

**SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC SECTOR EXPENDITURE

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
TUESDAY, 24 MARCH 2009**

SESSION FIVE

Members

Hon Sue Ellery (Chair)

Hon Brian Ellis

Hon Jon Ford

Hon Ken Travers (Participating Member)

Hearing commenced at 2.25 pm

JOHNSON, MR IAN
Commissioner, Department of Corrective Services,
sworn and examined:

DOYLE, MR GRAEME
Assistant Commissioner Corporate Support, Department of Corrective Services,
sworn and examined:

The CHAIR: On behalf of the committee, I welcome you to the meeting. Before we begin, I will ask you to take either the oath or the affirmation, and Renae will help you with that.

[Witnesses took the oath.]

The CHAIR: You would have signed a document entitled “Information for Witnesses”. Have you read and understood that document?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. To assist the committee and Hansard, please quote the full title of any document you refer to during the course of this hearing for the record. Please be aware of the microphones and try to talk into them and ensure that you do not cover them with papers or make noise near them, and try to speak in turn.

I remind you that your transcript will become a matter for the public record. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today’s proceedings, you should request that evidence be taken in closed session. If the committee grants your request, any public and media in attendance will be excluded from the hearing.

Please note that until such time as the transcript of your public evidence is finalised it should not be made public. I advise you that publication or disclosure of the uncorrected transcript of evidence may constitute a contempt of Parliament and may mean that the material published or disclosed is not subject to parliamentary privilege.

We have some questions we would like to ask you, but would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr Johnson: Thank you. Just to give some context really around the scope of the three per cent efficiency dividend, our recurrent budget is just a little over \$513 million and our capital budget is a little over \$78 million, so in effective terms that means for us in the 2008-09 financial year we are looking to make savings of just slightly over \$7.6 million and for the full financial year 2009-10, \$15.54 million. In relation to how we have actually done a consultation for the savings, we decided as a team and as an executive to work through the issues and look for efficiencies as opposed to making a general cut across the organisation.

[2.30 pm]

We have had consultations with both WAPOU—the prison officers’ union—and the CSA union in relation to involving them in the process and obviously asking them for their input and suggestions and to get some feedback. We have also had that consultation with managers and superintendents throughout the organisation.

I would just like to provide a little bit of context about the department, which I think is relevant. Basically, it was established on 1 February 2006, so it is a relatively new department. It is fair to say that the first two to three years were very much about building the foundations for the department, so lots to do with standards and structures, style, leadership, governance and building frameworks for the department. There were four key reform areas and certainly one of those was about a commitment to quality, which is really about continuous improvement. Therefore, some of the things that I will outline today are actually part of that process and not necessarily part of the three per cent. It was actually well and truly underway before the three per cent request came in.

We are now at a stage where we are moving forward as a department in terms of our strategic direction for the next three to five years improving the quality of our services and the effectiveness of those services. Like I say, the commitment to quality and the continuous improvement process is part of that cycle. I have some detail, obviously, of what we are planning to do, but I will await the questions.

The CHAIR: Sure; we will start those questions. If you have a document that would make it easier for us and you are prepared to table it, you might like to do that now. Do you?

Mr Johnson: I am just referring to my notes; they are handwritten notes.

The CHAIR: Okay. You indicated the three per cent efficiency dividend requirement on your agency to 30 June is \$7.6 million. Will you make that?

Mr Johnson: Yes, we are looking to make that figure.

The CHAIR: And in terms of your contribution in the out years?

Mr Johnson: At this stage I suppose one of my answers will be that it is very much a dynamic process, and the department is a dynamic area, I mean, obviously subject to lots of pressures that are well known in government. Simply what I will outline in terms of how we intend to achieve it may well change in the fullness of time because I think certain things will happen and then we will have to readjust our thinking. Therefore, we are not saying that these are tablets of stone and that is it, we will stick to that; we are saying this is what we propose to do to make the savings but if there are other opportunities, which we will look at, then we will certainly change them.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I am assuming that part of your reticence to talk about the out years is—I am assuming there will be a growth in prisoner population due to a range of legislative reforms we have done in the Parliament in respect to truth in sentencing and mandatory sentencing. Have you done any predictions? So that we can actually start with that as a bit of context, have you done any predictions of what the prisoner population will be—what the growth in the prisoner population will be—in the forward estimates period?

Mr Johnson: You are correct in your statement that the prisoner population is heading north and that certainly has been our experience to date.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: And it has been for a few years now.

The CHAIR: And you do not mean to Broome; you mean —

Mr Johnson: No, not to Broome. The last place we need any more prisoners is up in Broome. Certainly, the population has been rising considerably. We are yet to see, I think, physically see, the impact of truth in sentencing and other legislative reforms, but the projections have been done. I am not sure whether Mr Doyle has the figures.

Mr Doyle: This was reported during the debate, certainly, in the lower house, the Legislative Assembly, for the truth in sentencing that the estimated impact after four years from truth in sentencing was 604 additional prisoners to the prisoner population.

The CHAIR: Do you do wider modelling? That is useful information in respect of that piece of legislation, but do you predict based on that and other factors that you might take into account?

Have you done other modelling that says, “We’re predicting our prisoner population in year X will be, in the year after it will be”—have you done that modelling?

Mr Doyle: Yes, we have.

The CHAIR: Can you share some of that with us?

Mr Doyle: Unfortunately, I do not have the figures in front of me, but truth in sentencing is one of those factors that impacts on it. Natural growth in the prisoner population generally rises in accordance with population growth, so roundabout two per cent a year in terms of natural growth in the prisoner population. One of the other major factors that influence the growth in the prisoner population is the effectiveness of the police and the resources that are applied towards the police. For example, if there are additional police resources, additional police officers provided to the police, then that also has an upward impact on the prisoner population, as you would expect, with more police out there.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: If you cannot provide it now, are you able to provide to us on notice what your estimates over the forward estimates period is? Is that 604 over the full four years or is that in the final year the prison population will be at 604 above what it currently is?

Mr Doyle: The 604 is after four years it will be another 604 —

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Prisoners in the system.

Mr Doyle: — in the system, so it progressively goes up over those four years to reach a figure.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: What is the current prisoner population?

Mr Johnson: Effective 19 March, the population is 4 091. Today’s figure will probably be slightly down on that, but 4 091 prisoners in custody. Now, that is not including juveniles; there were 159 juveniles in detention on that same date and 6 429 offenders being managed in the community.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I assume there is an equivalent growth in prisoners being managed in the community, as well as the prison population going up. Does that reduce the number of prisoners in the community, or when they come out of prison, do you still have to manage them when they leave prison, so that figure will also grow?

Mr Doyle: That depends on the condition in which they come out of prison. If they come out on parole, of course, then they are part of those numbers we manage —

Hon KEN TRAVERS: But in terms of your predictions of what growth will be, is that a figure that will grow?

Mr Doyle: We do not have the same in terms of projection basis. We do not do the same modelling on the numbers of offenders managed in the community that we do on the numbers managed inside in terms of in prison.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Incarcerated. Just to put it into context for this afternoon’s debate, if truth in sentencing is 604, are we looking at the rest of the other increases being negligible compared to that, or are we looking at about a similar number again?

Mr Doyle: The natural growth of two per cent comes roughly at about 100 a year—90 to 100 a year natural growth in the prisoner population. We expect higher growth as a result of additional police resources, if those additional police resources are provided. Again, with 500 additional police over the five-year period, we are expecting a growth of about 475 in the prisoner population, if it transpires.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: All right. What about mandatory sentencing?

Mr Doyle: Very small.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Very small?

Mr Doyle: Yes.

The CHAIR: In terms of context again, can we set some kind of baselines here? How is your current budget travelling? Do you expect your expenditure to be over budget or under budget?

Mr Johnson: We are certainly looking to be on budget with our projections at this stage. I mean, like everything there will be challenges there, but that is our projection at this stage.

The CHAIR: Okay. Can you talk to us a bit about FTE? The Treasurer made an announcement on 3 February that he wanted to cap—put a ceiling—on the public sector workforce. He wanted that set at 99 155, and each agency's component of that was the target column taken out of the 2008-09 budget. Therefore, can you comment on what your current FTE is; what that budget figure is; and if there is a discrepancy, what will you do to meet the Treasurer's ceiling?

Mr Johnson: We are actually under that figure as we stand today. Our current FTE count is 3 717 and that includes approximately 170 that are currently in training. The 170 in training is a mix of prison officers, community corrections and juvenile justice officers. Therefore, at the moment we are under the actual estimate that is in the budget papers. To manage it from a departmental context, we have an establishment control group. Obviously, with the three per cent efficiency, everything—any growth in numbers—has to go through our own ECG process before it can be signed off. Therefore, it is not up to the division head, basically.

The CHAIR: Do you have vacancies?

Mr Johnson: We have vacancies with the officers who are currently in training, and we will be slightly under with the prison officers and, again, the same with juvenile custodial officers. We certainly have vacancies with the hard-to-fill occupations—psychologists and the like—so, yes, we do have vacancies.

[2.40 pm]

The CHAIR: If you filled all those vacancies, what would that establishment number be?

Mr Johnson: I do not have the figure with me, but it would still be under the figure projected in the budget papers.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Can we, for the record, have those figures that will be taken on notice—the projected growth in prisoner numbers?

The CHAIR: Sure. For the record, we are noting that you are going to provide us with some more detailed information on your modelling on projected future increases in the prison population.

Mr Johnson: Sure.

Hon JON FORD: You mentioned a shortfall in the number of prison officers. What is the current shortfall?

Mr Johnson: The figure varies, because you get FTEs and job sharing and the like, but the figure was around 150. In mid to late last year we embarked on a recruitment campaign which changed the way we branded the organisation. We had a very good response to that. We also changed the way we actually delivered the training. Traditionally, a school of 30 would start, and that would go for 10 weeks, and they would finish and graduate and move on. We currently have 125 prison officers in training. We have called it the super school, if you like, so when they graduate we will not be far short of meeting our target number. In addition to that, because of the current financial climate, anecdotally—I cannot give you the exact figures—a lot of officers who were looking to leave are now, of course, changing their minds and are having to stay on for personal reasons. Our loss rate is around six per month, and that is dropping.

Hon JON FORD: How are you covering the shortfalls at the moment?

Mr Johnson: By overtime, basically, on the rosters. We are just running the rosters by overtime.

Hon JON FORD: How much overtime did you pay last year?

Mr Doyle: Last financial year, we paid \$17.998 million in overtime—just under \$18 million—and for the year to date, as at the end of February this year, we have paid \$14.5 million in overtime.

Mr Johnson: We really struggled for a while, with the labour market, to get people into the organisation, but we have certainly seen a change in the past few months.

Hon JON FORD: A lot of people have come on—the good side of an economic downturn.

Mr Johnson: Yes; there is an upside to it, too.

Hon JON FORD: I want to move on now to the capital budget. Do you currently have sufficient beds for inmates?

Mr Johnson: That is a good question. The figure that gets spoken about a lot is the actual original design capacity of prisons. As we stand today, that design capacity was 3 462. That is what they were designed for. When I say “designed for”, if we have had additional beds, such as at Bandyup and Bunbury, then that figure obviously comes up accordingly. There is also a modified capacity, which is 4 238. That incorporates double-bunking throughout the state. So that is our number of beds, if you like—4 238—in terms of our modified capacity. As I say, that is double-bunking or trundle beds or somehow fitting people in. We are currently standing at just under 4 100.

The CHAIR: But that is not optimum practice, is it?

Mr Johnson: No. There are risks associated with double bunking. There is an upside, just like everything, as you have just mentioned with employment. There is an upside to it, because some people want to be double bunked; they do not want to be by themselves. Then there is a downside to it, where you have got to put people together when that would not necessary be the case. It is a balance, and we have got to do a proper risk management before we put people together. As I say, some groups like to be together, and others like their own space.

Hon JON FORD: I am taking it that as part of your managing the three per cent efficiency cuts, you are delaying some of the capital expenditure.

Mr Johnson: Not the capital, no. We are very keen to get on with getting some new beds—very much so.

Hon JON FORD: So you are not planning any delay in capital expenditure?

Mr Johnson: Not at all.

Hon JON FORD: What will that take your capacity to?

Mr Johnson: Well, we have yet to get the approval in terms of what the new government is going to build. We have certainly got 150 beds approved in Derby, and 50 in Wooroloo. Apart from awaiting the outcome of the ERC, we have yet to find out exactly what is going to be approved for the future.

Hon JON FORD: Do you have sufficient people in training as prison officers to cover that?

Mr Johnson: We are confident that, with the new recruitment campaign and the way we are going about training now, we will have sufficient numbers. If the labour market stays the way it is, then again that will add to that confidence. Moving away from the traditional way of training has made a big difference. We basically use the same model that the police did when they put through their super schools to try to increase the throughput.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: In answering those questions, you have identified about 200 beds. Is it all about building extra prisons, or there are other strategies that can be employed to meet that demand in prisoner numbers, which from my figures is just over a 25 per cent growth in the next four years that you are predicting? What other strategies are there for meeting that demand?

Mr Johnson: I will talk about the in-custody strategies, and then I will talk about the alternatives to that. In custody, we are certainly looking to increase numbers at work camps and make them a more viable prospect for a greater number of offenders. We are looking at other possibilities, places like Pardelup, for example, which is currently a 20-bed facility, and increasing that to 80 beds. Again, there are some issues to go through there before that can be done. There are a range of proposals that we have put forward in terms of managing people in custody and how we can actually do that. In managing people out of custody—community corrections—one of the key challenges for us is to get judicial confidence in community corrections in terms of being a viable alternative. So a lot of work is being done in that area about community work orders being a real alternative to people going into custody, and hopefully expanding the numbers that actually go through the community orders program. There has also been quite a significant amount of money provided for a number of strategies that look at reducing re-offending, which involves focus on re-entry services, focus on programs and education, on employment officers in each of prisons, and allowing prisoners to get employment during the last 12 months of their incarceration, and then leading to a full-time occupation. So there is a whole raft of initiatives dealing with the people themselves and trying to make sure they do not re-offend, as well as the in-custody alternatives.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Just focusing on work camps for the moment, you mentioned Pardelup, although Pardelup is not a work camp; it is a low security —

Mr Johnson: It is a prison farm.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Are you classifying Pardelup as a work camp, or are work camps on top of that?

Mr Johnson: It is probably just words. The other thing about work camps which I did miss is the redevelopment of the Wyndham work camp, which—correct me if I am wrong—will be increased from 20 to 40.

Mr Doyle: That is correct.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Can you give us a list of which work camps you are expecting to expand and which new camps will be created? Is that something that you can provide us with?

Mr Johnson: We have certainly submitted that information to government. I am not sure whether we can provide that or whether it is still a cabinet-in-confidence document.

Mr Doyle: It is under consideration in the current budget process.

The CHAIR: We are also going to ask you to provide us with a list of the efficiencies that you have identified that you can put in place this financial year, so you might like to go through those.

Mr Johnson: Would you like me to talk to that now?

The CHAIR: Yes, please.

Mr Johnson: The first one that we want to talk about is that obviously in an organisation as large as corrective services the majority of it is made up of staff. So the first thing we are looking at is vacancy management. Really, that is to manage our salary budget to around 95 per cent of the current funding capacity. There are critical occupation groups that we have excluded from any impact in relation to this. That includes prison officers, juvenile custodial officers, community correctional officers, juvenile justice officers, psychologists, teachers and TAFE lecturers, and medical practitioners and nurses. We are saying they are excluded from the vacancy management strategy. The strategy is all about looking at occupational groups outside of those and classifying them in a tiered approach as either high, medium or low. That is in relation to the impact that would have on service delivery for the organisation. When we have a vacancy, we assess the vacancy—if it falls outside one of these critical groups—as to whether it falls into high, medium and low. If it is high, we fill the vacancy straightaway. If it is medium, we assess it against that 95 per cent target. If it is low, we look at not filling it and making sure that we can cover the impact of that.

[2.50 pm]

Coupled to that is the establishment control board and the fact that all new positions must now be channelled through that area. The business case is then assessed from a financial perspective before the recommendation comes to me and goes through a thorough process. The delegations have also been lifted to divisional heads in relation to permission to advertise existing positions, so there is a lot more rigour in that process. In terms of backfilling positions when people go on leave, we are looking at putting that through the high, medium and low assessment process. If it is only for a short period, we will not backfill.

The CHAIR: Not filling those vacancies will save you how much?

Mr Johnson: We are looking, for 2008-09, at a total package of \$3.068 million.

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Johnson: That is the first one. Overtime—Mr Ford touched on this—it is obviously a big expense. One of the things we are looking to do is to cut overtime by around 20 per cent. We feel that we will be able to do that when we get the new officers online. Officers are currently working a lot of overtime; there should not be the same need with new officers. We would hope that sick leave issues and the like would reduce accordingly. We are looking to reduce overtime for prison officers and juvenile custodial officers by around 20 per cent.

The CHAIR: Which is about how much?

Mr Johnson: For 2008-09, \$1.870 million.

The CHAIR: Can we talk about that a bit?

Mr Johnson: Sure.

The CHAIR: You have increasing prison populations, you are cutting support services that front-line—if I can call them that—prison officers might need to rely on, and you are going to cut overtime. Is that not a recipe for something to go wrong?

Mr Johnson: If I can come back to cutting support services, I can probably give the committee a couple of practical examples of what we are looking at. In 2006, my office required a certain staffing level, because it was a new department starting up and there were lots of issues. There have been opportunities—not for the three per cent, but it will be captured by the three per cent. I have been able to combine the former executive manager role with the media and public affairs role, so I have actually saved an executive management position. The same also applied to coordination and keeping agendas and minutes et cetera for the executive team governance meetings. Again, the shift has gone from fortnightly meetings in 2006 to monthly meetings, along with some informal meetings. There is no longer the same need, so we have also been able to lose that position. That has no impact whatsoever on prison officers or front-line staff; it purely impacts on me and the way that the executive office is run. I certainly agree that there will be other positions that we will need to look at, but that is an example of the way we are going about it in terms of how we are trying to make savings.

The CHAIR: I do not disagree that cutting those positions will not affect prisoners at all, but if you are doing assessments of programs, for example, and determining that some programs are no longer high priority, so you will no longer run those programs, and you are going to be cutting overtime at the same time, I do not think that is sustainable, is it?

Mr Johnson: We are not really cutting programs; we are not looking at cutting education staff, TAFE staff or psychologists —

The CHAIR: Are you changing what they do?

Mr Johnson: They are part of the critical occupation group, and we have sat down as a team and said that there are certain things we cannot change, because we are managing a high risk and

potentially volatile population. Overtime roster gaps have been filled by officers and we now have 125 officers in training, some of whom will graduate in April, and we are rolling out graduations. We are saying that overtime should decrease. The cost saving of having a shift filled by a permanent FTE is —

Mr Doyle: It is \$12 000 a year, so for every officer that we have on at a normal time, allowing for superannuation, uniforms and other costs associated with keeping a person, versus the 50 per cent loading that we pay on overtime, we save \$12 000 over the course of a full year with one person. Getting those 125 officers into the prisons and paying them at normal time rates instead of having the shifts filled at overtime rates is a significant saving.

The CHAIR: Prison officers work 12-hour shifts, is that right?

Mr Doyle: That is correct.

The CHAIR: Are you looking at changing the way you arrange the shift arrangements?

Mr Johnson: The prison officers' enterprise bargaining negotiations are due in 2010, so part of that process will be simply sitting down with the union and discussing issues such as that. I think they will fight tooth and nail to keep it; they enjoy the 12-hour shifts.

The CHAIR: I reckon they will, too.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: How do they currently do overtime when they come in on their days off? You could not extend beyond 12 hours, could you?

Mr Johnson: We certainly should not extend beyond 12 hours, but yes, they come in on their days off with their leave.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: So it is not extending beyond the 12 hours?

Mr Doyle: On a normal three week roster, they do 10 12-hour shifts, so they are working 10 days out of 21. That is why some of them actually like to come in and do some overtime on their days off; others do not.

Hon JON FORD: How do you manage medical treatment of prisoners?

Mr Johnson: There are currently 82 nurses in the organisation. There are a dozen doctors, and there are other doctors and medical practitioners who come in on call. There are also mental health nurses and psychiatrists who come in on a call basis, as well as dental care. Typically, each of the prisoners has a medical staff. We are moving towards a process whereby rather than having the typical roll call, as it used to be, in which prisoners would front up for a medical, we are moving more along the community-based lines where if there is something wrong, an appointment is made and an assessment process takes place. If it is an urgent matter it will be dealt with straight away, but if not—as in the community—they wait for their appointment and take their appointment in due course. That is it in a nutshell. There are occasions when we have to transport people to hospitals for procedures, because we do not have the necessary facilities in a given custodial centre.

The CHAIR: What will that mean for a prisoner who is not well? In a previous life I work with the ANF, so I had some dealings with prison nurses. Until very recently, it was the system that prisoners went into an infirmary if they were not well and would basically spend their time there. The proposal now is that they identify as being unwell, wait for an appointment—however long that appointment may take—and meanwhile, they go back to their cell. Is that the system you are describing?

Mr Johnson: The only true infirmary would be at Casuarina; that is the only place. If someone needed full-time care, they would be transferred there anyway, or a hospital, depending on the nature of their complaint. We are not actually changing that part of their treatment. We are changing the system whereby there is a roll call for whoever wants to front up for a medical, whether it be for dispensing an aspirin, or a sore knee, or whatever. The nurse will assess and triage at that point, and

then make an assessment about what treatment the prisoner should get, and when he should get it. If it is as simple as a Panadol, then a Panadol will be dispensed. If it is more serious than that, it will be assessed. Nothing is being reduced, as far as I am concerned, in terms of service.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Is there any intention to change the level of nursing staff you employ—for example, registered versus enrolled nurses?

Mr Johnson: Certainly nothing that has been brought to my attention.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: All of your nursing positions currently filled, or are there issues of vacancies within your nursing positions?

Mr Doyle: There would be nursing position vacancies. We do not have the figures for how many vacancies there are.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: You said earlier that they are exempt positions?

Mr Doyle: They are exempt from the vacancy management process, yes. They are one of those groups.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: So if you could fill them tomorrow, you would fill them? Are you actively advertising to fill those positions?

Mr Johnson: I spoke to the director of health services this morning, and they are recruiting at the moment.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: There is no intention to reduce the medical coverage in any of our prisons?

Mr Johnson: The medical coverage of prisoners is an important aspect of prison management, so there is certainly no intent on my part to reduce the level of treatment. The group we have have very high needs.

The CHAIR: I will go back to programs, because maybe I misunderstood you at the beginning. I taught you are talking about putting a system in place by which you would assess programs. There has been some public debate on this. I think your minister is on record as saying that he thought some of the programs you ran were perhaps Rolls-Royce programs, when they needed to be Mini Minor programs—I think that was the car type he referred to. Have you made any adjustments or conducted any reviews of programs in line with the comments made by the minister?

[3.00 pm]

Mr Johnson: I am probably more a Commodore man than a Mini Minor man; I am not a Rolls Royce man. We already had programs under review. I will make that the general statement and be specific about it. The department is very much about making a positive difference to both health offenders and the community. There are a number of ways we can do that. It is unrealistic for some commentators to think that someone who has had 20-odd years of abuse will come to us for two years and walk out cured. It is impossible. We are moving towards changing the language somewhat to say, “We will make a positive difference in the time we are managing that offender.” That will be with people’s health and assessment, induction, skills, education, training, programs, introducing people back to culture, re-entry services, constructive day, employment and all these things that come together. Programs are part of the suite of what we will do with an individual. It is true that our programs have become too complicated, trying to achieve too much for the level of individual that we are actually treating. We got ourselves in a situation that we needed a four-year qualified psych to deliver a program and the labour market said we cannot get any of these people because they are either not available or they do not want to work in a corrective services environment. Yes, we are looking at what we deliver and how we deliver it and looking to deliver more but not necessarily the high end in terms of 160-hour programs. We are looking to deliver sharper interventions while at the same time not doing away with some of the more intensive type treatments. Like I say, I am a Commodore man.

The CHAIR: Can you name any of your programs that the minister might think fits within his Rolls Royce definition?

Mr Johnson: He has not shared that program name with me.

The CHAIR: I wish to ask a question about the regional youth justice strategy. My understanding was that we had some programs in Kalgoorlie and Geraldton last year. I think they only started partway through last year.

Mr Johnson: That is correct.

The CHAIR: Is it not the case that those services are already under evaluation or about to go under evaluation?

Mr Johnson: We are certainly evaluating them. On a positive note, we hope to roll out in the Pilbara and the Kimberley. That would be the aim. The numbers of young offenders coming into custody since those programs have been implemented has dropped considerably. We are assessing on a positive note.

The CHAIR: So you are looking to expand the program not cut back?

Mr Johnson: Correct. We are looking to evaluate the success of that program. It will take a little while because the data is early at this point but the indicators are that it is having positive outcomes. If it has positive outcomes and we can prove that, we will certainly be looking to move it out in the Kimberley and the Pilbara. We are also doing lots of other things on the youth justice strategy in terms of bringing together community and custody under the one assistant commissioner. I have taken the lead role as CEO to pull it together with other agencies. We are doing a lot of work in that area.

Hon JON FORD: This is a topical subject, relating to the issues that were raised with the recent tragedy in the goldfields. How much of your fleet needs to be replaced and do you have sufficient funds to meet that demand?

Mr Doyle: All of them. The entire secure vehicle fleet is being replaced.

Hon JON FORD: How many is that?

Mr Doyle: At the moment we have 37 vehicles in the fleet. We commenced a fleet replacement program a couple of years ago. There was a lot of consultation around the design of the vehicles. As you saw in recent media, there is still conjecture over the design of the vehicles. We have consulted with the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services and with the Aboriginal Legal Service in the period after Mr Ward's tragic death, certainly also with the police, the courts and Easy Fleet, which is the manager of our fleet. We have also visited Victoria and South Australia to look at their vehicles and to compare our proposed designs with the vehicles that are available elsewhere to make sure that if there are other attributes that we can bring to our vehicles, we include them in the design. This has been ongoing for a long period but unfortunately it has been slow going. Three prototype vehicles are in use and we had two of the new fleet delivered on 25 February. We have another two vehicles scheduled to be delivered early April. That program rolls out over the next year and a half to two years. By the end of 2010, the entire fleet will have been replaced. Yes, it is funded in the budget.

The CHAIR: It is not affected by the three per cent?

Mr Doyle: No, it is definitely not.

Hon JON FORD: I suppose the overall job as a prison officer can be quite stressful. Do you suffer from higher levels of stress leave or sick leave as a result of the job than other agencies?

Mr Johnson: I agree that the job would certainly be stressful and it certainly has its moments. I do not have the figures in comparison to other organisations. We may be able to provide those to you. I can say that we have done a lot in the past three years. Coming back to "Building the Foundation",

the key emphasis was about safety and security for our officers, for all staff for that matter. We also have an occupational safety and health framework, a better intelligence system, personal duress alarms have been issued to all officers throughout the state and there have been lots of enhancements to security procedures and security hardware. There has been a lot done on that front but I could not give you the actual figures compared to, say, police or other like occupations in relation to stress.

Hon JON FORD: You are not targeting any efficiency gains to those programs?

Mr Johnson: We have actually increased our retention in occupational safety and health in terms of health and wellness and the resources we have in that area in terms of officers. I forget the name of the officers—it has escaped for me for a moment—that we have. It is not welfare officers.

Mr Doyle: First aid.

Mr Johnson: No, I am thinking more about —

The CHAIR: Employee assistance or something like that?

Hon JON FORD: Peer support.

Mr Johnson: Yes, peer support, in terms of the number we have and the training that we give those officers as well.

Mr Doyle: The Mahoney recommendations from the 2005 inquiry related to occupational health and safety and employee wellness or welfare. They were Mahoney recommendations 59 and 56.

The CHAIR: He is showing off now!

Mr Johnson: He is impressive.

Mr Doyle: There was additional funding against both of those recommendations, and we have progressed. As Mr Johnson said, we have additional resources in both of those areas in our human resource branch.

Hon JON FORD: What about community justice officers? Are you currently up to your level of FTEs?

Mr Johnson: We currently have 22 in training and 23 juvenile justice officers. When they come out, that will put us at approximately 30 below what we need.

Hon JON FORD: The obvious question then is: are those positions going to be delayed?

Mr Johnson: That is one of the critical occupational groups that we are not touching but we are certainly looking at the way we do business. We have been looking because probably 12 months ago we were before the Industrial Relations Commission with community correctional officers. We have sat down with the union, the officers and the commission to work out how we can better manage offenders. It is true to say that sometimes we over manage some offenders who do not need the level that they get. We are looking at managing assessed risk and what level risk that offender raises and managing them accordingly.

The CHAIR: Do you think there is capacity to have less of those officers?

Mr Johnson: I would not like to see less. I would like to see more in community corrections because the more we have in community corrections, the less we have in custody. It is cheaper in community corrections than it is in custody. We can achieve better outcomes. Not being a bleeding heart, but more positive outcomes can be achieved there.

[3.10 pm]

The CHAIR: Ken, I will go to you. I am reminding everybody of the time. We have got another agency.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: At the time that that Industrial Relations Commission audit was handed down, I think you were required to employ extra people, so what you are saying to us this afternoon is that there will not be any cuts in that area at all?

Mr Johnson: At the time we actually had a cap on the number of cases that could be managed. We have since worked through that in terms of how we manage offenders and have case management —

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Are we now managing all of these cases, or do we still have a backlog or unallocated cases in that area?

Mr Johnson: There are some cases which are what they call “monitored”. My view is very strongly that if somebody is on a community-based order and it is for not holding a motor driver’s licence, then we do not have to put in an awful lot of time with that person. If someone is on a parole or community-based order for an offence of violence or certainly places the community at risk, that is where I want my people spending the time, not with somebody that has got a NDL and a couple of traffic offences, to be honest.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: In terms of those agreed arrangements that you talk about, within those agreed arrangements are you able to provide us with any figures on what level of unmet or overdue cases there are in terms of managing them?

Mr Johnson: I could provide you with a figure as to what would be the monitored caseload. When I say “monitored”, not actively being case managed but monitored in terms of —

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Are there also some that are overdue or not yet allocated?

Mr Johnson: Every case that comes in has that risk assessment at the front end and then is assigned accordingly.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: To go back in terms of bed numbers—are any other prisons in Western Australia able to increase their capacity through double-bunking that currently are not, or through other methods; and, if so, what are they and are they things that you are looking at managing over the —?

Mr Johnson: In the interim, for people in custody, then double-bunking is certainly in the immediate future short term, because before the new beds come on line at places like Derby in 2011, so double-bunking—and other prisons are certainly looking at increasing those numbers.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Whereabouts are we looking at?

Mr Johnson: Spreading it throughout the state and very much back to the principle of trying to keep an offender in country because we do not want somebody from the Kimberley necessarily down in Perth, so wherever possible we are trying to make sure that the offender is —

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Are you able to provide us with those figures of where you expect to meet, in the short term, the bed numbers?

Mr Doyle: We do, but again we are approaching the budget. Part of our total budget submission is to do some double-bunking and, in accordance with the budget process, we will get a decision on that some time between now and 14 May.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: My final question: I think you went through the two areas, vacancy management and overtime reduction. Are there any other areas?

Mr Johnson: Yes, there certainly is.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Are you able to provide us with those and maybe we will take them on notice.

The CHAIR: Yes.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Provide those and the amount for each. I would also be interested to know, I think you said \$1.8 million this year you are going to get out of overtime management —

Mr Johnson: Yes.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: What would you expect to get out of that in a full year?

Mr Johnson: 3.716.

Hon JON FORD: Do you supply any housing for your officers in the regions?

Mr Johnson: We do, actually, in the regions and in the metro. There are some properties at Hakea; some are at Karnet. In the regions we have government housing in a number of areas up in the Kimberley and the Pilbara:

Hon JON FORD: Have you got sufficient?

Mr Johnson: We always struggle in areas like Karratha to get enough houses, and Broome. We still struggle there to get houses. Again we are hoping to see some of that market freeing up a bit, now the mining companies are not taking everything that exists. But we have struggled in the past in certainly the Pilbara and the Kimberley.

Hon JON FORD: I take it you actually rent some houses?

Mr Johnson: We rent some. The only ones we would own would be the ones at Karnet, I think.

Mr Doyle: That is right. All the regional housing requirements are done through GROH. Whether they are owned by GROH or whether GROH lease them from landlords, there is a mix of that.

Hon JON FORD: My last question is: do you rely on NGOs to deliver any of your programs?

Mr Doyle: Yes, particularly in the areas of our re-entry programs. Our re-entry link program is one of the big programs, and we do contract that out to non-government organisations.

Hon JON FORD: Will they be affected at all by your drive to get that efficiency?

Mr Doyle: No.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I just want to go back to, if I could, that figure you gave me of \$3.7 million in a full year, but you are expecting to get \$1.8 million this year. From what you are saying you will not really be able to implement that full overtime management policy until such time as you have got the super school —

Mr Johnson: Part of it, yes. In other respects that may well be, but coming back to prisoner management, our prisoners currently get just under 12 hours a day out of their cell time. There may be a need to change that regime depending on safety and security in particular, but not necessarily just automatically fill a roster line if somebody rings in sick, for example. We may look at the regime and change the regime somewhat.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: At the moment you are putting in place harsher —?

Mr Johnson: Well, it is not harsher. It is to manage.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: — less free time. You are keeping them locked down for longer —

Mr Johnson: Not necessarily. I am not trying to be vague here but every prison is different. Karnet, they are out of their cells early in the morning and back late at night because everybody at Karnet is gainfully employed. Wooroloo is the same, so we are talking mainly the larger prisons, if you like, Hakea and Casuarina, in terms of looking at other options about the regimes.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: You do expect to make that full \$1.8 million this year?

Mr Johnson: That is the target.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for your contribution. If there are matters, when we review the transcript, that we seek further information on, we will let you know in writing and ask you to provide that to us within two weeks. Thanks very much.

Hearing concluded at 3.16 pm