need to be amended. Then we can look at further uses for GPS tracking. It is a no-brainer. It makes perfect sense that if we have technology that helps to provide an additional level of protection to the community, we should look at implementing it.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer the minister to “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on pages 882 to 883 of budget paper No 2, volume 2. Can the minister provide an overview of the prevention and diversion services available for young people?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Absolutely. One of the refreshing things that have happened in recent times in the area of juveniles and corrective services has been a welcome change in direction and thinking. A lot of other jurisdictions are starting to move away from the old “lock them up and throw away the key” attitude. Without doubt the most prominent example of that is the state of Texas. Texas is starting from a much lower base than us. Texas has well and truly adopted the attitude that spending money on trying to prevent people from committing crimes and on trying to keep them out of prison in the first place is a better spend of the taxpayer’s dollar because it costs so much money to lock up people. As members may have heard me comment before, it costs about \$636 a day to keep a juvenile in detention, which is just under \$250 000 a year. A duty of care has to be applied to juveniles that is much higher than the duty of care that is applied to adults. There are more programs and more issues that impact on juvenile detainees. It is a very, very expensive exercise for taxpayers to keep a juvenile incarcerated. I know the member for Warnbro shares my view on this: spending money on trying to keep people out of prison in the first place may well be a better use of taxpayers’ money.

My primary concern is the alarming statistics on Aboriginal males in custody. As of today, the muster for juveniles is 157. Of those, 12 are female. The rest are males. An exceptionally high percentage of them would be of Aboriginal descent and it is just an absolute waste of human capital. It is a matter of making a judgement call about how much money we spend in the area of youth diversion programs. I remember very well a talkback radio interview I did with Paul Murray on 6PR and he asked me why we did not give it a red hot crack and throw more than \$1 million into this year’s budget. This year we have topped it up to \$2 million and that came out of conversations I had with people in the department who actually run and administer these programs. They were pretty simple questions: if we put an extra \$1 million into this area, could we keep juveniles out of prison; and, is there enough capacity in the not-for-profit sector to absorb it? The answer was yes. The next question was: what about \$2 million? The answer was still yes. This is something we have to roll out slowly. We are starting from a different base from other jurisdictions such as Texas. We are starting from a base where there are already an awful lot of programs and an awful lot of money spent across many, many government departments across the state in different areas on trying to do these kinds of programs. As far as adults are concerned, for example, the Attorney General recently announced \$5.5 million to try to get drivers’ licences for adult Aboriginal prisoners. One of the worst things that can happen to someone getting out of prison is to need to drive somewhere and not have a driver’s licence—if they are caught, the prisoner will end up back in prison really quickly—so getting drivers’ licences for prisoners is exceptionally important. A lot of money gets put into these kinds of programs and I believe it is worth trying to put more money and resources into stopping people from ruining their lives and just wasting human capital by ending up in prison in the first place.

[3.40 pm]

Mr P. PAPALIA: I point out to my colleagues in this committee who are government members that the only reason there is only an hour allocated to the Department of Corrective Services is because their government has insisted that ministers cannot be shifted.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the member wanted to ask some questions, so I suggest he makes use of his time now.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am going to

The CHAIRMAN: You are not.

Mr P. PAPALIA: But I would ask that government members refrain from asking dorothy dixers just for a few minutes.

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The CHAIRMAN: The member for Warnbro now has the call and he is wasting his time. He needs to put his question or we will move on.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will put the question.

The CHAIRMAN: Please do.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Mr Chair, I think we are entitled to sit in here and ask questions the same as anybody else.

The CHAIRMAN: That is why we share the call around. The member for Warnbro has the call; he should put his question or we will move on.

Mr P. PAPALIA: As discussed with the minister, we had come to an agreement prior to starting this session.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Bunbury, thank you. Member for Warnbro, put your question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The first dot point on page 883 of the *Budget Statements* refers to Banksia Hill Detention Centre, which has seen significant cost to the state as a consequence of the bad decision to shut Rangeview Remand Centre in 2009 and take the cheap option of providing a young men's prison. I understand that the current Minister for Corrective Services was not there at the time, so I ask the acting commissioner, because she certainly was there. At exactly what point did the government decide to shut Rangeview and create Wandoo Reintegration Facility in 2009, which is when the decision was made; and, prior to that point, was a risk analysis done on assessing the consequences of taking that action?

Ms H. Harker: My recollection is that that decision was made as part of an election commitment and the department was asked to look at what the options might be, which is exactly what it did. If the member is asking whether the department did a detailed risk assessment in the normal terms of setting up a project as part of project management, it was not done in those kinds of terms. However, we certainly looked at the pros and cons of closing Rangeview as a juvenile detention centre and creating Banksia Hill as a single detention centre.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The election commitment was to build a new prison; it was not to shut Rangeview and create Wandoo. The government came to the decision. Did the department create a document that presented a risk analysis on the consequences of shutting one of only two juvenile detention facilities and putting all juveniles into the remaining facility; and, did the department provide that document to government?

Ms H. Harker: We provided a document that showed the pros and the cons of closing Rangeview and keeping Banksia Hill as the one detention centre. My recollection of the election commitment was that it was to establish a young adult facility for 18 to 24-year-olds and that is what we were asked to assess. The number of prisoners we were looking at was around 80, and, as the member is aware, Rangeview had that kind of capacity and that is why we obviously looked at Rangeview. The other point is that Banksia Hill is an exceptionally large footprint and there was clearly capacity there to expand and create it into the one centre. They were the options that the department looked at and it produced a document with those options in it.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Did the department determine that shutting one of only two facilities and putting all juveniles in one facility was a high-risk option?

Ms H. Harker: As I say, from my recollection the document was not a formal risk assessment; it was more about putting the pros and cons of taking that route to government.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What were the cons? Did the department determine that it was a con to place all juvenile offenders in the state into one facility and that it bore some risk? Was it determined that it was an action that would result in the risk of the sort of thing we saw happen in January?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Before I hand the answer back to commissioner, the member asked me a similar question about the existence of this document in question time a few weeks ago. I walked out of question time and telephoned my office and the acting commissioner and asked what the document was. From recollection, a search for the document was attempted and the department could not find one.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can we confirm for the record that no risk analysis was conducted prior to making the decision to shut Rangeview Remand Centre and put all juveniles into Banksia Hill?

Ms H. Harker: As I said, there was no formal risk analysis in terms of it being part of a project plan. However, a document was certainly produced giving the advantages and disadvantages of going down that route.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: In the first question I asked the minister about the Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison redevelopment, the minister mentioned the over-representation of Aboriginal people in prisons. That is reflected

in the second dot point on page 883 of budget paper No 2, which states, “Aboriginal people are significantly over-represented in Western Australia’s prisons and detention centres.” Can the minister provide me with some detail about the department’s involvement with the Fairbridge–Bindjareb project?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: A number of different programs offer assistance to try to get people on the right track. I will try to keep my answer short for the member for Warnbro. Fairbridge–Bindjareb essentially puts low-risk prisoners who have a great chance of being rehabilitated when they are released through a training program. The prisoners are relocated by the department to Karnet Prison Farm. They travel from Karnet to Fairbridge every single day for the training and they are trained in operations to do with working in the mining industry. In fact, there is even a dummy mining set-up there so that when the prisoners have finished their programs, they will have qualifications that can guarantee them work, and they are guaranteed work in the mining industry when they finish their term in custody. I understand 30 people have graduated from that program and that is the number of people who have also been released. As a measure of the program’s success, I think only one ex-prisoner has reoffended upon release. It is a great program and I would like to see more emphasis put on it. If people can be given worthwhile skills while they are doing their time in jail, if they can be given a sense of purpose and if they can be given a skill they can use to get employment when they get out of prison, they will be far less likely to reoffend on their release into society. It is a very, very successful program. I should say that I have been to Fairbridge and I was very, very impressed with the people who operate the program. It clearly gives value for money to the taxpayer and I encourage those running the program to keep up the great work they are doing.

[3.50 pm]

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The minister said that 30 people have received qualifications or gone through the program. Can the minister tell me about the participation rate of people in that program?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Obviously the people who are going to have the best chance of succeeding in the program are going to be selected—let us be realistic about this. My concern is amongst Aboriginal people. I do not want to be in the business of locking people up; I want to be in the business of letting people out, getting them jobs, and helping them make a meaningful contribution to society. There is a process that judges the suitability of people before they are transferred to Karnet to do their program out at Fairbridge. As I said, it is a great program and I am very happy with the success rate.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Despite the minister’s observations about trying to get people out of prison and reduce prison numbers, can he explain the growth in the recidivism rate for adults from 39.52 per cent in the fiscal year 2008–09 to 43.16 per cent in the fiscal year 2011–12? Why also has he set a target to increase the recidivism rate to 45 per cent in this coming year?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: What page is the member on?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is on page 883 listed under the heading “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators”. The minister is talking about reducing numbers in prison but has actually set a higher target for the recidivism rate next financial year.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Good question. This is a question I have asked the Department of Corrective Services before. I have always thought, and this is my personal opinion, that the target for the recidivism rate should be zero. If the member wants to be realistic, we do not want to lock anyone up after they get released; we do not want to re-sentence anyone. Good question, I am not sure how it is calculated and I am happy to ask the commissioner.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can the minister explain why the recidivism rate has grown so much from 2008–09? It was 39.52 per cent in 2008–09; the last known definite figure was 43.16 per cent in the fiscal year 2011–12; and the target for next year is 45 per cent.

Ms H. Harker: I think the member is referring to the table listing the rate of return for offender programs. Is that correct?

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is listed under the heading “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators” and it is the “Rate of return—offender programs (adult)”. The table does not have the 2008–09 figures but I looked that up.

Ms H. Harker: That is actually a new key performance indicator that we started measuring in 2010.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I asked a question on notice about the 2008–09 recidivism rates for adults, which was 39.52 per cent. I am just asking if the minister has an explanation for why it has grown so much in the interim years.

Ms H. Harker: I would want to take that away and have a look at the figures that the member has quoted and compare them, because this table actually relates to offender programs and not to offenders as a whole returning

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into the system. This is about offenders who have actually completed a program and what their rate of return is as a result of having done that program. We would need to look at the figures that the member has quoted for that year and see whether it is actually the same figure that we are talking about here.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would like that as supplementary information.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will provide the member with a history of the KPIs, both set and achieved, for recidivism rates amongst adult custodial offenders.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The equivalent of whatever this measure is back to 2008–09, please. Looking at this table, in 2011–12 the actual rate of return was 43.16 per cent. Is the minister suggesting that this is a good thing and he is trying to grow it? Is that what the measure is; is it a measure of people who come back to programs or people who come back to prison?

Ms H. Harker: I am not saying the figure quoted there is a good figure, but looking at the estimated actual for 2012–13 that is lower and suggests that there is an improvement in terms of people not coming back.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would like the comparison of equivalent figures for 2008–09 as supplementary information.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the minister agree?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am happy to provide that as supplementary information.

[*Supplementary Information No B18.*]

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Before the member for Warnbro continues I am going to provide further information about the question he asked me about Mr Mandeeep Singh. I am advised that the information my office received from the journalist was passed to the Public Sector Commissioner. I think in discussion with my office it was then passed to the coroner, so it might have gone through that level rather than directly from my office. I do remember the conversation about ensuring that the information was sent to the coroner. I am absolutely confident that he received that information.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The coroner did receive the information?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Yes, absolutely. But it was post the incident being raised.

Mr J. NORBERGER: I refer the minister to page 883 of budget paper No 2, listed under the heading “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” and ask: what is the Department of Corrective Services doing to mitigate risks in the transition of detainees back to the Banksia Hill Detention Centre?

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask the minister to keep his answer short.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am very aware of the time. Really quickly, this is obviously a significant issue as on 20 January there was a large amount of damage done to the Banksia Hill facility. At the moment there are still 57 juveniles housed at the Banksia Hill Detention Centre and there are 98, as of today, in the Hakea Prison juvenile detention facility. I am keen to ensure that those juveniles are moved back to the Banksia Hill Detention Centre as soon as possible but that has to be done as safely as possible. It has to be done gradually, so that it is done properly. We want to get it right; certainly no-one wants to back here in 12 months facing the consequences of not having it done it correctly. There are a number of issues that have been raised in the Inspector of Custodial Services’ report that was tabled a couple of weeks ago in the Legislative Assembly. We are working through those recommendations.

There were also issues raised by the union representing the youth custodial officers. The Department of Corrective Services has tried to address as many as those realistic concerns as possible. Some of this is essentially target hardening, making sure that there are cross bars across the little windows that they climbed out of, additional grilles across the windows, fences within the prison, and cowlings on the top. I am conscious that I do not want it to look like an adult prison because we are dealing with juveniles, but I am also concerned about the safety and welfare of people who work in the juvenile detention facility.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer to the top line of the table on page 882, “Public Sector Workforce Reform”. Can the minister explain why there is no figure there for this financial year or next financial year but in 2015–16 there is a cut of \$49 346 000 and in 2016–17 a cut of \$29 221 000? Minister, what do they relate to?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I believe there is a lot of room to reform the Department of Corrective Services. I believe there is a lot of room to reform the cost of staff alone with this department. I have commented before on the excessive amount of overtime that is paid to youth custodial officers and prison officers compared with other departments. There is also a very large amount that is paid as an insurance premium for workers’ compensation.

[4.00 pm]

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Mr P. PAPALIA: They are very specific figures.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: As to the detail of the figures, I will refer that to Mr Kessar, the chief financial officer.

Mr G. Kessar: Those figures are for the salary cap that has been imposed on departments by Treasury. It shows that we are not affected by the salary cap in the 2013–14 and 2014–15 years; the salaries that we have are within the salary cap in the current year and the next financial year. Starting from the 2015–16 financial year, we will be affected by that cap by \$50 million to start off with.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is that the figure by which the salary cap will be exceeded in that financial year?

Mr G. Kessar: No; that is the figure that our salary cap will be reduced by.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does that mean a cut in staff?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No; that means that we expect the department to find savings within the staff budget. The member will be aware that we are finalising the enterprise bargaining agreement offered to the WA Prison Officers' Union at the moment, in which there is a 12.75 per cent increase over the forward years. We are simplifying the EBA. I expect that a number of efficiencies will be gained from a simplified EBA. One of the factors is the extensive amount of overtime paid to youth custodial officers. I will not hide from it. I believe that sections of the department failed to recruit enough youth custodial officers over the last two years to fill the gaps in the roster, and the department is in the process now of making amends for that. Forty-four trainee youth custodial officers are about to start, and obviously there will be a second course because we are looking to recruit an additional 80 youth custodial officers just to fill the gaps in the roster and reduce overtime. That means that an awfully large amount of overtime is being paid, and that adds to the overall cost of staff at the Department of Corrective Services in particular. Does the member understand what I am saying?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister hopes to reduce the extent of overtime through recruiting more officers and thereby make an overall cut.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Workers' compensation issues are also being addressed. When more than 25 per cent of youth custodial officers have workers' compensation claims, that is a significant indication of some of the efficiencies that can be gained in the future.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have to leave, but my colleagues will continue for a little while. I have some questions that I would like to be read in as supplementary questions if they are not asked. That would be appreciated.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Certainly; I am happy to accommodate that.

The CHAIRMAN: No, we cannot do that, unfortunately.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We have done it in the past. We did it in 2010.

The CHAIRMAN: This is 2013.

Mr P. PAPALIA: So it specifically says in the instructions that they cannot be accepted as read in?

The CHAIRMAN: The advice I have is that that is not possible; they cannot be read in. Hopefully, we will get a chance to ask them during the session.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is extraordinary. It would work if we were not conflicted.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to the fourth bullet point on page 883 of the budget papers, which relates to the increase in the female prison population. Are any women sleeping on the floor at Bandyup Women's Prison at the moment; and, if so, how is that situation being remedied?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Having visited every estate in the metropolitan area, the one that disturbed me the most with the condition of the building was Bandyup. Roughly half of Bandyup is very acceptable and fairly modern; the other half of Bandyup is run down. It is not what I would consider to be of an acceptable standard. As the member heard me say, we have to treat people with a certain level of human decency to give them the best chance of rehabilitation. I will take advice on whether they are physically sleeping on the floor. My understanding is that they are not, but there may be mattresses on the floor that are just not raised off the floor.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: So they are sleeping on mattresses on the floor.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That is my understanding. When I went out there a few months ago, that was the case in some of the cells that I inspected, but I am happy to ask the acting commissioner to provide further information.

Ms H. Harker: My understanding is that, given that the population at Bandyup is 273, certainly as of this morning, it is quite likely that a small number of women are sleeping on mattresses on the floor. However, having said that, one of the things that the department does literally day in, day out is to look at the numbers at

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Bandyup and try to get those women moved, particularly as we have now opened up extra beds at Greenough Regional Prison. The Greenough women's unit can hold over 60 women and there are just under 50 there at the moment. We are trying to encourage some of the women at Bandyup to move to Greenough. There are 30 beds at West Kimberley Regional Prison, but I think there are about 28 women there at the moment. There are 17 women at the Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison, as well as those at the Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women, which is pretty much at capacity.

[Mr P. Abetz took the chair.]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Is the capacity at Boronia about 75?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I believe the capacity at Boronia is 79.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: At the moment, how many of those 79 would be Aboriginal women?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will have to take that question on notice. I went out there a couple of weeks ago and spoke to a lot of them. My estimate would be about 50 per cent, but I will take that question on notice and provide an exact number. I will provide the member with a breakdown as at today of the number of women at Boronia who are of Aboriginal descent.

[*Supplementary Information No B19.*]

Dr A.D. BUTI: I refer the minister to the table headed "Spending Changes" on page 881 and to the item "Public Sector Workforce Reform" at page 882. Is that the efficiency dividend; and, if not, what is it? Why does it not kick in until 2015–16, when it is \$49.346 million, but drops to \$29.221 million in the year after that; and how will that cut be achieved in returns? Thirdly, how many Aboriginal people, if any, have applied to become prison officers in the last year, and how many Aboriginal applicants were successful?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: As I said earlier, I believe there are efficiencies to be gained within the employment of staff at the Department of Corrective Services. That is fairly obvious to everyone who knows the operations of the department and the figures on absenteeism, the number of people on workers' compensation and the number of people who do overtime, because there are blanks in rosters. I will ask Mr Kessariss to provide the member with further information on the actual figures. I suspect that we will have to take on notice the question about the number of Aboriginal applicants to become prison officers and the number of successful applicants. But I will allow the chief financial officer to have a crack at it.

Mr G. Kessariss: The public sector workforce reform came from Treasury. The public sector workforce reform and savings measures include a number of initiatives to address the challenges with the budget. One of them was to place a cap on salaries and to limit the projected growth to the consumer price index. As the member knows, there is a targeted separation program across government at the moment. In terms of what it means for our department, those are the specific figures imposed by Treasury as part of the savings. In terms of how we will ensure that we stay within the salary cap, exactly as the minister has mentioned, overtime is one of the issues we want to look at. Certainly limiting the growth to CPI will also assist. We will have to look at a number of other initiatives. It is not just our department; every other government department has had this savings measure imposed. There are no ready-made answers to achieve this tomorrow. We have certainly got a couple of years up our sleeves. That will give us the ability to work on staying within the salary cap.

[4.10 pm]

Dr A.D. BUTI: Why up so much one year and down so much the next year?

Mr G. Kessariss: Because the 2015–16 year is when the Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison comes on board. That is why the figure is higher in that year.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: This is a serious issue. Many other departments have the ability to accurately forecast what their service requirement will be into the out years. It is a little difficult with corrective services. Of course, it does its best to predict maximum and minimum levels, but as I speak right now, the count for people in custody in Western Australia today is 4 937. That has declined by almost 100 since it peaked about eight weeks ago, which is the first time in the history of Western Australia it has gone over 5 000. I have not got it in here but I am happy to provide it offline. The current population trend is sitting within the predictions; that is, we are well down for some reason. I have looked at seasonal change and a number of different factors, but the prison population seems to be fairly stagnant as far as growth or decline is concerned. If anything, it is going down slowly, touch wood. I cannot find the reason, but it is trending that way at the moment. The point is that obviously has a significant impact on the department's predictions about staff requirements into the future.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the minister clear about what supplementary information he will provide?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will provide supplementary information as to the last three years —

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Dr A.D. BUTI: How many applicants in the last year and how many have been successful.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will provide supplementary information on how many applicants of Aboriginal descent applied to become either prison officers or youth custodial officers and how many of those applicants were successful. We will probably put that in context so that the member for Armadale knows the broader application success rate.

[*Supplementary Information No B20.*]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer the minister to page 882 of the *Budget Statements*. I have three reasonably diverse human resource questions to ask. Some time ago the minister was reported as saying he would like a section in the Prisons Act similar to that which the Commissioner of Police has, a so-called section 8; that is, a section that can be deployed for loss of confidence in a staff member. Is the minister progressing that and what is the reason he feels he needs such a section?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I made a comment that I believe the public should have a high degree of confidence in the integrity of prison officers. Prison officers have a very dangerous job to do—they guard the most dangerous members of our society, and, obviously, that is why they are behind bars. Prisons are not the most fun places to work; prisons have their challenges. But I think also that the public needs to have confidence in the integrity of the justice system and the corrections system. The public needs to know that prison officers are people of high calibre and high integrity. Prisons are dangerous places to work in and people expect a certain standard from prison officers, which is why we are looking at a number of different reforms in this section: firstly, bringing the management of prison officers under the Public Sector Management Act; and, secondly, bringing in loss-of-confidence provisions similar to what the police commissioner has for police officers. I am happy to pass this on to Mr Robinson, who is behind me, shortly. At the moment, there appears to be almost an ad hoc method of dealing with the discipline of prison officers. There seem to be different processes depending on rank—whether a prison officer is above or below a certain threshold—and also which prison superintendent manages to look at the particular issue if an officer comes to the notice of the prison officers' discipline system.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: The minister is not suggesting nepotism and patronage, is he?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I would never suggest that. As I started this answer, I am concerned about workplace safety and I am concerned about integrity. In addition to all this, the department is looking at options through regulation to bring in random drug and alcohol testing for people who work within the prison system. Firstly, it is an occupational health and safety issue. Prison officers, or anyone who works with dangerous people, need to know that the person next to them is sober, has their back and is capable of responding if things go wrong. As the member knows, things go wrong in prisons on a regular basis. Secondly, it is an integrity issue —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: We are quite familiar with the circumstances in which drug testing is required. I have two other questions on human resources. The first issue is —

The CHAIRMAN: Has the minister finished?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Yes, he has!

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I have not. I will just keep answering the question until I am finished.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: With all due respect, Mr Chair, he digressed from my question.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I was going to say, as far as the start of the member's question was concerned, I will ask Mr Adrian Robinson to provide further information. I will do that now.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: That is all I need for the time being, minister. I have two further questions that relate to human resources on page 883.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Girrawheen, just hold for a minute. Minister, I want to hear what you have to say.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I was not satisfied the member got the full answer to her question, but if the member for Girrawheen is satisfied, that suits me fine.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Thank you. The second question I have to ask about human resources will be a quick one. I know that the Public Sector Commissioner deals with the appointment of a new Commissioner of Corrective Services, but the minister will be kept apprised. At what stage is that?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I have not had a conversation with the Public Sector Commissioner for some time as to where he is at with that. I am happy to do that and provide information, although I suggest the member ask the Public Sector Commissioner directly.

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Ms M.M. QUIRK: I have other questions for him. The third question on human resources is: the minister will recall there was a parliamentary inquiry last year in relation to post-traumatic stress disorder. Clearly, many corrections officers will be suffering from that. What mechanisms has the department introduced to address that issue? One of my constituents was sacked after being attacked by a juvenile offender; does the minister think that is an appropriate mechanism for someone who has loyally served the department?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: As the member will know and as I have already mentioned before, I am restricted in my involvement in these issues under the Public Sector Management Act. I will ask Mr Adrian Robinson to answer that question.

Mr A. Robinson: There is a process for the medical boarding of prison officers in the event that they are unable to fulfil their contractual obligations as a prison officer. In that regard, the process that is undertaken is rigorous. It is managed by way of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981. A process is undertaken in which a set of independent medical practitioners determines the fitness or thereof of the individual to determine whether that individual can safely carry out their job function as a prison officer. The primary function is about the safety and the ability of that person to fulfil their contractual obligations. It poses a risk to that person, the prisoners and other members of staff working within the prison facility should that individual not be able to fulfil their entire contractual obligations. There is a section in the Prisons Act that allows the organisation, through this medical process—as deemed by an independent panel of medical practitioners—to determine whether an individual is fit to undertake their said duty or not. That process is independent of the department. The department does not make the final decision with respect to that; that is managed by medical practitioners. We will take that independent medical panel's consideration as to whether that person continues their employment or not.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I understand that process, but how is it that my constituent, who is not a prison officer but a community justice worker, was given a letter from the commissioner saying that his services were no longer required before a medical assessment had been made?

[4.20 pm]

Mr A. Robinson: An individual needs to go through a number of processes, whether they are a prison officer, a youth custodial officer or an administrator as per the Public Sector Management Act. We go through a range of things to determine an individual's fitness to undertake their duties. I point out at this stage that the workers' compensation process, which individuals go through to determine their fitness, should not be used to administer a transfer to an alternative position. Individuals who are deemed to be unfit to carry out their original appointed position have the opportunity, as do other public servants across the sector, to apply for positions and win those positions on merit. The transitional process when an individual is unfit to fulfil their contractual appointment should not be used by way of a transfer to an alternative position.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: I draw the minister's attention to the first dot point under "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency" on page 882. Can the minister explain a couple of things? First, the last two lines indicate that \$2 million per annum will be redirected to increase the availability of prevention and early intervention programs and services to divert young people from the formal justice system, which is laudable. Given that it comes on top of previous programs that have been axed, what will that \$2 million be spent on and what does the minister believe can be achieved with \$2 million in that very difficult and complex area?

Following on from that, one of those difficult and complex areas is the reason behind the establishment of the Wandoo Reintegration Facility, which was previously the Rangeview facility. How many people are in Wandoo at the moment?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will start with the last question. As of today, I believe there are 48 people in Wandoo. My position on this has been fairly consistent. Young 18 to 24-year-old offenders who have been sentenced for less lengthy terms in prison for less serious crimes are best served and rehabilitated by removing them from the mainstream prison population. I know that other people have called the harder core prisons "crime universities". I do not want them to be part of that; I want to give them every single chance to succeed in life when they are released. That means we find those 18 to 24-year-old prisoners within the prison system and put them in a purpose-built facility, which is Wandoo, so that they do not associate with hardened lifers and they have the best chance at rehabilitation.

We can also provide programs targeted specifically at them. I have been out there a couple of times and I have been suitably impressed with the work they are doing and the attitude of the inmates. The culture that dictates a prisoner's last day in prison should be as close to his first day of freedom as possible, bar the pillow that he lays his head on, is a good attitude to take when trying to enable people to be successful when they get out. We want

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to set them up to succeed. At the moment there are 48 prisoners out there. I believe it has the capacity for about 80. Its numbers have been slowly increasing. It is a matter of finding the right people so we do not send the wrong people out there and contaminate the 48 who are there at the moment. I am advised that the department is confident that before too long, it will be operating closer to that capacity of 80.

As for the \$2 million program, I am happy to go back over it but I did go into it earlier.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Did the minister provide the detail?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Pretty much. It is \$2 million funding that I am personally proud of. I think it is a good thing. We will keep spending money until we stop achieving value for money for the taxpayer. It is a matter of slowly stepping up this funding into diversionary programs, in particular, those aimed at young juvenile male Aboriginals.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Good luck, minister, because \$2 million is not going to go very far.

Further to the answer to the first part of the question, I was provided with advice on the contract with Wandoo by the previous minister. Can the minister confirm the payment methods, because that was not clear in the information that I received from the minister? Is it on a per capita basis? Therefore, is the operator being paid for 80 beds? There are 48 people in the Wandoo facility. If not, how is the payment to Serco made?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I will pass that on but I understand from the advice I have received that there was a base payment and it was done on bands, depending on the population. I am happy to pass that on to Ms Dominish.

Ms A. Dominish: That is correct. The contract is based on bands. There is a certain level, which is 48 first, and subsequently there are consequential bands, which then lead to payment.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: In that case, how many bands are there and what band are we at at the moment?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: I am happy to provide further information. I do not have that information at hand. I am agreeing to provide supplementary information for the member for Cockburn on what amounts are paid by contract to Serco for the running of Wandoo, how many bands there are and what those bands are.

[*Supplementary Information No B21.*]

The appropriation was recommended.

[4.30 pm]