

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**2011–12 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE  
TAKEN AT PERTH  
MONDAY, 20 JUNE 2011**

**SESSION ONE  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES**

**Members**

**Hon Giz Watson (Chair)  
Hon Philip Gardiner (Deputy Chair)  
Hon Liz Behjat  
Hon Ken Travers  
Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich**

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**Hearing commenced at 1.04 pm**

**HON SIMON O'BRIEN, MLC**

**Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Corrective Services, examined:**

**MR GRAEME DOYLE**

**Assistant Commissioner, Corporate Support, Department of Corrective Services, sworn and examined:**

**MS HEATHER HARKER**

**Acting Commissioner, Department of Corrective Services, sworn and examined:**

**MR IAN GILES**

**Deputy Commissioner, Adult Custodial, Department of Corrective Services, sworn and examined:**

**MS JACKIE TANG**

**Deputy Commissioner, Offender Management and Professional Development, Department of Corrective Services, sworn and examined:**

**MR MARK ROBINS**

**Acting Deputy Commissioner, Community and Youth Justice, Department of Corrective Services, sworn and examined:**

**MR JON PEACH**

**Assistant Commissioner, Custodial Operations, Department of Corrective Services, sworn and examined:**

**MR TERRY BUCKINGHAM**

**Assistant Commissioner, Professional Standards, Department of Corrective Services, sworn and examined:**

**MS SUSANNE RENSHAW**

**Acting Assistant Commissioner, Youth Justice Services, Department of Corrective Services, sworn and examined:**

**MR JEROME PARTRIDGE**

**Policy Adviser, Office of the Minister for Corrective Services, sworn and examined:**

**The CHAIR:** Welcome, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, to this afternoon's hearing. Before we commence, I am required to ask public servants to take either the oath or affirmation. If you do prefer to take the oath, Mark has copies of the Bible there, and if you indicate you would like one, he will distribute them; otherwise not.

[Witnesses took the oath or affirmation.]

**The CHAIR:** You all will have signed a document entitled "Information for Witnesses". Have you read and understood that document?

**The Witnesses:** Yes.

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**The CHAIR:** The hearing is being held in public, although there is a discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private either of its own motion or at a witness's request. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering. Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament, on behalf of the people of Western Australia, to scrutinise the budget papers, and we value your assistance this afternoon.

These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. It will greatly assist Hansard if, when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, the item, the program amount and so on in preface to any question. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee clerk within 10 working days of receipt of the questions. Should you be unable to meet this deadline, please advise the committee clerk immediately. An example of the required *Hansard* style for the documents has been provided to the advisers. The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations.

To start with, minister, I might ask if you could kindly, for the benefit of members and Hansard, introduce your advisers and that each of you please state your full name, your contact address and the capacity in which you appear before the committee.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am here, of course, in a representative capacity for Minister Redman, who is from another place, and, indeed, is in another place as we speak—in Indonesia.

**The CHAIR:** Not another planet!

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Yes! The acting commissioner, in Ian Johnson's absence, is Heather Harker, who is here with me today, and we have a large team of witnesses here at your disposal. Because you are asking them to identify positions and contact addresses, I might ask them to introduce themselves, possibly starting, for ease of reference for Hansard, with Mr Doyle on my right. So, I will just ask them now to say their name, the capacity in which they appear and the address.

[The witnesses were introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** Mr Partridge, are you participating as a witness or are you more generally in the public gallery?

**Mr Partridge:** I did swear in just in case, but really more just in the public gallery, yes.

**The CHAIR:** Okay; thanks very much. I might ask the minister: I assume you do not have an opening statement, as it is not your portfolio.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** No, but we are here to help the committee between now and knock-off.

**The CHAIR:** I appreciate that; excellent. This hearing is due to conclude at 3.00 pm, so I suggest we proceed straight through rather than taking a break.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Sure.

**The CHAIR:** Could members indicate whether they have questions? Does Hon Kate Doust want to start?

**Hon KATE DOUST:** Minister, I take you to page 796 and the table headed "Appropriations, Expenses and Cash Assets". Under the first column headed "Delivery of Services", I have two questions on this particular table. The first is that the estimated actual appropriation for 2010–11 and the budgeted amount differ by \$9.772 million. Why has that difference occurred? It is the second and third column of the first line.

[1.13 pm]

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I will ask Mr Doyle to address that.

**Mr Doyle:** For ease of reference for the member's question, the table down the bottom of that page is the "Major Spending Changes" table. The figures in the 2010–11 estimated actual column are all reasons for the variance between those two figures from the \$593 million up to \$603 million. The total of all those items adds up to \$8.565 million of that difference between those two figures. They are listed there. There are a couple of other more minor items —

**Hon KATE DOUST:** Sorry, did you say that was \$800 000?

**Mr Doyle:** The total listed in the "Major Spending Changes" table on that page is \$8.565 million. That makes up the bulk of the reasons for the increase between the two figures that you were quoting earlier. There are a couple of other more minor, what the Treasurer called parameter, changes that also contribute to the total of that difference.

**Hon KATE DOUST:** Where do we find those parameter changes?

**Mr Doyle:** They are not listed individually in the budget papers.

**Hon KATE DOUST:** Are you able to tell us what they are?

**Mr Doyle:** Yes. There are two other items which were actual transfers of expenses, or funding, from our capital appropriation to our recurrent appropriation. One was \$300 000 for a records compliance project. The second one was \$350 000 for office equipment. That was simply transfers from capital appropriation to recurrent appropriation. Because of the nature of those expenses, they fitted better in recurrent appropriation than capital items. I must admit I do not have the details of the other small changes, but there is only less than \$1 million left after we add all those into the total. They can be provided on notice, if you request.

**Hon KATE DOUST:** If we could have that on notice, that would be good.

*[Supplementary Information No A1.]*

**Hon KATE DOUST:** My second question relates to the same table, the column headed "Expenses". Again there seems to be a blow-out in cost from the 2010–11 budget, and then over to the 2010–11 estimated actual there seems to be a difference in costs of about \$15.114 million between the budgeted amount and the estimated actual over this financial year. Can you explain why that has happened?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** The increase in expenses: I think we have accounted in the answer to the previous question for about \$10 million of that. The rest is in another part of the budget that I will ask Mr Doyle to point to, regarding depreciation and amortisation. If the member would like to turn to page 803 of the budget statements, on that page we see a table which gives a breakdown of expenses under "Cost of Services". You will note a similar change to the amount we are looking for—depreciation and amortisation. Mr Doyle, have you got anything you could add by way of explanation as to why that has occurred?

**Mr Doyle:** The budget was predicated on a depreciation and amortisation figure of \$16.335 million. Our estimated actual for the year is \$21.498 million. That is a \$5.163 million difference. That increase is reviewed on an annual basis as a result of assessing our asset base and the depreciated replacement value of all our assets. With an increase in our asset base in recent years it was necessary to increase our depreciation on those assets. That is an approved expense increase through the budget process by the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee, but it did not come with a corresponding increase in our appropriation because of the non-cash nature of that item. That, when added with the previous explanations, adds up roundly to \$15 million.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I refer to the last dot point on page 798 which refers to prisoner transport. I want to speak about the G4S contract which comes to an end in July 2011, as I understand it. In 2010–11 alone I understand the general manager, the business manager and the

transport coordinator all left the employ of the contractor. In developing the 2010–11 budget, the contractor highlighted an anticipated 25 per cent staff turnover. The first question is: what did the department do in response to the information that a quarter of the staff would be turning over? What alarm bells rang for the department in respect of this? That is the second question. Maybe we can just do those two, and then we can get on to the next two.

[1.20 pm]

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** My advice is that staff do come and go from any body, be it private or public, so in relation to the several personnel that were nominated by the member in her question, that is probably a matter between them and their employer. We are concerned, obviously, about making sure that we have the services that have been contracted. In relation to alarm bells ringing about turnover of staff within that contractor, I am advised that the percentage figure that has been quoted is not an unusual level of turnover for a group such as this that does have a reliance, to some extent, on casual and part-time employees.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I do not see a turnover, for example, in the public service of 25 per cent; I think 25 per cent is extraordinary, and I understand that during the first months of the 2010–11 service year, the contractor had already fallen behind desired staff levels, with a shortfall of staff in regional areas of 35 per cent. A 35 per cent shortage of staff in regional areas would surely impact on the capacity of this organisation to deliver the services that are funded by the Western Australian taxpayer, and I have to say to you, minister —

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** What do you have to say to me?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Well, I do have to say to you that the idea that you can wash your hands of it just because you have contracted out this function —

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Chair, myself and these officers are here to assist the committee in any way that we can, so if you want me to respond to what is being said, I will do so, but if we are just here to be berated, then perhaps there is a better way that your committee might spend its time.

**The CHAIR:** I might just say to members that we only have two hours for this session, and I guess we can use it how we like, but if the questions have not too much preamble ahead of them, we will probably get through more questions. That would be my suggestion.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Noted, Madam Chair.

My question is simple. In terms of the 35 per cent shortfall of staff in regional areas, what did you do about it and were you concerned?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** My advice in response to what has been said is, firstly, there was no suggestion in my previous answer that the 25 per cent staff turnover rate did mirror what we might see in this or any other part of the public sector, but I am advised that it is typical, give or take, for this contractor to have that pattern of staff turnover because of the number of casuals and part-timers that they do employ throughout the year as part of their business model. That is simply a statement of fact. In relation to there being 35 per cent or some other high figure of the contractor's positions being unfilled, if this relates to service provision in a prison facility, for example, that would be of concern to the government. My advice is that there has not been that level of vacancies or anything like it. I am further advised of two other matters: firstly, if there are concerns about staffing or manning levels through the contractor, then it is a matter of concern, discussion and liaison between the agency and its contractor, as you would expect, and I am sure the member would be reassured by that. The second thing is that where the contractor has vacancies arise that, if not filled, would impact on the service delivery, they have recourse to a number of other mechanisms to make sure that those positions are filled—whether they fly in extra staff, if it is a regional area, or find some other method of short-term filling to make sure that they can meet their requirements.

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**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I wonder whether the minister can take this question on notice: can I have the staffing numbers in each custodial service prisoner transport facility?

**The CHAIR:** Can I get some clarification on that?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** You want the staff numbers at each location that we have staff?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes, absolutely.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Is that for the G4S contract, or for all of our facilities?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Can I have it, first, for all of your facilities and then can I have the second tranche for your G4S facilities? In other words, what were the actual numbers over the last 12 months? And, in addition to that, can we have what those numbers should have been for full staffing? I am looking at the gaps.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** The approved staffing levels and how many were actually there?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Correct, minister.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Across all facilities, including G4S.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes.

**Ms Harker:** Are you talking about just the transport contract and the locations that are serviced by that contract?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Not just the transport; can I have it for all of it, and then the transport ones separately?

**Ms Harker:** So you want it right across the prison establishments?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes, I do.

**Ms Harker:** So it is prisons and the contract?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes, thank you.

*[Supplementary Information No A2.]*

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Can I just quickly ask also, in addition to this: the Geraldton facility, in particular, should have come to your notice at some point in time, because I have been dealing with a constituent who has been impacted by, I guess, some of the circumstances up there, and I have raised questions in the Parliament about that. Would there have been an investigation into the operations of G4S at the Geraldton custodial services prisoner transport facility?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Perhaps the member might just clarify the question you are asking: is it about a specific incident that you have asked about, or —

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes, it is in relation to the staffing levels and a range of other issues at that particular facility. Can I tell you who it concerns? Would that make it easier?

[1.30 pm]

**Ms Harker:** That might help.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Okay; it concerns a Mr Barkla or Mr Barker —

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** Here we go naming individuals again in budget hearings. I thought that we had dealt with that last week.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I have his authority.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I am not sure just what the question was.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Was there an investigation by the department into any issues raised with the department by a Mr Geoff Barkla in relation to the Geraldton facility and the operations at

the Geraldton facility? You can take that on notice; I do not expect that you would have that information.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Madam Chair, what I think we will do is that we will take the question on notice and that also gives us the capacity, by responding in writing to the committee, if there is any personally sensitive information to be handled in a more discreet way.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** I am also mindful—albeit the member indicates she has authority to use the name—and request that members and witnesses do not take that outside of this room. It does not help our inquiry. But if you could respond by way of supplementary, that would be appreciated.

*[Supplementary Information No A3.]*

**The CHAIR:** Just on this area—if members have finished—of prisoner transport, which is on page 798, the final dot point. In terms of prison transport and the high profile that this has had, my question is with respect to the deaths in custody. Clause 24(1) of the previous contract required that there be more than two separate and isolated deaths in custody during any one service year for there to be a material breach of the contract that would entitle the state to terminate the contract. I am sure you are familiar with this area. If, after the commencement of the new contract, there is a death in custody during prisoner transport, what does the new contract say in respect of termination of a contract?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Good question.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** In relation to the new contract, and differing from the previous one, Madam Chair, I understand that just one incident of a prisoner dying is sufficient to trigger the process that might lead to termination of the contract.

**The CHAIR:** That is very good news. I was appalled that the contract was written any other terms! Further questions?

**Hon KATE DOUST:** In relation to that same dot point, given that there is a new contract with Serco that will come into effect in August, and talking about youth transport, which is now being managed in-house, what strategies has the department put into place with the new contract to try to reduce the number of occurrences where young people need to be moved around the state? And by saying that, I mean I want to know what the department has done in relation to additional IT facilities in various locations.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** That aspect of operations is handled entirely in-house, member, and I think Ms Harker can give you the information that you are looking for.

**Ms Harker:** Yes, that is correct; it is entirely handled by the department itself and we operate it from Rangeview detention centre. The team that runs it, runs it from there and we have a separate fleet of cars and we use our transport as well. In terms of trying to minimise the numbers of young people actually needing to be moved about, yes, we do make use of IT facilities wherever we can, and increasingly when things need upgrading then that obviously is taking place. We are also in close liaison and constant discussion with Judge Reynolds from the Children's Court who, again, has been very instrumental in trying to get the message across—to sentences—to his Children's Court magistrates that wherever possible we should try to minimise the transport of young people. So the use of audiovisual technology and making sure that the youngsters are kept within their local area as much as possible is obviously a priority. The expansion of the regional youth justice services, in particular—beyond Geraldton and Kalgoorlie, because they were the two original sites—the east and west Kimberley are now up and running. So the Kimberley region is actually covered in one respect and the Pilbara service actually starts in July. If it goes the way Geraldton and Kalgoorlie went, which did see a very significant reduction in the amount of young people

coming from those regions into remand and hence needing to be transported, then that is the thrust of what we are wanting to do in the east and west Kimberley and the Pilbara.

**Hon KATE DOUST:** I have a follow-up to that. In relation to the same matter, but getting more with the adults: in relation to the new contract, given that training was identified as a significant issue by the coroner—or lack thereof—in the new contract what mechanisms have been put in place, for the department to be able to monitor and ensure that the new contract with Serco is actually delivering appropriate training and that the staff have obtained the competencies that they are required to have when they are back in the workplace? I suppose the second part to that is: will there be any sort of penalty imposed if they do not obtain those standards?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** The member will be glad to know that this is specifically laid down as part of the new contract and that any breach of the standards—the training—may result in a penalty under the relevant clauses of the contract—withholding payment or whatever the appropriate penalty is.

Indicative levels of training are as follows: contract workers have to be trained to a minimum level of certificate III and be in possession of a certificate III as soon as possible, however no longer than 12 months after commencing work in performing these services. Supervisors similarly have to be trained, but theirs is to a minimum level of certificate IV. The contract also provides for the requirement for specific training programmes for contract workers in the performance of their various duties and responsibilities and the functions they are required to carry out. The contract also requires the contractor to develop ongoing training programs for staff development for all of their workers including updating and developing skills to meet the training qualifications that are laid down elsewhere in the contract and also to address any other matters that the principal, that is the agency, considers and notifies to the contractor should be the subject of an ongoing training program. So that allows for development where needs or deficiencies are identified for us to actually require that additional training be implemented.

**The CHAIR:** A couple of other members have indicated that they have follow-on questions in this area; I note, Hon Alison Xamon, that Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich has just indicated and has the call first.

[1.40 pm]

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** I am just wanting to pick up on this idea of evaluating and monitoring contracts. I understand that the G4S custodial service contract had a performance component to it, and that the performance linked fee for 2009–10 was \$1.173 million, of which G4S custodial services received only \$938 000. The reason for that was that it failed to meet performance standards. That included 12 failures to report incidents affecting service delivery, and three breaches of legislation in relation to providing adequate duty of care or security of a person in custody. Can the committee be provided, as supplementary information, with an overview of those 12 cases that G4S Custodial Services failed to report—to the minister, I am assuming—and also those three breaches of legislation? I also understand that there have been ongoing operational reviews during 2010. A review was completed in March for Geraldton, and then there was a re-review, I guess, that occurred in September. So, there were two reviews. I see that the acting director general is shaking her head positively. So, there were two reviews specifically in relation to Geraldton. If the committee can have access to those reviews, that would be appreciated.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** In relation to the first matter, there were a number of instances suggested that impacted on the payments made under the contract. We will take that on notice and we will provide as supplementary information the circumstances of each instance, the penalty in dollar terms, and that relevant information, including the three breaches, if these figures are correct.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** These figures are correct. They are from the annual report 2009–10, on the contract for the provision of court security and custodial services.

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**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Okay. They are from information in the annual report. We will provide the details for that. In relation to the other matter, I think the record shows that Ms Harker was nodding in agreement with something the member was saying. I am not sure that was the case. But the question from the member was that she believed there had been a couple of reviews into the operation at Geraldton. Was the request for those reviews to be provided?

**The CHAIR:** The member has the annual report. It might be useful if the member would indicate the page number.

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH:** Yes, it would be. It is on page 12, schedule of operational reviews 2010, and it is clearly regional: Albany, Broome, Bunbury, Carnarvon, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Kununurra, Roebourne and South Hedland. I am particularly interested in Geraldton. However, depending on what happens, it may well spark some broader interest in terms of that particular issue.

*[Supplementary Information No A4.]*

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** My question is following on from the response to Hon Giz Watson in relation to the terms by which the new contract regarding prisoner transport can be terminated. The response was that in the event of one death, the contract may be terminated. Are there any provisions within the new contract that will allow for its termination in the event that a prisoner does not die but is subject to grievous bodily harm as a result of neglect or negligence on behalf the provider; or, for that matter, if it can be demonstrated that a situation has been created by which a prisoner could have experienced death or grievous bodily harm, but, there but for the grace of God, that did not occur?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** That is an important point, Madam Chair. My advice is that the contract contains sufficient provisions that any of those circumstances, and others, although they are not referred to specifically in the contract, could give rise to a course of action that might result in a government determining that it had lost confidence in the contractor to an extent by which it could terminate the contract. I understand that all these things are a matter for judgement given the circumstances that prevail at the time. But any of the incidents that the member has hypothesised could well give rise, under the terms of the contract, to a termination of the contract, if the government determined that that was the action that was warranted.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** So, just to clarify, minister, it is not an express provision within the contract; it basically relies on the standard provisions of contract law. Is that what the minister is saying?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I understand that the contract—which I am not immediately familiar with myself—does have sufficient provisions that relate to duty of care that would provide the comfort that the member is seeking. Furthermore, I understand that before 14 July, the contract is required to be tabled for the benefit of members of both houses. Therefore, the member will be able to explore it in detail then.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Will that be before or after the house gets up, or can it be tabled outside of a sitting period?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** There is provision for anything to be tabled outside of an immediate sitting period.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Well, no, there is not, unless there is provision for it. That is why I am asking whether there is provision for it to be tabled outside of a sitting period, and whether it will become public the moment it is tabled.

[1.50 pm]

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Two things, Madam Chair: my advice is that the document can be tabled outside of a sitting time, and it does become a public document from that time. Secondly, in relation

to the very serious matter that Hon Alison Xamon has been pursuing, I think it might be worthwhile if we heard from the acting commissioner to emphasise the importance or the approach that the agency would take to this sort of incident and the seriousness with which it is viewed.

**Ms Harker:** I think it is fair to say that the incident that, if you like, sparked, obviously understandably, such a very thorough and serious review, certainly prior to the contract finishing with G4S, was, as I say, very, very serious from the department's point of view and one that affected the department particularly. Certainly, the commissioner, if he were here, would be saying just that. Suffice to say that, as a result of that, we do work, and have worked, very hard on this new contract to make sure that we have got far tighter provisions—that, if you like, we have learned from where potential and actual, in some instances, gaps were in the previous contract. Clearly, if there were any instances such as you have mentioned, we would view them very, very seriously and would not hesitate to take it further if need be, such was the level of concern in relation to the incident in relation to the death of Mr Ward. From a departmental point of view, I think it is fair to say this is probably the most critical contract that we currently have, and one that we will be watching very, very closely, as we have done up till now, but we will do even more so into the new contract, because the last thing that we want is any repeat of the kind of situation that we had before. As I say, we would have no hesitation in taking it further if our concerns were at that kind of level.

**The CHAIR:** Can I just perhaps be clear and get on the record that the understanding is that on 14 July the contract will become a public document. I just wondered whether it is possible to formally notify the committee. We will not be sitting, so is it possible to just notify the committee that that document has become available? I was going to ask for it to be provided, but if we can get it on 14 July —

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I think that my advice was that it is required to be tabled by 14 July, so it might well be before then. I cannot say when the date will be.

**The CHAIR:** Would it be possible, though, that the department could notify the committee when it is available?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I do not see that there is any problem with that occurring.

*[Supplementary Information No A5.]*

**The CHAIR:** In the course of that line of questioning, there was a comment about audio–video conferencing, particularly in relation to juvenile offenders. I had a question as to how much has been set aside in this particular budget to update audio and video conferencing facilities.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I might ask Ms Harker to respond and cut out the middleman.

**Ms Harker:** There is not actually any additional funding available for upgrades for this year, but what we are doing is certainly making sure that we use to the maximum the facilities that we have got available within our own offices and within the prisons and within the juvenile detention centres. We also make use of the audiovisual facilities that are available in all the courts as well. Something that we have begun increasingly to use of late is Skype technology, so it is quite possible to use Skype if we have got a young person in detention and their parents are, for example, in Broome or Kalgoorlie. They can go into the local office and we can actually use the Skype technology as well. That has been a fairly recent development. We are continuing to maintain the facilities that we have got, but we have not got any additional funding to expand it over and above what I have just said.

**The CHAIR:** It is my understanding, and correct me if I am wrong, that there had been some criticism that the lack of availability of audiovisual facilities was inhibiting such things as bail application and other matters to do with why juveniles were being detained perhaps arguably longer than they would have been otherwise. Is that correct?

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**Ms Harker:** I think it is fair to say that that is correct in the more remote areas of WA, most definitely. That is why the Skype technology is such a good development for us, because wherever we have got local branches—for example, Halls Creek—then they can make use of Skype in those kinds of locations.

**The CHAIR:** And that provides the same level of communication that is necessary for a bail application.

**Ms Harker:** Not for a bail application, as far as Skype is concerned, but the audiovisual in the courts and the local offices certainly are.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** It is probably also worth pointing out, Madam Chair, that, for a lot of the court processes, the Attorney General's office has the responsibility for providing these facilities. We have an input through the youth justice officers. That is not to say that we do not have a role at the bail application stage, but it might assist the committee in just making that observation that the Attorney General has a lot to do with it as well in the court set-up.

**Ms Harker:** The additional thing that we do have as well is supervised bail, which in an instance where a young person is suitable for bail but a responsible adult cannot be found to look after them, then that can be dealt with at Rangeview detention centre. They can find the responsible adult and they can be released to supervised bail. That is an additional facility that we have got as well.

**The CHAIR:** The problems that the Auditor General identified in terms of a number of cases where, for juveniles, a suitable adult had not been located and, therefore, they were being kept in remand longer than they were required to be: has that been resolved? How many cases are there where that still occurs, if it does still occur?

**Ms Harker:** I could not tell you immediately the actual numbers of cases, but the expansion of the regional youth justice service—one of the specific services that is available there is supported bail accommodation for exactly that instance. What we found in Geraldton and Kalgoorlie, because we had accommodation and we had responsible adults that we could find and link into that accommodation, was that the numbers of young people from those areas coming to Rangeview did fall, and we anticipate that that will happen with the Kimberley and the Pilbara as well. The new regional youth justice services do have that as a specific service area to target that very issue.

**The CHAIR:** Hon Liz Behjat has been waiting for a question. We have lots of people lined up. We probably need the whole afternoon, but we have not got it. I have various people back on the list. I am just trying to be as fair as I can.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** If I could, the second dot point under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 798 states —

Recognising the importance of employment in reducing recidivism, the Department has established a State-wide Career and Employment Service to support prisoners and ex-prisoners into sustainable employment options. To date, over 1,400 offenders have received support through this service.

I have a number of questions relating to that dot point that I would like you to go through for me. Firstly, how long has that program been running? What are the outcomes that you have achieved? What are the costs associated with that program? When you say “1 400 offenders have received support”, if you could just clarify exactly what “support” means.

[2.00 pm]

Is the 1 400 offenders that have had some sort of counselling from the service or 1 400 offenders have been found employment? If you could just run me through that, because I also note that the main thrust of that is to help in the reduction of recidivism. If we then go down to “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators”, the rate of return on both the offender programs for adults and the

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rate of return to detention for juveniles still sits quite high. If you could just run through those for me, that would be great.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I am going to ask Ms Tang to discuss this matter because quite a bit of material has been asked for.

**Ms Tang:** The prisoner employment program was originally introduced and started on 1 September 2008. When it originally started off, we had eight coordinators that were funded to assist prisoners who could undertake both employment training in the last 12 months of their sentence, if they had served more than half their sentence, and in the last three months of their sentence can actually leave the prison to undertake work, receive full employment benefits, as in their wage, and return each night. That was at the time when there was a particular boom, then there was a drop-off in employment across the state. We found that the allocation—we had \$1.38 million; that is what is allocated this year—to those eight coordinators was not the best use of the funds for those particular positions, and they were very narrow. We then moved to what we call the career and employment service—the CES, as under the old commonwealth, but I mean the CES in terms of a more broad service. So we now refer to it as a career employment service and prison employment—going out to work and vocational skills—is a subcomponent of that career employment.

You asked about the statistics and what do we actually do when we are assisting prisoners. Those career and employment officers who were working across this state, provided to the majority of prisoners, would undertake the simplest things—it might be doing resumes, it might be assisting them in interviews. It is actually coordinating; for those that can go out of prison to undertake job seeking, so they escort them to a job-seeking skill service within their local area, so they can become familiar with that and it could also start the process of getting employment. If they are successful in that, they might actually move to undertaking and going through the process of being approved, which is quite an onerous process of checking both the employer and the suitability of the prisoner, to undertake that work.

In relation to who we have assisted, for this financial year up to the end of March, there were 873 prisoners actively case-managed through the career and employment service, so we have broadened it out, as I say, undertaking those things like just going through the basic resumes, looking at what jobs are available, looking at what they might be suited to, and then starting the process within prison about what education and vocational training they may do to improve their chances on release. About 118 prisoners as of the end of March were also receiving post-release support whereby once they are released, whether they are under parole or not, they are followed up by people from within our department as to how they are going in sort of a mentoring role because what we do find, anecdotally, is that many ex-prisoners can find work; they do not often keep it. So it is how we can talk to and encourage prisoners that if they have a difficulty at work—this is a process which starts right back with cog skills programs and others—if you have a conflict with your employer, you do not just tell them to go somewhere. How do you bring that to their attention? You sit down with them to explain it, so you do not end up losing your job; or, that you do have to turn up each day and if you are not going to turn up, why are you not there? So it is broader than just, “Go and get a job”, because you have got to keep the job. The other is that we have a statistic of 365 who were assisted into employment. We are not putting up our hand and saying, “We got you a job” or we are there holding your hand when you are released, but through the processes that we know that people were able to get that work.

In relation to specifically the prison employment program, there were about 260 applications considered up until the first three-quarters of the year. For some of that we have tidied up the application process, because people were applying who clearly had not undertaken intensive violence or intensive sex offending programs who were not going to be included. So we had about 102 prisoners approved and that is either to go out in paid employment or to the vocational skills,

and 24 people for the first nine months of the year actually got employment and have been going out to that employment.

The other aspect that is probably important is that we run career expos, which we would not have been able to run previously. Over the last year, we ran about seven career expos where agencies or employers come into the prisons. We get a very good turnout; on average of about 60 per cent of the prisoners come and meet with potential employers or job skills agencies. I know we are running another one in Bunbury on Wednesday. We can have anywhere, say, between about 13 and maybe 35 exhibitors who come in.

I think that has covered all the questions; I am not sure whether there were any others.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** Does that program run across for the juveniles as well as adults?

**Ms Tang:** No, it does not; it is only adults. One thing I did miss out was the reference to the recidivism rates. The recidivism rates that are referred to in the budget papers, the programs, is not this program; it is about rehabilitative programs to do with alcohol, violence, sexual offending. However, what we are finding from our own statistics—I cannot get you a figure off the top of my head, but it is showing that people who are going out, particularly under PEP, are returning a lot less and that their recidivism rates are very much lower.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** Do you have those figures available that you could provide to us?

**Ms Tang:** I believe we do have them. The thing is, the program has been running only three years, so we can really only base our stats after two years. But what we can provide, we are more than proud to provide.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** If it is not too much trouble and I am not creating extra work, I would just like to have that because it sounds like it is a great program and you are getting some very good results.

**Ms Tang:** It is a very good program, yes.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** That is positive. What is the cost of the program?

**Ms Tang:** The cost that we had is for the financial year gone, and it will sit around the same, is about \$1.4 million, which is —

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** Is that that \$1.38 million that you spoke of for the eight coordinators, that is the money?

**Ms Tang:** It was a lot less—not a lot less, it has just incrementally increased over the years. But largely what we got to run for eight single coordinators we have expanded out to get a much broader and effective service with a similar amount of money.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** And where will I find that in the budget papers?

**Ms Tang:** You will not find it as a separate allocation; it will just be services to adult offenders, so it will not be within that.

*[Supplementary Information No A6.]*

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** This has some connection to the previous question and page 803, “Cost of Services”, but also page 797, “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”. Of the significant issues impacting the agency, I count about five which are to do with the development of prisoners or rehabilitation—I forget the precise words you used, but that kind of work—which is really interesting. Then we go to “Expenses” on page 803, employee benefits for the 2011–12 budget totalled \$428 million in that first line. That is the major proportion of the \$715 million total cost of services. What I would like to know, if you could give it to me, is what proportion of that \$428 million of employee benefits is taken up by the first, second, fourth, fifth and sixth dot points back on page 797, which are really the dot points associated with these programs of rehabilitation

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and so on. You have given us the \$1.4 million for one of them, which is the fifth dot point, so that is roughly \$1 000 per person you are assisting.

[2.10 pm]

**The CHAIR:** Which dot point was that?

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** The fifth dot point on page 798 under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** What the member is looking for, which we can easily provide, is a breakdown by various divisions. That might give an indication of the number of FTEs and the dollar cost, broadly, for those particular areas. I do not know that we would be able to quite drill it down to specifically what is being done there. I think that would be —

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** That is okay.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** The member is indicating that is all right. If the member would like us to do that, I think there might be —

**The CHAIR:** Are you proposing to take it on notice?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Just bear with me. We might be able to deal with this on the spot, which might be more satisfactory because it could lead to a follow-up question the member might have. Perhaps if the member goes to page 799, that might give him a better springboard for his inquiries. We break it down to the service level. That gives you an idea of what we are doing. For example, with adult corrective services—that covers a broad range of things, obviously—you will see that there are 3 662 full-time equivalents at the costs that are shown there. At service level 2 is youth justice services. Again, this is a very high-level break down. You will see that there are 777 FTEs for the costs that are shown there. I do not know if that helps give you a bit of an idea, but it is within those —

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** No, I am afraid that it does not, minister. What I am looking for is not a divisional breakdown but a functional breakdown. The points which attracted my attention —

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Perhaps Ms Tang could give you a breakdown, as this is in her area.

**Ms Tang:** I can give you what relates to my division. However, I need to begin by saying that any rehabilitation that occurs either in a juvenile facility or an adult facility is a whole picture. You cannot really separate the work undertaken by prison officers as opposed to prison counselling or programs. There is not a point at which it starts and stops; it is a whole community. Given that my area covers a lot of the direct services to adult offenders, I can give you a bit of a breakdown to see whether that is where you want to go. In relation to offender services, that covers educational and vocational training. Including the employment program, probably \$9 million is allocated directly to education and vocational training. I am not speaking of the work associated with prison employment, as in industrial officers and industries that occur within prison; this is about basic literacy and numeracy and vocational training for adult prisoners. When we look at prison counselling services—that is the direct intervention or crisis counselling for adult offenders—you are looking at about \$3.5 million. Clinical interventions are the programs for sex offending, violence and substance abuse, which is around \$10 million. Health services is sitting at around \$29 million. Again, health services are critical to people understanding that their health is important and that the use of substances impacts on that. Overall, does that give you a better picture?

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** That helps, thank you. As the minister said, that helps lead to another question. That is roughly \$50 million of —

**Ms Tang:** We also have the Aboriginal visitors' scheme, which is just under \$2 million.

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**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Let us say it is, \$55 million—I will round it down a bit—\$55 million of the \$428 million total employee benefits—that is about 13 per cent—is not a big proportion of money that we are putting in to try to change things. Can I try another question on you?

**Ms Tang:** Can I intervene, through the minister? There are also the administrative costs of running it. That is just direct. Looking at my division, it is around \$85 million, if you were tallying it up as split.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** That is roughly 20 per cent. My question is really that \$715 million for the total costs of services is such a huge number, and it is all reactive spending. It is reacting to behaviour. Have you considered what you could do to get a better rate of return if we had a blank bit of paper, and almost a blank world, to deal with it and start again? What would you do?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** This question —

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** That may be too tangential to this inquiry.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** The member is very well motivated and I think we all share the sentiment that I think he is expressing. Perhaps a large part of the question of preventative actions by government to stop people from entering the justice system are the responsibilities that are discharged, to a large extent, by other agencies. Corrective Services, while having a large input here as well, also has its own core responsibilities.

**Ms Harker:** I would like to agree with your comment in terms of where we actually start. The reality is that Corrective Services is usually the end of the line. We do not have any choice about the people who come into our system. We take whomever the courts give to us by way of people being sentenced. I would say that as a department I think we have been extremely proactive in trying to develop a whole raft of services, whether it is in prisons, in the community or in Jackie's areas in terms of offender services, to try to get onto the front foot an awful lot more, and increasingly we are doing that. When you look at the range of services that we offer and the changes we have made, both in the experiences people have when they come into custody and also how they are managed in the community, the department is a very different place from what it was four or five years ago. That is not to say that we will ever get in front because I am not sure that we are the kind of department that would. A lot of what we do tends to be reactive but I think, as I say, increasingly in recent years, we have looked around the world and at best practice and we have implemented a raft of new programs in the last few years that are designed to have a very significant and positive impact on not just lives of the offenders who we are responsible for managing, but on the broader community. That is very much the thrust of what the department is about. It is not just about looking inwards and dealing with what is immediately in front of us; it is about looking more broadly than that and trying to ensure that as a department we have a positive impact on the broader society.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Significantly, if we look at those significant issues that are listed there that the member is relying on, they talk about making a positive difference, along the terms you have mentioned, about addressing specific needs of Indigenous offenders and their over-representation in the corrective system and so on. I think this agency, you will be glad to know—even though in some ways the agency is positioned at the end of the line—has taken a very progressive and positive role in trying to address root causes. We have spoken already about trying to reduce recidivism rates, about effectively maintaining people when they are restored back to the community, about higher levels of supervision and proactive attention during the parole stage, for example, when this agency actually can exercise —

**The CHAIR:** They are not getting parole. Sorry, minister; that was an unruly interjection on my part!

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** I accept each of the points you make. You are ameliorating the situation that is upon you. I accept those points and I note that under the outcomes and key

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effectiveness indicators, as I said to my colleague earlier, the numbers show an improvement. I know it is only from one year to the next and that does not necessarily give a whole trend, but at least both of them are moving in the right direction. Is it possible to ask one more question?

**The CHAIR:** While you are gathering your thoughts, just to immediately follow up on that issue, surely one of the effectiveness indicators is the rate of recidivism. If you take Aboriginal offending, what has been the trend and what continues to be the trend in terms of recidivism? Is there any difference between five years ago, what it is projected to be in five years and what it is now?

**Ms Harker:** I think we would need to provide you with more detail. We do not have that immediately to hand.

**The CHAIR:** You do not have the recidivism rate?

**Ms Harker:** From memory, the global recidivism rate is around the 45 per cent mark.

**The CHAIR:** It is considerably higher for the Aboriginal population.

**Ms Harker:** That is correct. I do not like to say that it is “considerably” higher, but it would be higher.

*[Supplementary Information No A7.]*

[2.20 pm]

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** I refer to the “Royalties for Regions—Regional Workcamp Enhancement Program” under “Major Spending Changes” on page 796. On the next page under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”, reference is made to the Warburton work camp. Is the work camp strategy a new development; are there any work camps in existence that are working? I hope they are effective. I know of at least one constituent in Geraldton who could find only one in Victoria to go to, and it did him the world of good. Is this a program we are rolling out? What expectations do we have for it?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Mr Ian Giles will be able to address this question.

**Mr Giles:** The work camp programs have been in Western Australia for just over 10 years now. The first of them was pioneered in Walpole, in the south west of this state. I was not around at that time, but the recollection of those who were was that there was significant community concern about the set-up. It was something new and there was a great level of uncertainty around that. Nonetheless, they pushed ahead and established one. The reputation of the Walpole work camp has grown significantly over that 10-year period, to the point where it is a great community asset. The offenders in the work camp—there are 12 of them—provide a range of services for the community in and around town. Today we have a bunch of work camps in and around the state. We are expanding the work camp in Wyndham in the East Kimberley, and it will be opening very soon. That has expanded from 20 to 40 beds. There is the brand-new work camp in Warburton, in the lands area, that will be opening in the next couple of months, with a capacity of 30 beds. A brand-new work camp is being established in Dowerin, in the wheatbelt, to take the place of the Kellerberrin work camp. Again, we have increased the capacity.

**Hon KATE DOUST:** How many?

**Mr Giles:** At Dowerin it is 20. We also have put in two submissions under the royalties for regions program to establish additional work camps around the state, one in Roebourne and one in Gnowangerup. From our perspective, they are a great investment. They provide good opportunities for prisoners, in a minimum-security capacity, at the tail end of their sentence, to better integrate into the community to also improve, I guess, their work ethic and their job readiness for when they leave our custody to go back into the community.

**Hon PHILIP GARDINER:** Thank you.

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**The CHAIR:** It is difficult to fit everyone in. I will give the call to Hon Linda Savage because she has not asked a question yet, and I think her question is about a similar area.

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** I refer to the second dot point on page 797 on Indigenous offenders, so I am following up on the questions asked by Hon Philip Gardiner on the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in prisons in Western Australia and the high recidivism rate. I notice it says there that you are looking to provide culturally appropriate services and programs. My question refers to, not educational, but I suppose treatment programs. Have any current treatment programs been developed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders?

**Ms Tang:** Yes there are. More importantly, probably three years ago, at the same time as the prison employment program, we got funding to commence an Aboriginal facilitation unit whereby Aboriginal people were employed, and still are employed, to deliver programs to Aboriginal offenders, because for many years we were, understandably, criticised because we did not have Aboriginal people to do that. There is a two-pronged approach; that is, some programs are delivered directly to Aboriginal people—the Indigenous Men Managing Anger and Substance Use program. We are looking at that program and saying, through our clinical governance unit, that it is not where we want to be. We currently have a 100-hour pathways program for substance use, and we have just engaged with an Aboriginal substance use organisation to work closely with us to adapt that program. We have started that process to ensure the examples used in the manner in which the service delivery occurs are suited to Aboriginal people. We have to be mindful that the messages and interventions we want to provide should not be different; it is more their delivery and how the messages and the group work are done, so that it is not heavily based in written material and abstract concepts that might apply to non-Indigenous people. That is the work we will be doing.

There is also a program that is similar to cognitive skills. The name escapes me, but it is similar to the cog skills we brought in for non-Indigenous people. But, again, the examples and the program delivery are suited specifically for Aboriginal people. That is a very short program, but that also starts to work with prisoners—this is the cog skills program—who are not familiar with being in groups and to be respectful of other people, in the sense that they need to listen to other people and what they are communicating, and feel confidence in doing that. At times we have expected that people can walk into a 100-hour or 200-hour program and immediately be able to engage in a way that is fruitful to both them and the other participants. That is very much our base program. The other one is the Indigenous family violence program, which, as its title shows, is run specifically for Indigenous people.

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** I appreciate what you are saying, but what I really want to know is, with the programs you are referring to that are being delivered by Indigenous facilitators, are any treatment programs being run that have been developed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; and, if so, can you provide me with the names of those programs?

**Ms Tang:** I understand the Indigenous family violence program—I can check this and provide it as supplementary information—was developed in the Northern Territory and we brought it across to Western Australia for the Domestic Violence Court that runs in Geraldton.

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** Is that the only program?

**Ms Tang:** The Indigenous Men Managing Anger and Substance Use was also specifically designed for Indigenous —

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** Indigenous only?

**Ms Tang:** It is called Indigenous Men Managing Anger and Substance Abuse.

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** I am trying to get right back to when that program was developed and whether it was specifically developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. I asked that question for a specific reason: I think that is what we need. You are saying you think there are two programs.

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[2.30 pm]

**Ms Tang:** I believe that there are two, the BOAS, which is building on Aboriginal skills—I was thinking that was not what it was called. To me that is more an adaptation of a non-Indigenous program.

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** So, perhaps we have got one.

**Ms Tang:** I think we have got two: Indigenous family violence, one I believe we got from the Northern Territory, and the Indigenous men managing anger and substance use. But as I say, we are moving away from that anyway.

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** How many treatment programs would we have that are offered?

**Ms Tang:** There are about 10 people in the Aboriginal facilitation unit and a manager.

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** No, how many programs for adult prisoners generally—treatment programs of the type we are talking about?

**Ms Tang:** There are probably about 12 different programs across the areas.

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** I ask that because it seems to me that, given that over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, if we are talking about only two out of the 12 programs specifically developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, it does beg the question about whether the programs that they have been getting have been the most suitable or the best evidence-based programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Is that what that line item is about—trying to address that?

**Ms Tang:** It is more than that, and maybe Mr Giles might answer as well. But Indigenous over-representation is more than just program intervention. The work camps are very much based towards Aboriginal people and being close to country. The education and vocational is another area; about 41 per cent of our student population are Aboriginal people in the education area. So, it is significant when you are looking across Australia, that we do very well in relation to participation rates. The programs are something that we are working on. I absolutely acknowledge your comments. There are not a lot of programs generally across Australia to draw on for Aboriginal people. And also, just how we engage employment-wise in vocational fields is the other.

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** So, of the two programs that you think or believe were developed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, are either of those what they call these high-intensity programs?

**Ms Tang:** No.

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** So, you have got no specific high-intensity programs, meaning this hundred hours face-to-face that the institute of criminology talks about in their recent book, currently for Aboriginal —

**Ms Tang:** The pathways program is a 100-hour program, in which as I say, we are working with the Aboriginal substance use organisation to do that, but the intensive programs we have relating to sex offending and intensive violence, which are likely up to 300 hours, are not specifically designed for Aboriginal people. Now, that does not mean that Aboriginal people will not be participating in those programs and are not highly suited to those programs, but when we start moving out to regional areas, the more we go out regionally, the less suitable those programs are.

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** So, who in your department would evaluate that a program for the sex offenders with the high intensity, which has not been developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, is suitable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders?

**Ms Tang:** For many years we did not have any form. To our criticism, it was very much based on a view of the day of what we thought was good or not, but there really was not a lot of substance or evidence base for how we might do that. In recent years, and particularly over the last 18 months to

two years, we now have a clinical governance unit and the role of that unit is to establish whether programs should be running; so, we do focus groups with prisoners, which is unusual for us, but we are actually moving to that. We do outcome evaluations as far as recidivism is concerned. We had looked at, for example, for specific programs for Aboriginal people—there is an Indigenous sex offender program, which is of medium intensity, but again, it was not developed from the ground up for Aboriginal people. But we were looking at whether that was suitable for Aboriginal people and significant changes have been made to that program. We have also recommended through that same unit, which actually reports to our executive on a quarterly basis. One of the things that they do report is what evaluations they have undertaken, what evidence and what programs should remain. And, if we are bringing other programs in from either New Zealand or other places, other states, what is the basis on which we would bring them in, and how are they suited to our population?

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** Would I be correct in the next year being able to ask you if you were to have more specific programs developed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, given their over-representation? Is that the aim? Is there some way in this budget that that will move from towards that?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I think that the key point, and you might want to see if you get any specific response to that, there are programs developed as a module to be taken out, delivered and assessed separately. That is one thing and that is what the member is focusing on. But the significant issue, I think, identified on page 797 of the *Budget Statements*, in addressing the specific needs of Indigenous offenders and their over-representation in the corrections system, goes way beyond that. As it says here, it is about collaboration not only with other government agencies, where you talk about justice, children and communities and all those, but also with individuals in the community. We have been doing some fairly groundbreaking stuff in recent years such as collaborating with the prisoner group itself to find out what needs are and what works. Another reflection on this would be, for example, up in the West Kimberley. I was just up there the other day in fact, at the new facility that is being constructed there, which is going to have 150 prisoners in there when it is open shortly. The community has actually been closely involved in the planning and design of that facility, and even now, the chap who will be superintendent up there—I suppose he already is—is already engaging with the local community in relation to recruitment and a whole lot of other things, which I think will be culturally of use to the programs, which will be delivered better. So in a sense, that is designing an entire prison system, which is intended to be culturally appropriate and hopefully will achieve the things that we are talking about here, such as reducing recidivism and making our other programs more effective by improving the setting that they are in. The member might actually want to go and have a look there the next time she is up in the Derby, it is just outside town; it is worth a visit. Jackie, did you have anything else you wanted to proceed with?

**Ms Tang:** I know that one program that they are working on is called “going home”. It is a program working particularly with the central desert area, the Warburton lands or the central desert lands. I know that that program is being worked on. I will not sit here and promise you a whole handful of programs, but I can say that that is something that we are very focused on. It is a difficult area; program development is time-consuming and quite labour-intensive, so that is why I am not going to say, “Yes, we will have a hundred programs for you.”

**Hon LINDA SAVAGE:** And I appreciate that, the figures, the recidivism and the over-representation—I have some quite specific questions about, not vocational programs, but about treatment programs and I think it might be best to put them on notice.

**The CHAIR:** That is fantastic, if you would not mind. I am just mindful of the time.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** Two things, I am hearing anecdotally that now with the changing population in Western Australia, with more people coming from the culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, that as the population grows, so does that cohort's representation in the corrective

services. If that is the case, are you then also looking at programs that are targeted at those recent people, because again their needs are obviously different to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and people from an Australian background? I would also like to know what training prison officers, in particular, receive in relation to dealing with those groups.

**Ms Harker:** I will perhaps ask Jackie to comment specifically on the programs. You are right to say that the nature of the population is changing quite dramatically and it is beginning to change within the corrective services environment. I think that it is fair to say that it is still relatively early days, although we do have significant proportions of people from Indonesia, which obviously we have been hearing about. But in terms of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, we link increasingly with other agencies in terms of working with people from those different ethnic groups. I think it is fair to say that the Aboriginal population, particularly in regional Western Australia, is still the more significant one, but in the metropolitan area it is getting more and more diverse.

[2.40 pm]

In areas like Mirrabooka, for example, Community Corrections staff is actively involved with local groups because of the nature of the population that they are dealing with. I do not know if Ms Tang wants to comment on specific programs as such, but from where I sit the suite of programs is still available to them if they are offenders. The extent to which we tailor programs specifically for them is dictated by numbers, because sometimes there can be just one person. If people have language problems, we use interpreters and we have access to interpreters in a whole range of different languages. It is a changing landscape for us as things move forward in Western Australia, as far as the population composition is concerned, but the numbers still remain relatively small and the bigger proportion is still our Aboriginal offenders.

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** Do you run recruitment programs for Corrective Services officers that target people from other backgrounds to bring them into the service further down the track when, unfortunately, the system will have more of those people in the system?

**Ms Harker:** We have had specific and targeted attempts to attract Aboriginal staff, for obvious reasons, including the disproportionate number of offenders we have in Corrective Services. As far as recruitment is concerned, we have people from many different countries and cultural backgrounds. One only needs to go into the different establishments and workplaces to see that. To say that we would be targeting specific cultural groups is not the case at the moment. I do not know whether Ms Tang wants to comment on programs.

**Ms Tang:** No, but I wish to support the comments made earlier. If English is not a person's first language, then it is going to be difficult to do anything, as Ms Harker says, if there are only one or two people involved. We have quite high numbers of Vietnamese and there are Sudanese people coming in. It is first about their level of English. We might work with them, more so in an educational or vocational area, for basic literacy, numeracy and at-risk education, but if they are only serving a relatively short sentence then we are not going to get them to a standard at which they undertake a full-blown program. In relation to recruitment, we do not directly recruit those groups, but in recent years we have recruited experienced officers from New Zealand. We have brought them across and trained them specifically as a New Zealand group. Within our entry level training, we have limited cultural awareness training. One further point was in relation to the transfer of prisoners in the Kimberley to the Derby prison. We are very much focussing on Aboriginal employment, and part of that is funding that we have received for pre-employment training so that we can start that much earlier than the recruitment phase and we can bring people in and train them to be job ready when we go out and recruit for the prison. That is something that we have not done before. It is a new experience for us. The academy is working with custodial and corporate support in recruitment in a number of places. Across the department, we are working to get the highest number of Aboriginal people that we can. We will not achieve that in the first year,

but certainly if we bring people in and we provide the right supports, and word of mouth says that we are a good place to work, then hopefully more will come.

**The CHAIR:** I will give the call to Hon Kate Doust and then to Hon Alison Xamon, and we might run a little over time—just to warn people.

As a follow-on question, it is my understanding that there is a significant funding shortfall in being able to fund the programs, and there are people who are coming out of prison who have not been able to do the programs because there is insufficient staffing and funding to run them. It is all very well to paint that picture, but does the department have the capacity and the funds for all of those programs? I have very detailed questions here on that, which the agency will receive later, but I have to say the picture given to the committee is not what I understand to be the situation; is that correct?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** If the committee looks at the amount of money that the state is investing in this agency and the amount of endeavour that is being displayed by the thousands of officers within this agency, there is a conspicuous effort to do all that can be done to meet the business that this agency is about. I think the agency needs to be complimented on that. It is the case that probably in every area of endeavour one would like to do other things, but cannot because of the need to manage finite resources. In fairness, the government is allocating significant funds here and some specific things have been done, not only in this budget but in previous budgets, and the committee should look at major spending changes and the capital investment program. We have done a lot with prisoner transport, which was discussed at length earlier in this session. From my own observations, I would tell members of the committee, as colleagues, that there is a great deal of professionalism and commitment by the staff of this agency to do all that they can with the resources that are available.

**The CHAIR:** My question is: does the agency have enough resources to supply the programs that are necessary or desirable for people to undertake before they leave the prison system to achieve the outcomes?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I will ask Ms Harker to respond and to be frank with the committee, but I will admit up front that demand will always outstrip capacity in just about every level of endeavour, including the Corrective Services area.

**Ms Harker:** It is a difficult question to answer. The important thing for us is that, firstly, we have significantly increased the numbers of programs being delivered, particularly in the custodial setting in comparison again to where we were, say, three years ago; and likewise now, in the community, the number of programs are beginning to expand. The important thing though is that we need to make sure that all those programs are fully used. That is one of the challenges that we are dealing with at the moment. The fact that we have, for example, increasing numbers of programs in the community does not necessarily mean that all the programs are actually full to capacity. One of the challenges is about making sure that we fill those programs and use them to best effect. We have also done a significant amount of work around the corrective services demand model. Again, it is a new piece of work that is looking at the environment we are operating in and where are the pressure points and how we calculate our demands, given what we know about what we have to deal with and the numbers that are coming through the system. Again, I do not know if Ms Tang would want to comment on programs and whether we have enough. We certainly have a lot more than we had. As I said, the emphasis is very much on making sure that they are fully utilised.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Before we do that, I would like to offer some other information that deals with the specifics. The question is based on an assumption that we do not have the money or commitment to allocate funds for program activity. I am advised that the prison program delivery was increased by 68 per cent during 2009–10. That was on top of a 45 per cent increase in 2008–09. I would hope, Madam Chair, that is moving in the direction that your question was looking for. That increase has been sustained in 2010–11, and I think it was mentioned earlier that in the first three

quarters of 2010–11, 1 429 offenders participated in prison programs—of those 536 were Indigenous and 141 were female. The trends are going substantially in the way that Madam Chair would like to see, but we do recognise that there are finite resources.

[2.50 pm]

**The CHAIR:** Just before I move to Hon Kate Doust, there are two questions that I would like you to take on notice. One is in terms of those increased percentages in increased service provision. Can I have a breakdown of those services?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** That is program delivery?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Secondly, what percentage of people leave the prison system without having completed the programs—you can take that on notice—and what has that been like perhaps over the last couple of years and where is it at now?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Is that last question relating to people who commence programs and do not complete them before they are released?

**The CHAIR:** No, but I can have that as well—the ones who do not complete it. But I am thinking about the ones who do not even manage to get into them.

**Ms Tang:** There is a mix of categories. We can give you our recent work done on those recidivism rates in relation to both education and programs for those who were released more than two years ago. We can provide that and we are happy to provide that. When we say that people do not complete programs, there are any number of reasons and we will put some footnotes on that. One is because the sentence might be too short, another is because they absolute deny and will not participate, and the third is that, no, they are not available. We can give you that breakdown.

**The CHAIR:** Across those categories?

**Ms Tang:** Yes.

[*Supplementary Information No A8.*]

**Hon KATE DOUST:** I just go back and pick up on the question raised by Hon Philip Gardiner in relation to the significant jump in the cost of employee benefits from 2011–12 through to 2014–15 on page 803, and then I come back to page 796 where you see a similar jump reflected, albeit I imagine it is part of that cost, under the major spending changes for salary and superannuation increases. The first part of my question is: Can you explain to me why there is such a significant jump in salary and superannuation between 2011 and 2014–15? Are the public servants working in Corrective Services looking forward to a wonderful pay rise?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Are you looking at the big jump in this coming year up to \$428 million?

**Hon KATE DOUST:** Yes. I am also looking at the jump in salary and super from \$3.3 million this year up to \$17.6 million. I think that is probably a more interesting jump.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I think there are probably two questions you are looking at. First, you referred to page 803 and the employee benefits and you wanted to know, firstly, why we are looking at going from about \$388 million up to \$428 million. Specifically, I am advised that a lot of that increase is to do with some other facilities coming on board. I ask Mr Doyle to take you through those amounts because he is more familiar with the figures.

**Mr Doyle:** The major drivers behind that increase from \$388 million to \$428 million are provisions that are within our budget for new facilities that will open in the future. That includes the Derby prison. Although that will not open until around about this time next year, there is an actual full-year provision in our 2011-12 budget for that. Of that increase, \$11.5 million relates to the

estimated salary cost of the West Kimberley prison. Similarly, the new young adults facility is expected to open in the first half of next calendar year. The salary component of that which is currently in our budget is \$9.5 million. Also, for the eastern Goldfields, which is still some way away, we had to do an apportionment process of the provision that is in our budget for that. That provision is just a small amount over \$4 million. The other \$14 million, which will account for the difference, relates to normal salary increases that occur year on year for pay rises that public servants, prison officers et cetera might get through the year.

In terms of your question around the figures in the major spending changes table and the sharp rise in 2014 that takes that figure up to \$17.638 million, what that relates to is, being the last year of the forward estimates period, when Treasury creates that year in the forward estimates process, they have to provide CPI increases for salary and non-salary costs. So, the major part of that \$17.6 million that is listed there in 2014 simply relates to the 2.75 per cent—or whatever the salary-related CPI rate is for that year—on our base salaries. That is all that simply relates to—normal salary increases that will occur between 2013–14 and 2014–15. That would be a similar process for every agency.

**Hon KATE DOUST:** Thank you for that. I just want to go to the second part of my question, which is on page 799. Under the services and efficiency indicators for adult corrective services, it has the explanation of significant movements. I refer to the last sentence. This paragraph refers to the increase in full-time employees over the 2010–11 period and how this figure will stabilise. I just want you to confirm for me: is a review currently being conducted by an external consultant who is doing a comparative analysis of staffing in prisons?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Yes, there is a prison staffing review.

**Hon KATE DOUST:** Is one of the targets of that review looking at ways to reduce staff in the department?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I will ask Mr Giles to describe the range of things that the review is looking at.

**Mr Giles:** Indeed, we do. We have an external consultant, also backed up with a project team, undertaking a comprehensive review of prison officer staffing levels across public prisons throughout the state. There is a component that is looking at staffing reduction, but the greater focus of it is to look at efficiencies right across the board. The team has been operating now for some, I think, four or five months. Their first round of consultation identified a range of different positions through internal benchmarks. Each prison is different in their operations and in their philosophy and, therefore, some of their like functions are not entirely identical. A key part of their project was to have a look, firstly, at what the internal benchmarks are. One function in one prison can be readily compared with another function in another. They have completed that first round and have identified a number of positions that they think are up for question. In round 2, which is coming to a conclusion very soon—next week—they are going back to each of those prisons to confirm their findings and have that dialogue with the prison management and the local union representatives to get their feedback on their observations. There is a key part and, I think, in terms of finding efficiencies, it is around about 45 or 43 FTE across the state, but we are not limited by that. If we find greater efficiencies, that will become our focus as well.

**Hon KATE DOUST:** It is interesting. This sounds like quite a significant review into staffing. I have not been able to find any mention of that review in this budget document. Why has that not been made visible to us?

[3.00 pm]

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** My understanding is that this staffing review project was linked to the salary increases that flowed from the 2010 EBA, and that the examination of whatever the benchmarking processes and other parts of the review identify will be done in consultation not only

with the prison superintendents, but also with the Western Australian Prison Officers Union, because it is tied into the EBA.

**Hon KATE DOUST:** Thank you for that, minister, but I just think it is interesting that for such a significant review, there is not a single mention of it in this document. It also sort of begs the question then about the statements in here under that note 1 about the stability in terms of “subject to movements in the State’s prison population”. It may very well be an interesting question about the stability of staffing numbers that may actually impact on that note 1.

**Hon SIMON O’BRIEN:** As we were just discussing in response to earlier questions, there have been significant increases in officer numbers in recent years under this government.

**Hon KATE DOUST:** But now you are looking at reducing them under this review.

**Hon SIMON O’BRIEN:** We are looking at the appropriate levels of staffing for like functions and different facilities, and that is a process of good government, so I am sure that would meet with the approval of this committee.

**The CHAIR:** Hon Alison Xamon, I will just indicate that we will extend for 10 minutes just to have a couple more questions; apologies if anybody has buses to catch or other things.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** I may have to get some of my questions on notice anyway.

Turning back to the theme of overrepresentation in our prisons, I am interested in looking at the delivery of mental health services within our prisons. I refer to the first dot point on page 798 and the delivery of treatment programs. I am aware that there has already been some discussion of treatment programs that may be related to co-morbidity issues such as alcohol and drug issues. I would like a breakdown of whether there are any specific programs—I am going to come back to the issue of staffing arrangements in a moment—that are being delivered in the prisons pertaining to mental health issues that are separate to drug and alcohol concerns; and, if so, what are they?

**Ms Tang:** You will appreciate that mental health goes right from the mental health of all of us right through to acute care.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Yes.

**Ms Tang:** Largely, the mental health services we provide are through the health services division.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Can I just confirm that that is out of the \$29 million you made reference to before?

**Ms Tang:** Yes, the \$29 million.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Okay; thank you.

**Ms Tang:** So that is specifically all of health, and within that there is a co-morbidity program that has mental health nurses and other nurses working on the basis of mental health combined with substance use issues. We have a particular brief intervention program for people who are coming in, but that is more almost as an initial contact with people to see where they are at and where they might engage, taking into account that there is a whole assessment process for people to undertake interventions, so you have, sort of, the medical model, which is working with the offender services psychological team as to when people might fit into a program. But as to a specific program for mental health, there is not a specific program; however, we do have, as a broader service, the prison counselling service, which offers crisis intervention; we have the peer support, who are Aboriginal people employed to work with peer support prisoners and who provide support at a peer level; and then we have the Aboriginal visitors scheme, and they come in and provide support to people in a less psychological environment but they are certainly a cultural and significant community connection support for offenders. On top of that, we have psychiatrists whom we employ ourselves who come in or do a fly in, fly out across the state, and we work closely with the Frankland Centre at Graylands for acute care in relation to people who should actually be



hospitalised rather than in our care. While it may not be a subject for this committee, in more recent times the health department has received commonwealth funding in relation to re-entry services for people with health problems who are in prison so that they can connect through when they are released into the community, and that also includes mental health. Much of our nursing time is taken up with connecting to community health care when we really need to be focused on care within the custodial environment.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** That came up in the Department of Health estimates, and I was particularly interested to know, though, what was actually occurring within our prisons right now. I am happy to take that on notice, and I think it will become clear why. Could I please have a breakdown of every prison, including juvenile facilities, of exactly what FTEs are available? I note the comments you made about FIFO in relation to our remote areas, so what FTEs are available there in relation to psychiatric support, mental health nurses, counsellors, and any other mental health professionals and what they may be, for the coming year, please?

**Ms Tang:** We can we do that.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** I would also like to know what it was for this year, so for 2010-11, and then for 2011-12.

**Ms Tang:** It will not shift significantly.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** That is fine.

**Ms Tang:** We can do it by providing what is allocated to particular sites—we already have it set out that way—and what staff we have with a flexible working arrangement who can fly to Roebourne or Albany, so those more system-wide services not assigned to one prison.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** The information I am trying to chase is who is actually employed by Corrective Services. I am well aware of what is available, or not available, within the mental health sector once they transition into there, but I particularly want to know what is available there.

**Ms Tang:** Sorry for interrupting you, but can I add to that? Again, people who work within a prison environment or in juvenile detention do not work in isolation, so I may put a footnote on that about the Aboriginal visitors scheme, prisons counselling and peer support. While they are not psychiatrists or mental health nurses, they provide an environment of support to prisoners, so I may, if that would be helpful to you, include that as well.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Well, not necessarily within the FTE. I am interested in getting that information, but I do not want to confuse the, sort of, preventative work that is being done to try to prevent people from becoming mentally unwell with the actual clinical services available for people with mental illness.

**Ms Tang:** I know exactly what you are saying, and we can provide that exact information.

*[Supplementary Information No A9.]*

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** Has any money been put aside in this budget to continue with the pilot program for inside parenting?

**Ms Tang:** I am not in a position to answer that; I do not have responsibility for parenting programs. Is that for in a juvenile facility?

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** That was the pilot program that was run out of Acacia in conjunction with UnitingCare West and Serco, and I understand they actually needed to have additional funding to continue the program.

**Ms Tang:** I do not have that responsibility.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, would you like to take that on notice?

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**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I think that might be the best way of dealing with that one, given the hour and that there are other meetings.

[*Supplementary Information No A10.*]

**The CHAIR:** One more question from Hon Alison Xamon, and then I will come to Hon Ken Travers.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** I refer to page 799 of the *Budget Statements* under the heading of “Youth Justice Services”. The efficiency indicators state the cost per day of keeping a juvenile in detention. The estimated actual is \$599, and it was estimated that it was meant to be \$641—I notice that the budget target for the coming year is \$645. Why was it so much lower? Considering that I know there is such a need for delivery of services, I am sure I would have been able to find ways to put that money back up again. Why was it so much lower? Was it double-bunking or triple-bunking or something; or was it “Please, sir, can I have some more porridge?”?

[3.10 pm]

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** There is a bit of detail with that, which probably means it is best that we take that one on notice for a proper explanation.

[*Supplementary Information No A11.*]

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** The first question I had is that I am struggling to work out why your appropriation for this year is significantly higher than your total cost of services. On page 796, your total appropriation is \$734 million, and on page 797, your total cost of services is \$715 million. So you are getting an appropriation that is \$20 million more than you are spending, but I cannot see it then coming out as increased equity or anything else in your balance sheet.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I think it is the capital element, but I ask Mr Doyle to respond.

**Mr Doyle:** The total cost of services relates only to recurrent operations. So the figures that you should be lining up are total cost of services with total appropriations provided to deliver services, which is the \$636 million figure that is just above that. So the \$98 316 000 is a capital appropriation, so that is for asset delivery, and the actual construction of assets, capital items, does not come into the total cost of services. Total cost of services is simply for recurrent operations.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Where would I find the figure that relates to the appropriation, then? Which figure are you referring me to?

**Mr Doyle:** It is probably best to go to page 803 where you have got the income statement. The figure you were looking at on the front page, \$715 116 000, is listed there in the shaded column under 2011–12 as the total cost of services. In order to fund that total cost of services, we have some of our own generated revenue there—about \$37 038 000 worth of internal revenue. So we have net cost of services of \$678 078 000. That is funded mainly from appropriations. So that is our service appropriation of the \$636 million. It is also appropriations from the royalties for regions of \$14.4 million, and most of that is for regional youth justice services; and also other appropriations that relate to the new young adults—it is still appropriations held in Treasury centrally before the new services start up at the young adults facility and at the Eastern Goldfields Regional Prison and at some of the new work camps. The total appropriations that will come to the department are \$681 504 000. You will not see in that total the \$98 million capital appropriation, because it is just not part of our operating services. Capital appropriation is treated differently. But you will see that in the statement of cash flows on page 805. It is listed there separately.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** My next question is: last year the commissioner indicated you expected to put through 624 additional prison officers between last year and this year. Are we still on track to do that?

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**Mr Doyle:** My understanding is that in the 2010 calendar year we put through approximately 382, if my memory serves me correctly. We did suspend the recruitment program because the prisoner population actually started to decline. Yes, we were heading towards recruiting that higher number, but when the prisoner population started to decline, we had to take action to stop that recruitment program.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Again, I think the range of prisoner numbers that you gave us last year to what you are showing this year—have you identified what the reason for that decline is?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** Obviously, positive effects, but Ms Harker will give her view.

**Ms Harker:** I think there is a range of reasons as to why that might have happened. It is very difficult to pinpoint any one very specifically, but there has been a fall, obviously, in the adult prison population, but there has also been a fall in the number of offenders on community-based orders as well. Our discussions with sentencers, in particular at the magistrates level, are suggesting that there has been a reduction in the throughput going through court as well. I think it can be a number of different things that are impacting on it, and we are not really in a position to pinpoint any one thing.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** My last two quick questions are: your electricity and water costs, how much have they gone up by in the last financial year compared to the previous financial year? I note that I think you are one of the top five energy users in the public sector.

**The CHAIR:** Do you want to put that on notice?

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I would have thought they might have it. You do not know that?

**Mr Doyle:** No.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I guess the other question is: have you been compensated for that within your budget? There is nothing mentioned there, but have you been given any compensation in terms of your budget for increased water and electricity charges; and, if not, how are you managing those increases, which I suspect would run into a significant figure?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** We will take that on notice as a two-part question—the one you just mentioned and the second one.

*[Supplementary Information No A12.]*

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** My final question is: when people talk about a Gngangara prison complex, where do they actually mean when they say Gngangara? Have you identified a site? I am not aware of the government owning any large land holdings in Gngangara. Can you clarify for me —

**Hon LIZ BEHJAT:** There is a forest.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** Is that what we are talking about—putting it on the mound? Are we talking about putting it in the state forest? When we talk about Gngangara, what are we talking about?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** My advice is there is no Gngangara precinct or anything like it.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** The department has considered a Gngangara precinct, minister, and I want to know what they mean by the Gngangara precinct when they talk about it.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** In 2007, under the previous government, the department did undertake an evaluation of potential prison precinct sites, and I gather that a site called “Gngangara” would have been one of those. No decision was ever made nor any action taken by the previous government to further that. I do not know how much work the department is currently doing assessing work undertaken under the previous government to determine whether it has any relevance nowadays, but this government has not even begun to identify any prison precinct or anything at Gngangara or otherwise.

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**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** That is fine, minister, but you just mentioned they did do and they identified a Gwangara precinct. What I am trying to find out is: when they say a Gwangara precinct, what do they mean? What area are they referring to when they talk about a Gwangara precinct?

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** I do not know. It was your government.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** No-one can say what this Gwangara precinct was?

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** It is a good question because it keeps coming up.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** People keep talking about it. In terms of history, we can go back to, I think, under the previous Court government; there was talk about a prison in Gwangara, and at that stage it was at the Santa Rosa site. Is that the area we are talking about? That is what I am trying to work out.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** There is no currency to the question, so that is why I am not able to immediately answer it, but if you want something up there, you could put in an application.

**Hon KEN TRAVERS:** I think the southern suburbs seem to be closer to the prison population.

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** We have got plenty of good prisons down our way.

**Hon ALISON XAMON:** It is all in the eastern suburbs.

**The CHAIR:** Order! I think we need to pull up stumps at this point. I just have to do some concluding words for this hearing.

The committee will forward any additional questions that it has to you via the minister in writing in the next couple of days, together with a transcript of evidence, which includes questions taken on notice. If members have any unasked questions, I ask them to submit these to the committee clerk at the close of this hearing. Responses to these questions will be requested within 10 working days of receipt of the questions. Should the agency be unable to meet this due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. Advice is to include specific reasons as to why the due date cannot be met, if that is the case. Finally, on behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you very much for your attendance this afternoon. We will close this session.

**Hearing concluded at 3.18 pm**

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