

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CRIME PREVENTION

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE TAKEN
AT PERTH
TUESDAY, 14 APRIL 1998**

**Mr Nicholls (Chairman)
Mr Barron-Sullivan
Mr Ripper
Mrs Roberts
Mrs van de Klashorst**

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The CHAIRMAN: Good morning. I will go through a few formalities while the equipment is being set up. I am required to ask whether you have read the notes at the bottom of the witness form.

Mr LIENERT: Yes; I have

The CHAIRMAN: I am also required to ask whether you understand them.

Mr LIENERT: I do.

The CHAIRMAN: I would also like to check whether you have had the opportunity to view the terms of reference of the committee and, if so, whether you have any concern about them or need to discuss any issue of your understanding of the terms with us.

Mr LIENERT: Yes. I have read the terms of reference and also a subsequent letter seeking, what I understand is, background information about the causes of crime.

The CHAIRMAN: That is correct. The committee's intent in these hearings is to establish an understanding of crime and its underlying causes before we examine programs in detail. Before I proceed, I indicate that members of the media are present this morning. This is an open hearing. Do you have any objections to members of the media being here?

Mr LIENERT: I have no objections to the media; however, I will probably ask that one part of the information I give not be published. I will revisit that matter before the hour is out and then I could veto anything that may be said because it may relate to confidential operations and it would be inappropriate to put them to the media at this time.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that we deal with the information you would like to provide the committee, which you feel is inappropriate to be reported on, towards the end of the evidence.

Mr LIENERT: We can do. I will take guidance from you. The second term of reference refers to the background of crime. With the permission of the committee, I intend to proceed in this way: First, I will explain the shared understanding of the short history of policing in Australia to know where we are at today; secondly, I will also look at policing in a national context, and where Western Australia sits in the overall picture; thirdly, I intend to allude to trends in the state of crime in Western Australia, with the aid of a power point; and finally, I will describe the strategies and programs that have been devised and researched to counter crime in Western Australia.

The CHAIRMAN: I have no objection, and neither does the committee. However, because we have only a limited amount of time, I would appreciate your covering those areas of presentation, possibly within 20 minutes or so, if that is possible. How long will it take?

Mr LIENERT: I had envisaged 30 minutes, but it may finish up at 20 minutes, depending on what the chairman requires.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like the opportunity to do that and I ask that, where possible, you constrain the broader view and relate to the specific terms of reference which are our primary focus. Could you give us a brief insight into your position and the role you play in providing information? Would you like to commence with an overview?

Mr LIENERT: To assist in the presentation, I have a number of handouts I will table. My role as Acting Assistant Commissioner (Crime Support) is involved with major and serious crime in Western Australia. It is to coordinate activities and resources and to equip that through the Western Australia Police Service. This section is also a national and international liaison centre of contact with the Western Australia Police Service as it operates in consultation with overseas jurisdictions and a multitude of law enforcement agencies throughout the world. For that reason we have become a centre of concentration of specialist key factors that we think will impact globally.

I will allude to the short history of policing in Australia because it is important to understand where we have come from in the past 200 years. Primarily Australia was based on a threefold mandate of British, European and western European policing, and we are required to maintain public order, enforce laws and provide miscellaneous and emergency services. The factors that have influenced the evolution of policing over the past 200 hundred years are quite interesting. We had the British influence which ran a military style organisation. There was a lot of centralisation in the settlement of Australia. A lot of the challenges were in the regions with convicts, Aborigines, bushrangers, and those involved in the gold rush.

Centralisation was the underpinning factor in the standard of control. The magistrates of the day, who were in charge of policing, were required to engage their own constables, some of whom we know from history were pretty bleak, having come from a convict past. In 1901 the Australian Constitution gave powers of policing to several States. That charter remained fairly constant until about the 1960s. Between the 1960s and the 1990s we have seen community social reform, and the questioning by society of police legitimacy and its mandate. Therefore, we have reviewed the way we do business. Through that, we have adopted the Delta program, which has been well publicised. It has been innovative in Western Australia in the past three and a half years. The Police Service in Western Australia has gone to a regionalisation and devolution model, with a strong focus on a working partnership with the community to find the solution to crime.

The philosophy is that where the crime happens is where the answers are. Our business approach is that the police, the government agencies and the community at the local level must make the decisions about what is affecting them greatly. Policing in a national context is overarched by the Australasian Police Ministers Council and others. In fact, I will table a document setting out Australasian directions in policing which fundamentally covers three areas: Leadership, partnership and stakeholders; accountability and professionalism in policing; and cooperation and

coordination of operations and resources.

I table that document to show that we cannot work in a vacuum, in isolation. We are affected by some overarching factors that underpin our thinking across the nation. I also submit a magazine about better policing services. To amplify our approach to policing and improving the community; we developed the Western Australia state crime prevention strategy two years ago, in August 1996. I was the co-author of this document. It focuses on a tripartite approach to crime prevention. First, let us look at it in a triangle; that appears in the strategy. At the pinnacle is where the crime happens. We have the police, the courts and the corrective services area. That is our response to what openly and manifestly happens.

The second part is to look at social crime prevention. The situational strategies relate to a "lock it or lose it" position. Not that long ago we left our keys in the ignition of the motor car; the windows down and the doors open. We now tell people to lock their cars. We encourage people, through publications, to leave lights on in their homes, to make their environment more risky to the person who wants to create a criminal act, to make it more difficult for them to commit a crime, and easier for them to get caught.

Underpinning all of this is the social factor of crime prevention. We must work with other government agencies and the community. This impacts upon the Health Department, the Ministry of Justice, Education Department; about eight government agencies. They can contribute to the crime solution. We see our role as a police agency to take the lead role in that at all levels, from chief executive officer to the Minister, at one level; to what we call the regional chief of police, at the district level. We also include our counterparts in education and other government agencies through the regions with whom the police can work. Importantly this is driven by the community at the third level.

We have a community based policing crime prevention council which has 22 subgroups throughout the State of Western Australia. They are aligned largely to what we call 15 police districts. They form a partnership with other government agencies that are interlinked with us. These groups work to identify the problems, to come up with what they see as the solution. Then in a coordinated approach we bring it to the notice of the government agencies. We try to find out whether as part of their core business they are addressing the problem. If not, it becomes part of their core business. Finally, if it drifts through those government agency support areas, funding has been made available for special projects to deal with identifying ideas that will reduce crime.

The focus is for the solutions to be evaluated. If they are successful, we see whether they can be transplanted to other areas. Those that are not successful are re-evaluated or discarded. It is a coordinated approach, about bringing it back to where the problem is - at the grass roots level. An interesting parallel is that where once everything in Western Australian policing was centralised, it is now regionalised. We have gone full circle and realised that the seat of the problem is where crime must be addressed, and that is what we are endeavouring to do.

I will now refer to the state of crime in Western Australia and will call on acting Sergeant Gordon Smith to assist me.

The CHAIRMAN: Before we start, if members of the media would like to see what is on the

screen, they are quite welcome to move closer.

Mr LIENERT: For the benefit of the media, I had referred to the regional districts and specialist portfolios and the way the Western Australia Police Service is structured. We are now dependent on the regional chiefs of police running their districts. We provide them through two centralised support areas - crime support and traffic and operations support. I had just alluded to the various government agencies with which we are involved.

Mr LIENERT: The role of the crime operations portfolio that was touched on earlier is to investigate major and serial crime; provide specialist support to districts - coordination of statewide strategies to reduce the incidence of crime is one of our key roles; and national and international liaison with law enforcement agencies. This is a chart which gives an indicator of crime trends. The community seems to focus on what is happening today, or it is the focus of various outlets including the media. That is certainly very important because people are concerned with what is happening today. However, we need to take a step back and we have chosen to do that for the past 20 years. You will note from the chart titled "Crime Trends - 20 Years" that there is a significant increase in what we call selected crimes compared with the population increase. It is major. When looking at the causal factors of crime, one needs to understand that for the last 20 years there have been huge jumps. Figures in the annual report that I will table show that although there have been increases in some areas of crime in the last two and a half years, they have levelled out compared with the previous 20 years. We believe that is quite significant.

Crimes of concern are those that worry the community which include burglary, robbery and graffiti. However, two murder inquiries have been highlighted. The Macro task force is carrying out the Claremont investigations, is investigating the Gerard Ross murder at Rockingham. We use task force approaches for crimes. HOLMES is an acronym for Home Office Large Major Enquiries Systems which was developed after the Yorkshire Ripper inquiry in which several policing agencies were involved. We have adopted and adapted that to our own use.

I have touched on the domestic violence program in connection with the causal factors of crime. It was previously thought from a crime point of view that the role of the investigators was to investigate homicide. However, we need to look at the underpinning causes of crime. In 1995 there were 43 homicides in Western Australia, and 42 of those were solved. It is significant that 24 of those were domestic related, so they were violence in the home. In another 13 cases, the offender and victim knew each other. Therefore, in 37 of the 42 homicides solved the person was known to the victim, the victim was known to the offender. People think about the stranger crimes of 40 and wonder how to stop homicide. However, very few murders are committed by strangers. There were only 20 homicides in Western Australia 1996, and in 1997 there were 25.

The 1995 figures were not inconsistent with those of previous years. In 1995 there was a domestic violence intervention program, through government agencies working together, and the community interest groups, women's groups, and others came on board in the domestic violence action groups. The policy across the community was consistent and that became active in 1995. In 1996 some results were seen. This is only an indicator. I just paint that picture to show that when the community and police look at something and see what the problem is, we need to take

that step back and try to find out the underpinning factors. There has been a reduction in that area. Unfortunately, early this year I think there have been six murders, and most of those are in the domestic violence arena so it needs to be re-assessed. We are conscious of that. I use that as an illustration of the need to look at the underpinning factors of crime and not what is seen on the street.

Robbery involves other underpinning factors. They have been on the increase and most are committed by people who want money for drugs or people who are on drugs and who steal them. A good indicator here is that in a three month period in 1997 there were 19 armed robberies of banks and 16 were solved. The consistency is that, repeat offenders are either on bail or are parolees. Every one of the 16 robberies solved were committed by people who were recidivist offender. They were either on bail or on parole and committing other crimes. This is a real concern.

To give an analogy to the drug connection, in late 1997 three groups were arrested. Eight people were going around robbing pharmacies, delicatessens, service stations and liquor outlets. Eight people, three different gangs, unrelated - committed 30 armed robberies in a month that caused terror in our community. All were drug related.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Were they recidivists too?

Mr LIENERT: I cannot give you the answer to that. Some were. We are identifying that pattern at the moment. I was told by the armed robbery squad that 90 per cent of the bank robberies committed in the past 12 months were committed because people wanted money for drugs - for heroin.

Aggravated burglaries are those that occur when people are at home, as in the case of Jack Bendat and I highlight him. Daytime and night-time burglaries are quite blatant. Some of the recidivist offenders repeat their crimes and do not care. They are out on bail. They will be caught. It is a matter of how many crimes they can commit before they are caught. Some of them are top scale. We know the suspects for Bendat - this is not for the media - but it will take a lot of work to get them. They are more high profile but still recidivists, they are still criminals, who have been to jail, or may have just been released or are out on bail.

I look now at drug habits. Why are there so many burglaries? We were running at 60 000 burglaries in Western Australia. That figure is about 56 000, but it is still too many. When we looked at the research internationally we found that a 1996 study in the Republic of Ireland showed that 42 per cent of crimes were drug related burglaries. The Commissioner found that on his tour to Ireland and other countries late last year. The Pawnbrokers and Second-hand Dealers Act has had an effect, but it has had what some may term as a displacement effect and this is still being researched. It has not stopped many burglaries but it has made people steal for cash rather than take other goods. Offenders are trying to pick houses when people are at home and they look for the purse. I looked at four burglaries in an area near my place that were all done in one night, and everybody from that household had left their purses and handbags near the telephone on the kitchen bench when they first walked in. The burglars know that. This is why a lot of crimes are happening. They are what we call opportunistic crimes.

The Pareto principle is a strategy that the WA police crime support is taking on. The principle is that 20 per cent of people commit 80 per cent of crimes. Instead of reactively chasing and chasing, we are taking a step back, identifying the patterns, and identifying the recidivists. We believe we will make a significant impact on those areas in this 12 months.

Studies of the heroin scene in WA have shown increased availability, and the purity has been high at up to 81 per cent. The cost is between \$50 and \$100 a deal. There were 88 deaths in 1996 and 83 in 1997. Sixty-four of those deaths are recognised by the WA Drug and Alcohol Strategy Office, because they are the ones that have been confirmed through post mortem. The word poly is used in reference to these deaths when it is not heroin alone that kills. People take cannabis, barbiturates, amphetamines, alcohol, then have a hit and then their system fails and they are dead. That is our problem.

There are strategies to deal with this. We have publicised the Final Dose strategy, which is a street level strategy targeting people on the street, wheeling and dealing, using drugs. It has had its success. It is continuing at the moment. It is working at local level alliances, and we have had a number of successes in that area.

A Joint Management Group has been a bit of an innovation. A joint management group of Western Australian police, Australian Federal Police, Australian Customs Service, and the National Crime Authority was formed. The heads of those three agencies in Western Australia and the crime support head, which is myself, formed a group last year at the directions of our respective commissioners and heads for a combined law enforcement agency approach. I will come to that a bit later and give you some of the details. One of the strategies that has come out of that and has been in the press previously - this is not for the press here - is Operation Alliance. We said we would look at heroin supply routes and associated factors. That is, target entry areas into Western Australia to reduce supply routes that we have identified. We are in the process of running an operation called Operation Pipeline which focuses on those areas described. There has been significant apprehension in the last few weeks which will be publicly announced in the near future. Again not for the press, but eight kg and 0.8kg of Ecstasy were seized in two raids just to give an indication, not to mention heroin and other things have been seized.

What we did see as a strategy was the need for education, treatment and enforcement, particularly for drugs. On the one hand, the community needs to be aware of what is going on and we need to educate through our schools, peer groups, and seniors of the dangers and harms of drugs which are directly impacting on crime. Some people do need medical treatment when they are hooked and caught in that cycle. Enforcement then becomes a very important follow-up and people must know that there is a sting in the tail and that if they are going to be blatant in the eyes of the law something is going to stop and get them. Operation Alliance's strategy, if we take a step back, was to let the media and the community know that we were going to take very firm measures in law enforcement. Operation Pipeline, the follow on, is the quiet side of it and people have not learnt from the warnings we see the need to take action. Community involvement is the answer, I believe, to crime solution. There are community policing crime prevention committees set up throughout the State. Sub-groups - domestic violence action groups, the drug action groups which are now forming - may eventually all come under that one body. Until these individual groups get their special interests recognised and on the floor, it needs to be motivated at that local level.

Crime stoppers has been an important tool. The community has been responding, because it is very easy to pick up a telephone and there has been significant results in people being dobbed in for drugs and serious crimes that we did not know about. Importantly it is also an anti-corruption tool, because of the recording and mechanisms of that report it could relate to police officers or activities that are not being investigated that we thought are being investigated and somebody gets charged or arrested. PC cops is a new medium to get the police to inform the local communities about what is happening in their areas. It is a computer based program. Blue Alert is something recently started where the armed robbery squad work with the retail traders. If someone sees an armed robbery at the local deli, it is nine o'clock at night, they ring up a nominated radio station - in this case it is 94.5 - and the radio station will let a Blue Alert go. Anyone else working at nine o'clock at night who hears that there is a robbery at a delicatessen in Subiaco, the idea then is that other people in Subiaco keep a watch out. What happens generally is these opportunists do not just go in and do the robbery and shoot through, they will rob three places in a row and do not care. If people are aware and awake and alert the police, we will get there a lot quicker.

Crime tools now in use; telephone interceptions has been an absolute boon. We have seen some results which have not come to air yet but certainly will. Listening devices - still waiting for the legislation that is in Parliament at the moment. It is a strategic tool for us. There has been a parliamentary select committee formed to investigate the Misuse of Drugs Act. There are some powers that we do need. Control of weapon legislation - knives. The armed robbery squad in 1997 investigated 592 robberies - this is not all the robberies in Western Australia; it is just the ones that were investigated by the armed robbery squad. Of the 592, 306 were committed by people who had knives or sharp instruments as their weapon. Again, an opportunistic thing; people have no regard, walk in, and take a tool of the day, that is knife or baseball bat. I mentioned pawn brokers and second-hand dealers. Proactive targeting of criminals - this is critical. Strong government support, a committed competent work force, active participation of community in crime prevention and control. Participation by the community is not turning up for cups of tea and having sandwiches; it is having a say in what is affecting their area, it is about mobilising the community. If it is hurting in a person's area, they should get up and say it, meet with their local police, come along to the committees, and identify the real issues that are bothering them; is it house breaks; is it wheelies on their front lawn, whatever it is. The people that police that area will respond to those issues. A tripartite approach to the crime prevention is critical. The first approach is about police, courts and corrections; the second one is the situation; and the third one is causal factors of crime. The outcome - to improve the quality of life of all Western Australians which we all aim for, I am sure.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to think that you have nearly concluded your presentation.

Mr LIENERT: I have three pages which I will give you as a hand out if I may, and it may assist your terms of reference more directly regarding the crime research and evaluation. That enumerates about 20 areas we deal with in crime research, so perhaps I can table that rather than go through all those. I do not have copies for the remainder of the committee at this stage. I refer the committee to the point about people who are involved in crime research and evaluation and processes. It is quite a comprehensive list because, as I said earlier, there is the global approach; the national approach; and the local approach. In the WA police service we have policy, planning and evaluation; research and development; crimes support. I have not touched on our community services branch role because I understand that Mr Max Jones is here at 11

o'clock.

One initiative recently created by our commissioner was to coordinate the various research groups in Western Australia. At a meeting they had on 26 February this year, there was a group of people who impacted upon that. It was the Edith Cowan University justice studies and police studies aspect. The crime research unit of Western Australia; Murdoch and Curtin - I still have to go back and check my notes - all have interest in research and evaluation of crime programs and of course we have a very strong interest in these types of things. That was initiated by the commissioner to bring these people together so we have a common denominator to evaluate research programs. Something that we need to continue improving is evaluation of programs. We get a lot of programs and good ideas. We need to coordinate them as a community and importantly we need to have genuine evaluation of them; not just from one perspective but from a combined perspective, so it represents the community's greatest concerns. I will not go through those dot points. I can if you wish, but they are there.

We require strategies for an over-representation of certain categories of people in the justice system; that is the indigenous, the young and repeat offenders. We see strategies are required for victims of crime, particularly domestic partners, indigenous people, young people, and importantly - which this committee is about and we certainly welcome this because we look forward to the outcomes - is identifying the causal links between drug abuse and crime incidence. On page two are a number of crime contributors, some of which I touched upon in drug dependency. I also touch on overindulgence of alcohol; family violence; opportunism, truancy; the broken window theory which is a theory by Wilson and Kelling in 1982. We see it in the northern suburbs with graffiti. We need to put those fires out, for want of a term. The New York City police saw the broken window and did not worry about it today; another one got broken tomorrow well, OK, they will get around to fixing it. Eventually the building had all broken windows and people say Oh, that is a bit of a slum tenement. They forget about that and one day it will get knocked down. People would cohabit in there and from there they would go and commit crimes and everything would become untidy; it looked as though people did not care, That became a bit like a cancer and carried on in to other crimes. What this means is we must look after small issues before they get out of hand. This was a theory by two criminologists which is being picked up by people throughout the world and is something that we certainly do adopt now.

Alienation is a problem with individuals, some ethnic groups of the community and Aborigines, particularly in their own communities. There needs to be an acceptance that there is a number of tribes within the Aborigine community. They are not one group; it is easy to label them as one group but within that there is a whole set of structures, tribes, family environment, hierarchical chain, acceptance of the old and new. We need to understand those issues before we talk about strategies for crime solutions. If we see Aborigines as victims of crime, particularly in the field of domestic violence and homicides, that concerns us.

Mr LIENERT: I touch on the National Crime Prevention Council of America points of the need to create a community and to reclaim the parks. I understand through Mr Kennedy that this Committee has been to Tasmania. I believe that members may have heard a chap called Jack Calhoun. I do not know what sort of presentation he gave there, but I saw him in 1995. He is the type of person we could bring out here to help with our coordination and strategies. He has looked at the crime solution in America. He is not alone; another person called Terry Modglin looked at the drug problem in America and all the strategies that are working or not working.

Seeing the huge impact of drugs - not the use of and addiction to drugs which are bad enough in themselves - but the consequential flow on to crime in our community, it is essential that we look at those issues and those causes.

The CHAIRMAN: If you could draw your general comments to a close; the committee would like to concentrate on those specifics.

Mr LIENERT: I have got other dot points which I will not go through. A recommended solution is that government agencies, community, local government and police must work together on crime. We need to gain community acceptance because crime solution lies with the community. Crime is not a police or government problem but a community one. It can be resolved with government and police support. I suggest that an overarching government policy statement is probably there when we look at working together for the sake of the community. That should be the approach of government and everybody. It is about improving the quality of life. Mobilising our community to reduce crime is not merely a strategy but an investment in our safety.

The other points may help you in your deliberations. They probably contain some strategies I would not like to see public and some that maybe I would. We give figures where we refer to strategies on page 4 of the document, which I handed to you, where we refer to drug strategies in enforcement. At (j) and (g) we refer to the number of identified users and the number of people who interrelate in the core group of heroin users in Western Australia. We have a strategy of identifying most of the users in the core group who are the distributors of drugs in Western Australia. We are in the process of identifying the extent of the use of heroin in Western Australia. One point in the document I would highlight is where we identified one heroin offender first arrested in 1988 who has been arrested 19 times on various charges relating to heroin. The penalty this person received on the first court appearance in 1988 was greater than the person last got despite 18 subsequent convictions. That person has been arrested three times in the past four weeks through what we call proactive intelligence led policing in targeting those people and is now restricted in prison, not on bail with the ability to form a dossier on people.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your presentation. I do appreciate the wide area of influence and the number of objectives. Will you provide the committee with a more detailed description of the research capability in the Police Force and also either your view or the police view of the key areas of offending that are impacting at the moment on the Western Australian community?

Mr LIENERT: I have here another document, which I will table, which really relates to the question you have just asked. Page 1 refers to some of the overview that I have provided of the policing group. The important thing on page 2 is the research and development into that area and the areas that interact and to which it interrelates. Then on page 3 are the major research programs in which that group is involved, which are probably about 10 or 12, and the future directions in research. That carries on to page 4.

I want to go back to your questions. I think your first question was what is impacting on crime. Perhaps I will answer the questions in order. I did touch on that. I might add an adjunct to that document which I gave you. If I may refer you to that first handout on page 2, it indicates that

crime contributors are drug dependency and drugs usage. Alcohol overindulgence is involved in certain areas, which then lead to a breakdown in the community, family violence and abuse in the home environment. Are you asking for strategies to assist or to identify the problems?

The CHAIRMAN: My question really relates to this: If we have identified this type of offending as being of major concern, what research, if any, has been undertaken in the Police Service to look at the causes that either contribute to or lead to these types of crimes? Do you have other research being undertaken by other bodies or do you not look at causation but research programs or responses only after the event?

Mr LIENERT: We are moving into that field of researching the underpinning causes, and have been for the past 12 months or so. That research is one example. Our research and development group is liaising with the University of Western Australia crime research group and others to look at not only the correlation between drug use and crime but also the underpinning factors of why people are at a given area at a given time to commit crimes. That is being developed through the partnership of that group with university groups, such as the UWA crime research unit which is chaired by Professor Richard Harding and David Indermaur. If I have it, I will give to you a list of names in those contact groups with which we interrelate. We have not been able to chase the underpinning factors down as far as we would like to go in more recent years but research into the underpinning factors is being developed as a result of the formation of the research and development unit in the Crime Support Branch. We have identified the need for community involvement and ownership. We are talking about parents at the schools among other things. The indicators include truancy and alienation. I do not think that is quite the question.

The CHAIRMAN: The purpose of my question was really to ascertain what type of research was being undertaken by the research unit. Is it into the causes of crime itself; is it into the programs that the police are delivering; is there another set of criteria? I have looked briefly through the information you have provided. It would appear that most of the research has been undertaken into programs that the police are implementing, as opposed to causes before the offending takes place. Is that a fair summation?

Mr LIENERT: Yes. Another impacting factor on that is more of a national nature. We have what we call the National Police Research Unit. That belongs to all of the Australian Police Services through the national common policing services. The unit has a series of programs to evaluate performance from a national perspective. Each year through the Australasian Crime Conference, which involves all of the heads of crime throughout Australasia, including New Zealand, and through the Australian Commissioners Conference, we give the unit the charter of things that we want it to research. It looks at value adding programs, importantly looking at causal factors of crime, but we will define that. That is an ongoing factor. The unit is based in Adelaide, South Australia. We are in the process of developing further links with the Australian Institute of Criminology which, though Adam Greycar, researches factors and occasionally writes articles on its research. Interestingly, quite often some of those come from left field, because it picks a particular theory or line. It is not a global approach because we cannot do it globally. The MPAU gets specifications, but not the AIC. The Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence also gets charters from Australian police heads. It has looked at the extent and concerns with crime and drugs in the Australian illicit drug report which it has released. That gives an indication of the extent of the problems. Our follow on strategies we develop through our own research and

development policy and planning through environmental scans. Those are the underpinning factors. So internally we have our policy planning research and development look at those; externally we interlink with the universities, MPRU, ABCI and AIC.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to paraphrase a comment you made along the lines of identifying problems at the local level and then encouraging or enlisting the support of the local community to find solutions. However, it would appear that the research and focus of research on causes, if done locally or at a national level, would not necessarily relate to a local level decision making process. How do local communities therefore receive or research problems to gain information about causes? Do they have an avenue through the Police Service to gain research about causes of crime at a local level?

Mr LIENERT: Yes, this is particularly through our community police and crime prevention councils and you will get more of that from Mr Jones shortly. Our CPCPCs have access to the data and information of crimes, occurrences and incidents and what they are about, and a profile of what happens in their district, and that is why they need to work with the police.

In 1995 we asked various councils what their crime problem was. The local government of Stirling told us it was graffiti. The Perth City Council told us it was 13 and 14 year olds in Northbridge using drugs. Bunbury told us it was house burglary. Busselton told us it was stealing from motor cars. What that indicates is that different things worry people at different levels and different localities and that is why local strategies are needed. It is not just crime that we are talking about; it is the perception of the fear of crime and that is huge. It is even greater than the occurrence of crime itself. What might happen; what will happen; am I safe going on the train tonight? To use an analogy, Ross Tomasini, our media liaison officer, met with 40 cadet journalists recently. He asked them, "How many people are frightened of travelling on public transport or the train at night-time?" Twenty put their hand up. He asked, "How many of you travel on public transport or the train at night-time?" Three put their hand up and they were a different three to the other 20. That says a lot about how people perceive the impact of crime and that is just one analogy.

To add to the point that you raised - local problem solving - I think it is a beautiful strategy that is in use in Merredin. This is all about this regionalisation, devolution of power at the local level. You will hear a lot about it, it is important. Merredin had a problem; they had bored Aboriginal kids who did not know what to do with themselves. They asked themselves how do we achieve our goals at creative football clinics. They invited Orrel McGuire and Chris Lewis to talk to the Nukarni and the Merredin kids. In their language they talked football, talked about career aspirations and things that they could achieve. The Merredin Police Station found that many of the Aboriginal communities in those localities participate in the football activities, irrespective of whether McGuire or Lewis is there, because they want to belong. The police have noted - and it does not mean it is these children - that there has been a reduction of crimes of vandalism, burglary and other associated crimes in the Merredin district. That is what we refer to as local problems. Your question was how do these over arching things, the big things, fit with the little things. That is the critical support mechanisms are in place to ensure that through regionalisation and crime support is provided. At a macro level we target the known criminals who are going to repeat, but at the districts, the police look after a bit of that, but also the reactive things that are worrying the people, so we have got a double pronged approach to attacking crime.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: If you handle the broken window theory, how do you stop displacement in the overall metropolitan area? I find in my area that when we set one program up, we just displace crime. Have you any programs in place for that?

Mr LIENERT: We have identified that too. Our State Commander of Operations, Mr Bruce Brennan, looks after all operational policing aspects in Western Australia. He has two direct interviews each month with each chief of police and each superintendent in his team. They must work with the community to report on crime statistics, the strategies they are using, the community initiatives of involvement, the user support, and they are budgeting and other things in how they are using their people to the best effect. If we have an intense program at Midland, we find it is a bit quiet there; it is a bit like the balloon effect: Cannington now has an increase. That is why a coordinated approach is needed and that is why we have these monthly meetings with the state commander. We want all people at all times working on commonalities because that still is just law enforcement we are talking about; it is still a very important issue of putting that down. What we need and recommend in the community groups and particularly the schools that become involved - and this is Jack Calhoun's point - is that we must create a community. If we decline to keep an open park at Midlands because we had problems with people in the park who were doing break and enters, we must turn the park into a playground where people can go. We must fill it up; we cannot leave spaces empty. This is the theory of creating a community. It is not just removing the graffiti; it is creating an alternative that people own this and have some pride. I spoke to a couple of school teachers, at private and state levels, and they say the biggest impact they have is at parent meetings. They come to the meetings and say their kid is doing this and that what can they do. A common theme is parents need guidance on what to advise their children.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: How would you sheet the causes back?

Mr LIENERT: It comes back to the causes factor because parents do not want to say no to the kids. This is the feedback from schools: We have some inside information - my wife is a school teacher in a local area and my daughter is a school teacher in a private area and they swap notes. I was on the school board of Wesley for ten years and I was the P&C president of Dianella for a number of years - I was involved in that school for ten years - so one's interlink with schools is quite interesting. A worrying factor is that teachers often say that they will pick a six, eight or nine year old as a potential trouble maker for the future. What support is given then to either help that child or the parent or that family environment to make sure that those people do not come into the criminal justice system in another six to seven years down the road. That is one of our challenges; it is one thing that we have identified when you say research and evaluation. If an eleven year old kid keeps breaking a window; an answer could be to keep locking him up, but that does not end the problem. Tomorrow there will be another eleven year old and the next day there will another eleven year old, so it is not the problem. A crime occurrence is the manifest sore that we have observed. The solution lay in why are eleven year olds coming through and breaking windows? That is what our research is saying; they will keep flowing. The booklet with the state crime prevention strategies identifies those issues. We have done that research and it is shown that these people, these certain elements of our community, will keep coming through and keep doing certain things. We as a whole group need to identify them and say that is what we need to target. We have identified the five biggest factors impacting on crime in Western Australia at the moment regarding the local solution: Drugs, household burglaries, assault, robberies and motor

vehicle theft. From a policing perspective, we are saying to all police officers that they are being judged, accountable, whatever, and what are they doing about those big five; meeting with the community, forming strategic alliances, meeting with the schools, doing all these sorts of strategies and we want to see where they are going. We will see emerging strategies, we will see that ballooning effect that you have just mentioned because it is very real, but if we see a blanket approach to it, and importantly with the community - I do not use the term community loosely, that is the global word - but the people must want to get involved, they need to get involved, that have to get involved. That is about mobilising the community, it is simply not good enough to leave it to the Government or the police.

The CHAIRMAN: We have a number of questions to ask, so could you please keep your responses reasonably precise.

Mrs ROBERTS: I was interested in some of your earlier comments in which you referred to the slogans "lock it or lose it" and "make it risky" and so forth. When speaking about the causes of crime and the reasons that juveniles commit crimes, other witnesses have made the same point. They said that a juvenile would take into consideration whether he or she will get away with the crime, far more so than any penalty. In fact research referred to in an earlier hearing indicated that juveniles took very little cognisance of the penalties for crimes. In most instances, they took cognisance of the chance of getting caught. You have referred to five main crimes which include house burglaries, car theft and the like, in which many juveniles are involved. It has been interesting to look at the wide variety of causes. If we accept this evidence, surely the Police Service has a major responsibility for reducing the clearance rates for home burglary, and so on, because with only about a 10 per cent clearance rate in that area, the average juvenile will not perceive very highly the risk of being caught. Therefore, the juvenile will be more inclined to commit the crime, if we accept what we have heard in earlier hearings.

Mr LIENERT: I agree. The fear of getting caught is a great deterrent. People do not commit an offence in order to be caught. They think they can get away with it. Proactive intelligence-led policing is identifying the recidivist kids, not the first offenders who may get caught. I will come back to the cautioning system in a moment. The crime support unit has identified the top 100 criminals who live in Perth; many of them are juveniles, and we will target them. You are right; our role is to increase the clear up rate of crimes. We cannot, as a policing agency, control the crime rate. That is where we need the community, and everyone else. The clear up rate is our business, and that is where we need the "lock it or lose it" programs, to work with other people, and to have police attendance when it is needed. It becomes an ongoing, revolving door syndrome, because if we do not take that step back to the causal factors of crime we will be forever charging and locking up people, and we will not find a solution.

We can make large inroads. The evidence in New York and around the world is that a very strong police presence - which the community wants - can make a difference. We are targeting people. Some people regard the cannabis cautioning system as a soft action, but it is not. Research in South Australia indicates that only 30 per cent of first offenders re-offend within 12 months. The next time they are cautioned and do not go to court, but they are told if they do not undergo a treatment program, they will be brought before the court. The idea is to try to bring people before the court.

You are spot on. Penalties are just a consequence. Fear of being caught is the key issue. How we deal with offenders after they are caught, is also important, because we do not want to be wasting a lot of time and resources on someone who will not return; once they have the smack or have been caught that is enough. But not for recidivist offenders. Treatment, control and incarceration may be needed.

Mrs ROBERTS: The chairman raised the question of research. I note that in the paper that you tabled reference is made to research being done on private policing and the impact of the relinquishment of police responsibility to private enterprise; and the integrity and accountability of private investigators and policing groups. That is a trend that I have noticed. What research is going on within the Police Service and is private policing the way to go? If so, are those concerns being addressed in that research?

Mr LIENERT: Both locally and nationally private policing is being assessed and evaluated. Private policing is used in a number of areas in Perth for security purposes, such as in Belmont where the local police sergeant meets with the private security people every morning and tells them about occurrences around the place. They become the eyes and ears for the locality. That is another function that local government has decided to take on. It is a process that we must monitor and evaluate. There are two factors here, and it comes back to the remarks by Mrs van de Klashorst about the displacement theory. You must also be conscious of the Johannesburg syndrome: Anyone who has been to Johannesburg would know about the high walls, and security and video systems, but I do not think we want people to have a siege mentality. We must avoid that. It is an issue of accountability, and we know that people are pushing for private policing. People want private security people to be fingerprinted. If they are in the neighbourhood we want to know who they are, and if they go to a crime scene we will be able to eliminate their fingerprints very quickly.

Research is ongoing. It is interesting to look at world trends. The USA is commercially driven. New South Wales is very strong on private policing and security. It is an area that must be monitored and evaluated, because ultimately it is what the community wants and needs. If the community thinks the system is intrusive it will say so. That is why we consider that part of our strategy for devolution and regionalisation and the community becoming involved is for the community not only to highlight the problems but also to indicate how we should be servicing the community. What is affecting one area may be more important to the local community than what is happening, say, in Busselton. That is an outline of the philosophy of our approach.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: You talked about education as a prevention, and the involvement of the joint intelligence unit. I have been a teacher for many years and I know that one usually teaches at the point of need. How valuable is police work in schools as a prevention model, and what is the depth of that work?

Mr LIENERT: Max Jones will answer that question in more depth.

The CHAIRMAN: We thank you for that a broad overview. I am conscious of the fact that Superintendent Jones is the next witness.

We have talked about research functions but we have not dealt with the detail. Can you or

someone else in the service provide the committee with information directly relating to the research that has been undertaken on the offending that has been deemed to be of concern in Western Australia. I think you highlighted five areas. I am interested in the research into the causes of crime or the contributing factors. Can you also provide information on the evaluation of programs. I note in the crime strategy and a number of other programs, reference is made to evaluation. The submission states that all funded programs are being evaluated, which is a positive move. The committee would benefit greatly from information relating to the evaluation of all programs. We would like to receive some information about each program in those areas, or programs relating to those areas - whether they are reducing or preventing offences. We would also like information about the objectives of each funded program, so that we can gain an understanding of that.

Mr LIENERT: I would like a list of those requests.

The CHAIRMAN: We will provide that. Is there any reason that the information could not be provided?

Mr LIENERT: No. It is a matter of itemising the request. It is a positive move.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank-you very much for your presentation and the information you have given to the committee. I presume that if we need to clarify any information or feel that you should elaborate on it, you will be happy to assist us.

Mr LIENERT: I would be pleased to do that, and I am sure the Commissioner of Police would not like us to forgo that opportunity.

[The witness retired]

JONES, MR MAXWELL JOHN,
Superintendent, Community Services Command,
WA Police Service,
8 Burton Street,
Cannington, examined:

The CHAIRMAN: Have you read and do you understand the notes at the bottom of the witness form that you have just signed?

Mr JONES: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you received a copy of the terms of reference of the committee and had an opportunity to read them?

Mr JONES: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any issues that you would like to raise in clarification or otherwise of the terms of reference.

Mr JONES: I have read them and I do not have any problem with understanding them.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you received a copy of the letter indicating the purpose of the hearings and what the committee is hoping to do to establish an understanding of crime and its underlying causes before we proceed further with identifying and processing programs?

Mr JONES: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have any issue or questions you would like to raise as a result of that letter or what we are seeking to establish through our hearings?

Mr JONES: No, not really. There were a couple of issues that I thought I would speak about if it is appropriate.

The CHAIRMAN: I will give you an opportunity of doing that in providing the committee with a brief background of your function within the Police Service and how that relates to crime prevention and the work that the committee is doing. I invite you to give the committee a brief insight into that area and other issues that you would like to bring to the committee's attention.

Mr JONES: For the last couple of years I have spent 15 or 16 months in the Mirrabooka police district. I got back in touch with operational general duties policing. Prior to that I was in the crime command, and prior to that training in personnel for a number of years. In November last year I was moved across to the Community Services Command, which provides a statewide service for a variety of functions that were all explained fairly well in the paper that was provided by the Community Services Command. The majority of those functions are all reasonably

proactive. Victims of crime may be an exception because that comes along after the event. In the main, programs and efforts are being made in a proactive sense to try to prevent crime from occurring. If the committee likes, I could go through a couple of issues that I thought the committee might -

The CHAIRMAN: I want to give you the opportunity to provide information or some background for the committee that helps you to put into perspective, first, the information you are providing and, second, the detail about which you want the committee to be aware.

Mr JONES: My perspective of crime prevention is that basically there are three elements necessary for a crime to occur. The committee may have been apprised of these already. They are the ability of a person, the desire of a person, and the opportunity for a person to commit the crime. If one of those is missing, it is impossible virtually for a crime to occur. My impression is that, in this State we tend to concentrate most of our crime prevention efforts on reducing the opportunity for the crime to occur and to a certain extent perhaps upon the ability of the offender to commit it by putting iron bars on windows and locking things in safes and so on. That may reduce the ability of some less serious offenders.

We are not doing a lot of work with the desire to commit the offence. However, that is an area into which we should put a lot more effort. In my view, the desire may be reduced: Firstly, early intervention at the childhood stage and the inculcation of suitable values and standards of behaviour; and, secondly - this may sound a little Jurassic in some people's minds - by the prospect of real punishment, which is a realistic option. Of course, while a person is incarcerated, he or she does not have the ability to commit crimes, nor the opportunity. However, that is probably a rather negative way of looking at incarceration. The reduction of a person's desire to commit crime would be the real benefit that is likely to come out of incarceration.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not mention it at the start but the media are able to attend the hearings this morning. If you object to the media presence, please raise them now.

Mr JONES: I am quite happy. The one misgiving that I have about the reduction of the opportunity for people to commit crime is something called target hardening which involves us putting bars on our windows, encouraging people to put security lights on their homes, and so on. The reason I have misgivings about that approach is that I saw the extremes of that in Papua New Guinea in the three years I was there between 1988 and 1991. Provided the occupiers of homes could afford it, they go to the extremes of target hardening by surrounding their homes with cyclone fences with razor wire curled around the top. Some of these homes have automatic gates and security lighting that remains on all night. Some of them have three or four vicious dogs - Dobermans, Rottweilers or Alsatians - and some have guards on patrol all night within the compound. Others have windows that are covered by heavy grills. I know of an instance in which the bedroom of one house that was owned by the Australian Government and occupied by one of its officers was lined with steel as a safe room. It had a hard to get through door on it so that if people got through all of the outer perimeters, the occupiers of the house could retreat to the bedroom. The owner of one house that I was at for a barbeque explained to me that there was a trapdoor under his house with a ladder to the ground in case the house was set on fire. Some houses have panic alarms and that sort of thing. These houses were virtual fortresses because people had hardened the target. It involved reducing the opportunity and the ability of people to

commit crime. Perth is moving towards that because people are taking more and more precautions along those lines. We have not gone to that extreme, obviously, although I would not be surprised if some homeowners in Perth have gone to similar an extent. The result is that, in Port Moresby and the other main towns in Papua New Guinea, it is a very unpleasant environment. People do not feel very safe driving around Port Moresby because they can see all of these fortresses with either wire fences and razor wire, or iron fences 7 or 8 feet high topped with razor wire and so on. It is not a very good environment and I would not like to see us go to that extent as far as target hardening and crime prevention is concerned. Neighbourhood Watch is one. Criticisms have been raised about whether Neighbourhood Watch works. It is very difficult to use hard facts and figures to prove it does, or does not. On one occasion I looked at a map of all the crimes that occurred in the Mirrabooka district over a month. I noticed in one spot very few offences had occurred; only two or three burglaries at the most. By sheer coincidence the following night I was attending a Neighbourhood Watch function and was talking with the people who were the suburb managers for that organisation for the Karrinyup area. My curiosity was aroused. I spoke to these people about what was different about this suburb. It seemed the only difference was that there was a very strong Neighbourhood Watch organisation in Karrinyup which had almost full membership. People were very active. The suburb manager and coordinators were doing a very good, proactive job to get people enrolled and involved in it.

It may be a coincidence; however, when such a difference shows up, compared with what is happening in other suburbs, we naturally think Neighbourhood Watch makes a difference. Of course, that was for only one month. The picture for other months may be altogether different. I get the distinct impression that if there is a strong membership of Neighbourhood Watch, there will be less crime. That is where people take notice of what is going on around them; have the Neighbourhood Watch sign out the front of the property; look after each other's house while the neighbour is on holiday or at work; mark their property with their driver's licence number; and take reasonable steps to ensure the house is well secured. When people are doing those sorts of things, it makes Neighbourhood Watch successful. Sometimes people say that Neighbourhood Watch covers their street, but there is nothing to indicate that. When the residents do nothing, other than to say they are members of Neighbourhood Watch and receive an information brochure every couple of months, it will not work.

In light of that, I encourage the state coordinating committee of Neighbourhood Watch to try to get a 100 per cent participation in various streets. We are still working on that. Hopefully we will give some encouragement to people. Perhaps putting up a sign indicating there is a 100 per cent participation in Neighbourhood Watch in certain streets might provide more motivation.

I have already mentioned early intervention. There is a lot to be said about that. A recent youth conference was held in Fremantle on 2 and 3 April. The senior sergeant who works with me went to the conference. He told me that he got this information from the conference: Youth want a place to hang out, where they can associate without fear of being picked on by the police - as they perceived it - or by other youths and being assaulted. There is not a lot of opportunity for that. I was pleased to hear that because that line of thinking is congruent with what we are doing in the development of a new police and citizen's youth club in Geraldton. That is in the early planning stages now; however, we will make a determined effort to involve the youth in Geraldton in having their say about what they would like to see in such a youth club. Based on what has happened in Queensland, it will include some sort of a cafe specially for youth. They will have

somewhere to go where they can feel very comfortable and, hopefully, have a bit of interaction with a police officer there, and not be bored to the extent that some of them might do unlawful things just to fill in their time.

The CHAIRMAN: Earlier in the hearing we had an overview presentation provided to us. I wonder whether we can deal with some of the specific issues that are either contained in the submission or relate to your comments.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I am aware the media is here. What do you think of the reports by the media that often the perception is not the reality in many cases and people are locking themselves in their homes and setting up barriers? Where do you see the media's role in this?

Mr JONES: I have not really given much thought to the media role. It is important that people take some action to reduce the opportunity for offences to occur. Some people still need to be made very much aware of that. There is still a significant attitude among members of the community that it will not happen to them, and they are not taking sufficient care of their own environment. Just this morning I attended a meeting during which a member of the community told me that the previous night she went to visit friends in Fremantle. She knocked on the front door and there was no answer. She tried the door and it was open. She walked in and called out, "Hello, is anyone there?" She walked right through the house and found her friend out the back on the patio. It may be that they were expecting her, but she felt very uncomfortable. Perhaps they normally have their door open. I feel there is a lot of apathy until an offence occurs to either someone or a neighbour, and then people react accordingly.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Are you saying that in many ways we can see the media as a very positive influence on those types of activities?

Mr JONES: We certainly can. The media - television, radio or newspaper - can get through to more people in the community better than anything else, such as, a police presence, public meetings and so on. The media has a very important role to play.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I am just trying to built that into crime prevention.

Mrs ROBERTS: You referred to the ability, the desire and the opportunity to commit the crime. What work does your branch do in looking at the causes of crime? Do you follow up on that problem with other units of the police service?

Mr JONES: We do not appear to conduct a lot of in-depth research on the causes of crime. We tend to rely on what has been generated elsewhere. The Crime Research Centre and the police research centre at Edith Cowan University have done some work in that regard. Some of the causes of crime include child poverty; poor living conditions; inconsistent and uncaring parents; childhood trauma, such as physical and sexual abuse; family breakdown; racism and other forms of discrimination; difficulties in schools; friends engaged in criminal behaviour; living conditions involving alcohol, drugs and other substance abuse. Those are fairly typical of the factors that contribute to the causes of crime. Members will see that we try to address those at the lower end of the pyramid on the chart, and that is probably the biggest challenge, not just for the police but

the community generally. To a certain extent we are still in the early stages, in my area, in trying to address some of these underlying causes of crime. They are big ticket items and are not easy to address in the long term. However, we are trying to do what we can.

In relation to the drugs aspect, we have the Constable Care puppet show which we heartily support, even though it is a private organisation. That can go a long way in trying to steer kids off that path of thinking that drugs are okay. The GURD - that is the word "drug" spelt backwards - program is in the early stages of development. That will provide a range of free products, at a fair cost to us, to encourage kids to have a life without drugs, alcohol and cigarettes. The PCYCs are trying to get kids away from the normal environment and into a situation where they can get involved in sport and other recreational pursuits. We are making some headway and the PCYCs have been doing that for a long time in some respects. They are likely to undergo a little change in the not too distant future to be directed more towards crime prevention and early intervention, rather than just providing a recreational facility.

Mrs ROBERTS: I have examined the submission. How do you feel the support works? Has that task been made more difficult by DELTA and the devolution of the service? What are your view on the need for specialist training for police officers in the units such as the family and victims of crime units, seniors, gay and lesbians, or whatever. Surely police need specialist skills and people with special attributes for much of that policing work? Does the way DELTA operates mitigate against that or enhance it?

Mr JONES: It does not mitigate against it. The devolution process in the districts has been a very good thing. Formerly, general duties police officers, including officers in charge of the police districts or regions as they were, tended to leave many of the crime prevention issues to the specialist areas. For example, a crime prevention officer at Fremantle reported to my area. The same applied to prevention officers wherever they might be. The district or regional officer did not take a great deal of interest in it. Now that that person reports to him, he is taking greater responsibility for crime prevention issues.

The same goes for school based policing and the officer in charge of the Police and Citizens Youth Club. Those officers now report to the district officer. Community services still provide administrative guidance and facilitation where required to keep them up to date and to provide training. Crime prevention officers come into our offices or a convenient place in the metropolitan area or the State and, where possible, keep them up to date with what is going on.

No doubt special people should be involved in dealing with gay and lesbian liaison and domestic violence victims of crime. The substantive gay and lesbian liaison officer was carefully selected eight or nine months ago for that role because he was seen as someone who could get along with that community in a very constructive way. I do not know what training he had. He was moved aside recently because it is a rather difficult job at times. We have done some interchange and a woman from the juvenile justice area has stepped in as the acting sergeant. That is partly because it will enable us to pay a little more attention to the lesbian community from a female point of view. She is doing very well. A lot of liaison is involved, not so much specialist knowledge and skills. It is more the ability of the person to be able to get along with people, particularly people in special areas.

Wherever we can provide training opportunities we do. I am always on the lookout for seminars or short courses which anyone from within my command can attend and gain from. That happens all the time. Towards the end of last week there was a session on domestic violence for people to attend. Last week a three-day course was held on crime prevention through an environmental design approach, which a number of people attended. We are very much aware of the need to increase skills.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I was a teacher before I went mad and became a politician. We learned in teaching that we should teach to the point of need; that is, teach the message that is more relevant to the stage they may be at. What programs are available from the police in the school regarding early intervention? How are the police generally interacting with the schools? Do you have any evaluation of the programs being run in the schools to try to stop people from ultimately becoming part of the justice system?

Mr JONES: Our approach is not structured to the point it should be. We have made some inroads through the school based officers, Constable Care and the GURD and that sort of thing. We have not conducted any evaluations because I suppose the educative efforts are not structured to allow an analysis of any differences in the behaviour of the children.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Obviously it would be a long time before you realised the value of that resource.

Mr JONES: That is true. We know from a study of responses to the Constable Care puppet show that the children retain far greater quantities of what information is passed across because of the way it is done.

Mr JONES: Much more should be done on intervention in schools. However, it cannot all come from the police. There are not enough officers to be able to provide extra people in the schools. That is one of the difficulties with the DARE program which is fairly popular in the United States. I am told that program involves police far too much and not enough parents or school teachers. We must have that re-enforcement almost on a weekly basis as part of the school program. The police are not able to provide that.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Do you have any input into the primary school curriculum through social studies or any involvement with the Education Department in writing that curriculum?

Mr JONES: I am not aware of that. However, work is done within the Education Department about protective behaviours. It is built in as part of the physical and health education curriculum. I do not know whether the police had any specific input into that.

The CHAIRMAN: The submission contains reference to a car park security program. The first objective is to have the working group research and identify types of offences committed in car parks and their causal factors. What research was undertaken and what causal factors were identified as a result of that research?

Mr JONES: I cannot answer that; it was before my time.

The CHAIRMAN: Will you please provide that information to the committee?

Mr JONES: Certainly.

The CHAIRMAN: You referred to the success of Neighbourhood Watch and the fear of crime. I see under Neighbourhood Watch the first objective is to reduce the fear of crime in the community. What research has been done of which you are aware on the causes of fear of crime in the community? Can you elaborate on the contributing factors and causes that would allow programs and activities to reduce the fear of crime in the community?

Mr JONES: I do not know what research was conducted. I have no doubt that media coverage has contributed to fear of crime in the community because it informs the public of what is happening. I guess ignorance is bliss. If the public were not aware of what was happening they would probably be much less fearful.

The CHAIRMAN: Assuming some research has been done into the causes of the fear of crime, how would you describe the process of reducing the fear of crime through Neighbourhood Watch?

Mr JONES: Again, it is informal. Most neighbourhood watch areas or suburbs have their own newsletter in which they indicate precisely what the crime levels are and when the offences have occurred in a given month or two months, and that helps people to appreciate that burglaries are not occurring in their area to a huge extent, or that home invasions do not occur in their area. They realise, therefore, that the reality of crime occurring in their suburb is much less than they envisage. When people see crimes reported overall, statewide the impression may be that all sorts of horrible crimes are happening all of the time just around the corner, and that is not the case.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps the converse is also true. I live in an area with a high incidence of crime; therefore, my anxiety rises, simply because of that information. Perhaps the lack of information allows us to live in bliss. Am I correct in assuming from your perspective and with all your knowledge that the Police Service has not conducted any research into the causes of the fear of crime?

Mr JONES: Not that I am aware of. The policy, planning and research area has conducted surveys about the perceptions of people in the community, but I have not seen those reports and I do not know exactly what they show.

The CHAIRMAN: In your capacity in community services, have you investigated whether any research has been undertaken into the causes of the fear of crime; and, if so, can you provide the committee with copies of the results of that research?

Mr JONES: Certainly

The CHAIRMAN: I assume from reading the submission on the state crime prevention strategy that if we are to have a crime reduction strategy, we have identified the issues that we need to address in order to reduce crime. Do these issues relate to the causes of crime or to the types of offences and how those offences are carried out?

Mr JONES: I do not think I can answer that question with any accuracy.

The CHAIRMAN: Could you arrange for that information to be provided to the committee, through either yourself or someone else in the Police Service?

Mr JONES: Can you repeat that question?

The CHAIRMAN: I am making the assumption that in order for a state crime prevention strategy to be successful, the causes of crime have been identified, although perhaps the strategy relies on the types of offences that are committed and the way in which they are committed, as opposed to simply the causes that contribute to the offences. Is the Police Service trying to prevent crime from occurring by responding quickly? It seemed to be clear from your general overview that the Police Service is looking at reducing the opportunity for crime by encouraging target-hardening and encouraging people to take responsibility for themselves. I gained the impression that the Police Service is looking at how it responds when offending occurs; for example, having task forces go to certain areas to respond to those offences. What I cannot ascertain is whether the state strategy is based on research into the causes of those offences, rather than on how to catch the offenders or react in a more appropriate or speedier way.

Mr JONES: Okay.

The CHAIRMAN: With regard to the Victims of Crime Unit, in the evidence that we have taken so far there seems to be a consistent view that a victim of crime has a greater potential to become a victim again, particularly when talking about burglary or, in some cases, assault. Would you share that view?

Mr JONES: The research carried out in England shows that once a premise has been broken into, it is likely to be broken into again, because people are creatures of habit. They know where things are. We have seen that happen here also. Some offenders are smart enough to realise that if the video has been taken, an insurance claim will be lodged and a brand new video will be there in about a month's time, so that is a good time to go back and do it again.

The CHAIRMAN: In your experience, or from the research that has been undertaken in Western Australia, if a burglary is committed in Western Australia, is there a high potential for that home to be burgled again in the future?

Mr JONES: I cannot say with certainty the extent to which that happens.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Police Service in Western Australia have the capacity to provide advice to victims of crime, particularly of crimes such as home burglary, on how they can prevent a recurrence or try to identify the avenues through which the offender gained entry or the contributing factors which caused the crime, or does it rely on the media or other sources to provide that information?

Mr JONES: It depends on the constable who attends the burglary. We try to get constables to provide crime prevention information to victims, particularly in the case of a burglary, so that they can take some sort of action. The constable will either provide some form of written information

there and then, or refer the person to the crime prevention office for the district. What is happening in Fremantle - although it has not been a hugely successful initiative at this stage - is that some of the major lock manufacturers have agreed that in the case of elderly people who have been the subject of a home burglary, they will fit deadlocks for free because of the possibility that the offence will recur. That matter is being addressed to some extent.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it correct that Western Australia has no formal process of responding to victims of crimes such as home invasion by providing them with information on how they can target-harden their homes or reduce the potential of revictimisation, and it is left up to the individual officer who attends the crime to provide general information?

Mr JONES: For the most part, yes. The Victims of Crime Unit in my command has for several months been contacting all victims of crime aged over 60 to find out whether it can help them by providing a police service or crime prevention information.

The CHAIRMAN: The evidence from other countries and definitely the research done in the United Kingdom clearly indicates the potential for revictimisation. If that was substantiated in Western Australia, or at least if it was assumed that it was similar here, would there be merit in providing a clear and consistent response to victims of crime, particularly home invasion, where they were given information about how to reduce the potential of being revictimised?

Mr JONES: Do you mean just home invasion or burglary?

The CHAIRMAN: If the research from the United Kingdom was seen to be consistent with what is happening in Western Australia, would there be any value in providing resources to deliver a consistent response to victims about how to reduce the risk of becoming victims again in the future?

Mr JONES: Certainly, yes. In every instance, police officers should be - I say "should be" because they are encouraged to do that, but whether they do it is another thing, and I do not know the extent to which they are doing it - providing information and advising about how crime might be prevented from recurring. It would be good if that was standard practice for any police officer attending a burglary or home invasion.

The CHAIRMAN: There are issues about attendance and those sorts of things, but if we have not done any research into the incidence of victims of crime become victims of crime again, we will not know whether that applies in Western Australia. Is it fair to assume from your answer that the situation is likely to be similar?

Mr JONES: Yes, it is. However, I do not know whether there has been any formal research about revictimisation.

The CHAIRMAN: If that were the case, and if we were relying on individual officers to give their opinions without some formal, structured evaluation, if you had an experienced and knowledgeable officer you would be lucky, but if you had a rookie who was doing his best but still gaining experience, you probably would not get the same depth and quality of information.

Mr JONES: That is quite possible. It depends, of course, on the number of jobs that a police officer had on his plate. He might be in a state of anxiety about several more jobs that he had to attend and try to make the attendance as brief as possible.

The CHAIRMAN: Could crime prevention officers play a greater role?

Mr JONES: If a special appraisal was required of the person's property, the crime prevention officer could be called in by the police officer who attended, or his contact number could be provided to the victim, and the crime prevention officer could provide an assessment of the security needs of the home. I am aware that in Joondalup, Superintendent Darryl Lockhart has taken a fairly firm approach to the investigation of burglary. He has set up burglary teams and ensured that the people who attend burglaries do certain things: They provide crime prevention advice and hand out literature and brochures, and they ensure that fingerprint examination is done there and then, and that neighbours are interviewed. This might well form a more standard approach throughout the metropolitan area. He has taken the right approach.

Two or three years ago, we were getting to the stage where burglaries were not even attended by some police officers and details were just taken over the telephone. That was fairly poor, because in the minds of some police officers, I suppose burglary had come to be seen as just another offence, perhaps hardly more serious than shoplifting, whereas it is a very serious offence. When I was in crime command and took charge of the northern suburbs detectives' offices from Claremont to Joondalup and across to Morley, I found that the officers were not putting a lot of investigation time into burglaries but were putting it all into offences against the person. Of course, assaults and so on are more important, but I was rather perturbed that there was not more investigation into routine burglaries.

The CHAIRMAN: Has that now changed?

Mr JONES: I believe it has.

The CHAIRMAN: I turn now to the Aboriginal affairs branch. Page 20 of the submission refers to research into trends and issues assisting in the development of programs and initiatives to improve Aboriginal-police relationships. Given the high proportion of Aboriginal people who are incarcerated or identified as offenders, can you provide any insight into the research which was carried out? Did the research look at causes of offending for Aboriginal or other ethnic groups who are identified as having either high rates of incarceration or offending in an area? Can you give an insight into the trends which are occurring as a result of some of the programs?

Mr JONES: The research referred to there is probably fairly informal research - looking at statistics and talking to people. I do not think it was any type of formal research. If any formal research was carried out in the form of lengthy surveys, investigations and so on, that would most likely be carried out by the crime research centre or the centre for police research at Edith Cowan University.

The CHAIRMAN: You are not aware of any specific research into the causes of offending within some areas of the Aboriginal community or the contributing factors which lead to offending?

Mr JONES: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Can you investigate that further to see whether any research has been undertaken in that area, because of the significance of both the offending and the need to identify causes, where possible, and provide details to the committee?

Mr JONES: Do you mean research conducted by the Police Department?

The CHAIRMAN: Either that, or research that the Police Service is using as a base for its decision-making. If we are trying to reduce and prevent crime, we need to know about the causes of crime so that we can target the causes as opposed to responding after the offence has occurred. I am trying to ascertain how much research has been conducted into the causes, as opposed to research into how to catch the offender. I assume that the Police Service has a focus on detection of offenders as opposed to that wide gambit of prevention, perhaps in the form of early intervention with young children or in areas of departmental responsibility other than in the Police Service. I am trying to gain a clear understanding of what research is undertaken by the Police Service and on what research the Police Service bases its decision-making when it comes to the implementation of programs to reduce crime within the community.

Mr JONES: Understood.

The CHAIRMAN: The other questions will be answered by the information you provide - they relate to the same issues.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: The use of juvenile justice teams is a major program throughout Western Australia. How well are these teams working, and how well are they preventing reoffending by some of these juveniles?

Mr JONES: I have asked that question of the people involved in the juvenile justice teams, and they assure me that they have a very good success rate of people coming before them who do not come back again. The number of people who do come back seem to be in the minority.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Is the victim involvement as successful as was envisaged? That is where the victim and the offender confront each other and try to talk out their problems.

Mr JONES: Everything I hear indicates that it is successful, other than one gentleman who was a victim who did not have a very high opinion of his interaction with the offender and seemed a bit cynical about it. However, I understand that in the majority of cases it is a successful strategy for minor offenders.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I notice that it is done in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice and the Education Department. Who keeps the statistics or the evaluation of what is happening there?

Mr JONES: The Ministry of Justice, as the senior partner in this initiative, no doubt keeps the statistics on the number of people who have appeared before them and reappeared.

Mrs ROBERTS: I have seen the presentations read the background information on the PC Cops

program being used in Armadale and Cannington. Is that now available throughout the metropolitan area and how often is it actually used?

Mr JONES: If I remember correctly, it has been used a few times a month, but no more than two or three times, since it was implemented last August. It is not being used to a huge extent at the moment because there are some technical problems. These are currently being addressed and we are trying to overcome them as quickly as possible so that the program can be publicised to a higher level. The difficulty at the moment concerns the telephone system and dial tones.

Mrs ROBERTS: Does that mean it is really just being used for high level incidents at the moment, such as a missing child or whatever, and is not being used for other crimes? For example, there was an incident in my street at the weekend with an attempted theft of a vehicle further down the street. The fellow made his way into our place and my husband went speeding after him to see if he could find the guy and inform the police. The police were in the area, and he caught up with them and spoke to them. They were already looking for this guy before he came to our place, and if the PC Cops system was operating, as it has been publicised, they should have been able to dial every house in my street and ask people to look out for their cars because they might see the fellow.

Mr JONES: It is intended that it will be used in that sort of scenario. It is not just intended for use with murders and major crimes or major disasters, chemical spills and so on. It will be used more for routine things like that because, as you have no doubt read, it can get in contact with a lot of households very quickly.

There are two problems; the first is that we must fix this issue of the dial tones, or the decadic problem as they refer to it, with the old style dial phones. The difficulty they have encountered is that when they ring someone, or the computer contacts somebody and tells them to press button 2, when they dial the figure 2, the machine does not recognise the tone and it goes all haywire. People become agitated by it, ring the Police Department and there is negative feedback from it. The latest I heard last Thursday is that another trial was conducted in Sydney and it worked perfectly, but it is not working in Perth. Telstra and Optus are putting their heads together to work out why it is not working properly. It works but it is not working as well as it should do. That is one issue.

Second, as a new initiative we still have to convince police officers of its value and use, and get them used to the idea of using it as one of their investigation tools promptly and in a timely way. You are dealing with human nature there. It is easy enough for anybody, from the commissioner down, to say that officers will use it but we must try to get people keen to use it and realise the value of it. I can assure you that the once it is operating and the technological bugs are ironed out, and police officers are more used to the idea of using it as a matter of routine, then it will be used.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: How is Rural Watch working generally?

Mr JONES: I understand that Rural Watch in some places is working very well, and in other places it is not working at all because people do not have an interest in it. It is like Neighbourhood Watch. In some suburbs it is keenly followed, perhaps because of good

leadership from people in the community or some police officers, and in other places it is just flat and the people are not interested at all. It is the same with Rural Watch.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Is the program statewide or are there pockets?

Mr JONES: I do not know whether Rural Watch has been promoted statewide.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank-you very much for the information you have provided. We will provide you with some written outline of the information that has been requested.

[The witness retired]

FITZGERALD, MR ROBERT EDWARD,
Executive Director, Policy and Legislation, Ministry of Justice,
residing at 9 Bellevue Avenue,
Dalkeith, examined:

CSABA, MS KATHLEEN,
Acting Senior Policy Officer, Ministry of Justice,
residing at 124 Reynolds Road,
Mt Pleasant, examined:

The CHAIRMAN: Have you read and do you understand the notes at the bottom of the witness form?

Mr FITZGERALD: Yes.

Ms CSABA: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Have each of you received a copy of the terms of reference of the committee and would you like to raise any issue to clarify the terms of reference?

Mr FITZGERALD: No. I believe the terms of reference are clear to me.

Ms CSABA: Yes I have received a copy of the terms of reference.

The CHAIRMAN: I would also like to check that you have received a letter recently outlining the committee's intent to establish an understanding of crime and its underlying causes before continuing to assess programs in crime prevention?

Mr FITZGERALD: Yes.

Ms CSABA: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Finally, I inform you that this is an open hearing and members of the media are present. Do you have any objections to the media being present?

Mr FITZGERALD: No.

The CHAIRMAN: I welcome you before the committee. Would you like to give a brief overview of your role and how that fits within the framework of work associated with the prevention of crime in Western Australia?

Mr FITZGERALD: We have prepared a paper but unfortunately it is rather long. Perhaps rather than going through the paper, I will address your specific question regarding our role in crime prevention and the contribution we hope to make. As you will be aware, the present Government,

when it was elected to office in 1993, established the Justice Coordinating Council. The council comprised the Ministers and the chief executive officers of agencies, including the Police Department, Ministry of Justice, Department of Training, Education Department, Aboriginal Affairs Department, Family and Children's Services, and I have probably forgotten some of the others. It is essentially a council which covers the justice agencies and the justice-related agencies.

In order to address crime and prevent crime, particularly if you are aiming to address the primary causes of crime, it is necessary to adopt a much broader focus than simply what the Police Service and the Ministry of Justice can do. A range of agencies are in a position to make a contribution. Health, Education, Family and Children's Services, Aboriginal Affairs, Training and other agencies, all have a role to play in crime prevention. This is why the Justice Coordinating Council is important because it provides a forum for the Ministers responsible for those portfolio areas and the CEOs with responsibility for those agencies to work together.

The 1995 report of the state Aboriginal Justice Council, which was released in early 1996, commented on issues to do with Aboriginal deaths in custody and the high detention rate of Aboriginal people, in particular, Aboriginal juveniles, in custody. One of the points made - echoing the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody - was that in order to address the high rate of detention of Aboriginal juveniles and imprisonment of Aboriginal adults, it was necessary to address not only issues such as police practices, the way in which courts carry out their business and criminal law, but also some of the primary causes of crime - factors associated with the disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal people in the community in general. The report said there was a link between disadvantage, such as low levels of employment or comparatively low retention rates at school, and the involvement of Aboriginal adults and juveniles in the criminal justice system.

In response to that report, the Justice Coordinating Council requested the senior officers group to the council to prepare a response to the Aboriginal Justice Council's report. One of the specific points the senior officers were to address was how the underlying issues associated with criminal behaviour might best be addressed. A paper, which has been referred to as an action plan to address the cycle of Aboriginal juvenile offending, came out of that, and that in turn has resulted in the implementation of a pilot project in Geraldton. The pilot project aims to reduce the level of involvement of Aboriginal juveniles in the criminal justice system. It seeks to do that by, firstly, targeting the risk factors associated with the involvement of young people in the criminal justice system. It is also focusing on the involvement of a range of agencies. Rather than just focusing on what the police might do, or what justice might do, or even what Family and Children's Services might do, it is working in a collaborative, cooperative way with all the agencies pulling together towards the single goal of reducing the level of involvement of Aboriginal juveniles in the justice system. It also places an emphasis on involvement of the Aboriginal community, so that the strategies adopted are relevant to them and are not those imposed by a white bureaucracy on the Aboriginal community.

It also emphasises local solutions. We are talking about a program in Geraldton but we envisage that a similar program could be put in place in other parts of the State. For example, we are contemplating expanding the program to Midland. We are saying while the same risk factors may apply in both Geraldton and Midland, the on-the-ground solutions need to be tailored to what is

happening locally.

The final principle underpinning the approach in Geraldton - and which we see as underpinning any approach we adopt in any part of the State - is that the program should be fully evaluated. We are not just hoping that it will work and reporting on the basis of some good feeling that we or other people may have that the program is working. We are seeking to evaluate the program quite rigorously so we know whether the program is having the desired effect, whether certain elements are proving to be effective, and perhaps some other elements are not as effective. In relation to that evaluation, because we are tackling the root causes we are not anticipating that we will necessarily see change in the short term. Hopefully, we will see some changes in terms of the willingness of government and non-government agencies to work together, and the willingness of members of the Aboriginal community to become involved in the process. Certainly we hope to see some short term improvements in those aspects. In the medium term - say three to five years - we hope to see some improvements in things such as school retention rates, the quality of parenting skills, and housing. In terms of a sustainable reduction in crime committed by Aboriginal juveniles, that is not likely to occur until perhaps 10 years' time. It is really a long term commitment. I believe that if people want to tackle the causes of crime, they do not do it hoping to get some very positive results within 12 months - they must make a longer term commitment. Unless Kathy wishes to add something, that might be a sufficient introductory comment on our involvement. Just to round out our involvement, obviously Ministry of Justice is part of the group of agencies involved with the Justice Coordinating Council. The Attorney General is the chair of the senior officers group of the Justice Coordinating Council. Kathy has been very much involved in the policy work underpinning the development of the action plan.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for that overview. Will you provide for me an insight into the research that is undertaken in the Ministry of Justice or in your area? When you talk about the causes of crime, is your research targeted at specific areas or is it across a wide base to identify issues relating to a large number of offences?

Mr FITZGERALD: Our research has been primarily looking at studies conducted in the United Kingdom and the United States, some studies in Canada and to a lesser extent some in Australia. Some of the studies have focused on particular kinds of offences. Others have focused on a broad range of offences. Some have followed individual young people over a period of time, associating which factors relate to subsequent involvement in criminal behaviour and which seem to relate less. Those studies look at not only risk factors but also which factors seem to be associated with a reduced risk of becoming involved. Kathy is well positioned to respond in detail.

Ms CSABA: A lot of the research is specific in looking at particular areas of risk. For example, some of the research that has been conducted recently in Australia has been looking at such things as social and economic stress, how they impact on the family and how they lead to pathways to delinquency, as well as others that deal more with children's social development. A lot of the research has to do more with the developmental stages of children and the pathways into which they go. Some research is more mental health specific in looking at children's aggressive behaviour and how that is often a pathway to later delinquency. In Australia research has been undertaken recently into the drift of children in foster care into the criminal justice system. A number of excellent research studies have been conducted on Aboriginal people's involvement in the criminal justice system and the specific risk factors that they face which can lead to them on

to pathways of delinquency. Some of the more longitudinal studies have been conducted in the United States and in the United Kingdom, some of which have tracked children over virtually their life cycle from when they were children to the age of 30 or 40 years. Those studies have been very revealing about the pathways and how it is that some children are resilient and do not go on to offend and others do. The studies have looked at specific events in people's lives which will stop them from offending. So it is desistance as well as persistence.

A very interesting study, which is still under development - the report on which is in draft form at the moment - is being conducted in Western Australia by the Health Department as its lead agency. The study has been looking at children's behavioural problems. It has basically involved a complete audit of currently available services, as well as looking at some of those other longitudinal studies over the past 10 to 15 years. It is specifically once again focused on children with antisocial behaviour and what are known these days as conduct disorders. Its fairly comprehensive report which will probably be available later this year. A very good Aboriginal study was undertaken by Beresford and Omaji in Western Australia and published in a book called "Rites of Passage". It specifically looked at Aboriginal youth in Western Australia. It was extremely insightful into the specific disadvantages Aboriginal youths face in their progression into Western Australia's criminal justice system.

There have been very specific studies as well as broader ones. Often the focus is not merely a criminological focus; often it is a health focus or it could be a social focus for a particular area like Aboriginal crime.

The CHAIRMAN: As a result of your research or that undertaken in Western Australia, have you been able to identify factors which you could say are clear causes of offending and, if so, will you elaborate on the key causes, how they impact and the sort of offences they lead to?

Ms CSABA: In our particular area we do not talk about causes of crime so much as correlations of crime. Primarily the reason is that it is very difficult to say that one risk factor will cause crime. We look primarily at the correlations. A huge range of risk factors has been identified, both in Western Australia and other places. They are generally grouped into particular areas. For example, risk factors are associated with individuals' or children's behaviour and other problems that they may have. Risk factors relate to family problems through things impacting on the family, which may impact on the child. Risk factors are associated with school, for example, truancy or low attainment levels.

Larger risk factors are to do with the community. If you like, I could give you a bit of a run down of some of the more important ones. If we are talking about family factors, it is very important that children are brought up in a nurturing environment, not necessarily by two parents but certainly by a parent who has a very good relationship with the child. Unfortunately, there seems to be a lot of stress associated with large families, which can impact on whether families go on to have children who are involved in the criminal justice system. The role of the mother is very important in the support she can give to her child as a baby and then through its developmental years. Such things as domestic violence and alcohol abuse impact directly on a child and are definitely high correlates.

There is a range of child factors too. I referred earlier to antisocial behaviour and conduct

disorders. It seems that those can be associated with parenting styles and the family but some children seem to be born with them and they can be moderated by positive family influences. For example, some children simply have an easy temperament but others do not. If the family is already under stress, such as a single parent family with other problems, then that will really exacerbate the problem. Skill factors are very important. For example, children who do not have high attainment levels at school or at least are not coping particularly well, often even before they start school are already at a disadvantage which continues all the way along. By the time they are at the transition from primary to high school, it is very difficult to reverse and it will impact upon their self-esteem and ability to obtain a good level at school. By the time they are in their first year at high school they will drop out of school, start truanting or have poor grades.

Those are probably some of the main risk factors. Peer pressure is also very important once children go to school. Other stresses in families include overcrowded housing, economic problems and financial problems. They are all certainly highly correlated with later juvenile crime. Things like psychological problems in children which are not identified early enough tend to be exacerbated, so that by the time the child is finally picked up by the mental health services the problem is very difficult to reverse. If we can get to these problems much earlier, we have a greater chance of success.

Mr FITZGERALD: The factors identified in Australian studies are pretty similar to the factors identified in studies in the United Kingdom and the United States. Therefore, a fairly common set of factors seems to be associated with subsequent involvement in criminal behaviour. Kathy made the point about the use of the term "associational correlation" rather than the term "cause". It is important to emphasise that a child who comes from a dysfunctional family, for example, will not necessarily go on to become involved in criminal behaviour. One of the things we know about children is that they are remarkably resilient. Sometimes the surprise is that these kids do not end up committing offences, rather than the fact that many of the kids who are brought up in those families do end up committing offences.

The second point is that some of the factors need to be related to some of the specific cultural forces that are in operation. In the case of Aboriginal young people who commit offences, it has been suggested that loss of cultural identity may be associated with subsequent criminal behaviour by Aboriginal young people. I do not know to what extent the research supports that suggestion.

Ms CSABA: A number of reports have been done on Aboriginal children's propensity to go on to offend. Some of the factors are certainly due to cultural aspects - for example, loss of cultural identity and the fact that often children do not respect the elders in the community as much as they used to. Other factors are associated with the erosion of their culture; for example, Aboriginal people's dependency on welfare, and the fact that many of them were institutionalised as children, which may impact on their ability to be good parents because they have not had parents themselves. That is supported by a number of reports. I do not think any longitudinal studies have been done on that matter; it is really what has come out of the findings from people who have ended up in the criminal justice system. With regard to the program in Geraldton, the community there said they would like to focus on getting their children to have stronger ties with their Aboriginal culture and have a proud sense of identity.

Mrs ROBERTS: I am interested in the Waminda intensive intervention centre. Your submission

states that the program will be evaluated in early 1998. Is that evaluation complete, and can we have a copy of that? It also suggested that 90 per cent of the offenders who attend Waminda exhibit some form of drug or alcohol misuse, and that drug testing is carried out frequently and offenders are excluded if they continue to use illicit drugs. What happens to the people who are excluded from that program? How are they then picked up? Obviously they still have a major problem which needs to be addressed.

Mr FITZGERALD: We cannot respond to that question because that program is being run from a separate part of the ministry. Ian Vaughan from the ministry, who will give evidence this afternoon about specific programs, may be able to answer that question. Alternatively, we can take those questions on notice.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: With regard to the term associational correlation, it is a well known fact that males are more prone to commit crimes. Have any studies been done into the reason for that; and, secondly, is that changing? I do not know the population of Bandyup Prison compared with other prisons in the State, but is there any upward trend of more young women getting into the criminal justice system?

Has any study been done of functional children? I am taking up your comment, Bob, that some children should end up in the prison system if we take their associational correlation, yet they do not. Have any specific studies been done of why some families do and others do not? Do we know what the trigger is, or are we anywhere near finding out the trigger?

Mr FITZGERALD: The first couple of questions relate to why women and girls tend to be under-represented in offending populations. I would need to do separate research on this, but there are biological theories with regard to hormones and physical structure, and there are also sociological theories with regard to how young girls and young boys are acculturated. If that sounds imprecise, it is. Kathy may be able to give more detail on that. We can provide a bit more information on that if you like.

With regard to the involvement of women and young girls in criminal behaviour, I am not familiar with the current figures, but there has been a very small increase in recent years. Fifteen years ago, about 6 per cent of the prison population was female. I think it may have increased by one or two percentage points, but it is still very low. The United States has also had a small increase. It is still a ratio of nine or 10 males to every female caught up in the prison system. The nature of the offences also tends to be different. Women are far less likely to be involved in offences involving violence. To that extent, I suppose the crimes in which they are involved may be viewed as being less serious or less of a threat to the community.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Is there any evidence that as young women get involved in drugs, it is changing the crime scene so that it involves more young women?

Mr FITZGERALD: I am not completely familiar with the literature. I have only a limited knowledge of the literature. It is having some effect, but not a marked effect. The second part of your question was to do with studies of functional children. There have been studies which have focused on ways some kids are less likely to become involved in criminal behaviour. Generally on one side we have the risk factors and then on the other we have the protective

factors. Protective factors tend to be the polar opposites of the risk factors. If a risk factor is a child coming from a dysfunctional family where there is inconsistent parenting, a protective factor would be coming from a family where there is consistent parenting, stability in the family. If truancy is a risk factor associated with a greater likelihood of becoming involved in criminal behaviour, on the converse side a child who is achieving at school, who is attending regularly, has a reduced likelihood of becoming involved in criminal behaviour.

Ms CSABA: There are a number of factors which we call resiliency that have been identified. Sometimes, against all odds and for whatever reasons, children from disadvantaged backgrounds will not go on to offend. One of the factors in this is above average intelligence. That is important because it has to do with higher achievement in school; higher self-esteem; and a higher ability to analyse cognitively. They have the ability to think things through. They are not so impulsive as other children.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: They can realise the consequences of their actions.

Ms CSABA: That is right. Some children generally have good sociable natures, and that also helps them. Once they go to school they are popular. They tend to develop good, social based competency levels, high self-esteem. There are two very important external factors that children have as anchors in their life. One is that either their parents, or if they do not have parents then possibly a teacher or a peer or a mentor, who can see them through the various difficult stages of their lives. Another very important resiliency factor is found in children who come from homes where there are strong religious or moral beliefs or a sense of spirituality, so that children can have some forms of control that we call informal social controls. They are not usually formalised, but these children know what are the bounds in society within which they should be operating.

Another important resiliency factor is that children either can excel or do well at some non-school activity; for example, sport, involvement in a cultural activity, girl guides or whatever. Some other kind of activity they can show they are good at. Not all children are good at school, but they are good at sport or ballroom dancing or whatever. There are a number of things that, against all the odds, will ensure children do not actually end up in the system, even though we wonder why because their siblings or even their mum and dad have been in the system. Another risk factor for children is that their parents are criminals.

The CHAIRMAN: There are a couple of issues that are central to our work. One is the key offences of concern in Western Australia at the moment. Given your work, I imagine you have a reasonably good knowledge of those offences causing concern and the trends. What are the offences you would identify as being of concern to the community? Could you elaborate on some of those factors that lead to offending by juveniles as well as adults?

Mr FITZGERALD: We have not undertaken separate research to identify those particular offences which are of concern to the community. I think in general the offences of greatest concern relate to violence towards another person. This is not to say that other offences are not of concern, but certainly those offences are of particular concern as well as offences where there is a potential threat of violence; for example, offences, such as burglary, which while there may not have been violence, there is certainly that potential threat of violence to the homeowner.

The CHAIRMAN: What are the contributing factors or combined influences that are usually prevalent for that offending to occur? What are the factors that contribute to that?

Ms CSABA: To specific offending?

The CHAIRMAN: We talk of issues such as burglary, violence against the person, car theft or even property theft. Those reasonably topical issues as well as the fear of crime, the emotional fear that somebody may be a victim are of concern. If we knew what factors made people remain hardened criminals, surely that would help. Could you elaborate on the contributing factors that research has been able to establish that lead to, or that are usually present in, that offending in Western Australia?

Ms CSABA: Violent acts are associated with those risk factors I mentioned. Children who grow up with aggressive behaviour or other conduct type disorders are very much correlated with violent acts. I cannot really say that any specific risk factors could be associated with things such as property theft and motor vehicle theft. Often it is a combination of things. Another thing that is also associated with offending and the risk factors is opportunities within the community to offend. In particular communities we have higher rates of offending; for example, higher rates of burglary that are often associated with a range of risk factors combined with the opportunities that present themselves. Apart from the correlation of violent crime with children who are displaying those risk factors, I cannot really say whether people who commit burglary can be identified from a specific range of risk factors.

The CHAIRMAN: It has been suggested more than once that issues such as drug or substance dependency and a change of substance may contribute. Is there any evidence to suggest that crimes, such as burglary, car theft and car chases, may be influenced or increased because of a trend in the community? For example, is an increased use of heroin, as opposed to an increased use of amphetamines related, to car chases or that sort of behaviour or offending?

Mr FITZGERALD: I do not have the answer to that.

Ms CSABA: I think so, but I have not seen any evidence of that. I would say quite possibly yes, but in Western Australia there has been no specific study done on that particular correlation. Anecdotally, yes, but in terms of hard evidence to support that, not that I know of. There could possibly be from other sources, but not within the Ministry of Justice.

The CHAIRMAN: Western Australia has a higher incidence of issues such as motor vehicle theft. Can you indicate whether there has been any research to identify why that is the case?

Mr FITZGERALD: I do not know the research. I would expect that research would have been done, probably by the police service into that issue.

Ms CSABA: There is a motor vehicle theft steering committee looking at a range of issues and it would be the best way to find that out. It is an inter-departmental officers' group that are looking at a range of those particular issues in terms of identifying what the problems are and coming up with solutions. The Australian Institute of Criminology has also done some research into motor vehicle theft, but I am not familiar with that.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Do crime prevention programs, many of which are aimed at juveniles, have an upper age limit or is there a certain stage in a criminal's life when crime prevention programs are just not empirically worth doing or is it ongoing? Many prisoners go into prison on remand and then go back and repeat; are there any programs designed to stop recidivism, ? Ian may be able to answer that.

Mr FITZGERALD: I think the question should also be put to Ian Vaughan. The types of programs of which the Geraldton program is an example, obviously target some of those primary causes of crime. What we seek to do there is tackle the problem before it develops into a problem. Looking at another extreme of sex offenders who are currently in the prison system, the community has an expectation that if those people are to be released then something will be done. A program will be offered to them which seeks to address their offending behaviour. In the case of sex offenders, their age may vary from quite young persons to men in their 70s, for example, who may have offended against children. Generally what is known is that the peak age for offending by men - but it probably applies to women - is in the range from 18 to 30 years. After that time, whether it is a maturing process, people start slowing down, or the effects of things such as family and responsibilities has an impact - I am sure there is work which relates to that. I do not think that there is necessarily an optimal period. In terms of primary crime prevention it is likely that the optimal crime period is as early as possible. Other than that, I do not know that much more can be said.

Ms CSABA: Concerning the primary preventive approach, if one looks at pathways, at various stages one will want to intervene and implement different programs to break it in to chunks. Obviously, between 0 and three and four is the best time to intervene. Then once the child starts school there is another range of issues that one must deal with and once again when the child gets to high school. At least at the primary preventative stage - literature suggests 0 to 13 and then at 13 to 18, another set of interventions are also very important to keep children on the right pathway.

The CHAIRMAN: I am aware that the Geraldton program has recently been implemented and no doubt is going through its process of implementation; what are the primary causes that the Geraldton program is trying to address?

Mr FITZGERALD: The primary "causes" we are focusing on are factors such as school attendance, housing, ---

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Health.

Ms CSABA: Health is a very important one. Education is one of the main factors, but health and housing are important as well. They would probably be the primary ones.

Mr FITZGERALD: The risk factors that we are focusing on are the fairly standard ones, such as the employment of at least one parent, stability of the home environment and the consistency of parenting that is provided. We have spoken with members of the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council - that is the state Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council - Aboriginal people in Geraldton, Aboriginal workers in government agencies and members of the Aboriginal community generally. We told them that the research suggests that these are the factors associated with subsequent

offending behaviour and without exception they said that is precisely what they believe are the causes as well. There are some other factors such as loss of cultural identity which the research suggests may be another factor causing Aboriginal offending. Those additional cultural related factors will be explored with the Aboriginal community in Geraldton. We try to ensure that we do not impose anything from outside on the community but say this is what the research suggests and ask does this gel with their experience. There really are no surprises; the Aboriginal community tend to confirm what the research literature is saying.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the basis for the Geraldton program emanate from research into offenders in the area, environmental issues or a number of other social factors? Was there detailed research undertaken of the Geraldton community regarding the offending that was occurring?

Mr FITZGERALD: No, the focus was that we, from the research, had identified a set of risk factors which seemed to apply irrespective of whether the studies were conducted in Australia, US, England or wherever; there was a common set of factors. The Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council raised concern about addressing these underlying factors and we wanted to select for the pilot project a location which would gain some support from the Aboriginal community, police, government agencies, etc. That was the basis for selecting Geraldton rather than undertaking an analysis of crime and then perceiving a major problem that needed to be addressed. In fact, some would say that as a result of initiatives in recent years, juvenile offending in Geraldton has decreased and there certainly is evidence to support that. Our view was that that should not deter us from trying to implement the model in Geraldton. We felt that, because it was a country centre, we had a reasonably good chance of getting the program up and running effectively and that we could use that as a learning experience before implementing the program in other centres.

The CHAIRMAN: We have not touched upon the issue of alcohol as a contributing factor. However, most of the literature I have read and the people to whom I speak point to alcohol as one of the major factors in crime and violence, particularly with male offenders.

Mr FITZGERALD: Some kids are on a trajectory towards becoming involved in crime. One of the factors that indicate whether they will become involved in crime is family stability and consistency of parenting within the home. It is easy to see that if one or both of the parents are involved in the abuse of alcohol that will impact on the home environment. Alcohol plays a part in offending behaviour at a later age when young people start to abuse alcohol. Certainly, in the earlier developmental stages it would have an indirect effect on the family which, in turn, has an effect on the child. Some studies have shown - this does not relate to alcohol, but I believe the same finding would apply - an association between mothers who are drug users during pregnancy and children's subsequent offending behaviour. We are defining a risk factor in a narrow sense; that is, a factor that heads a kid off on a trajectory towards crime. Alcohol use would come in at a slightly later age rather than a young age.

Ms CSABA: I agree that substance abuse and illicit drug use in the family environment is a high risk factor.

Mrs ROBERTS: I note that you are part of the policy and legislation section of the ministry. What legislation or amendments to existing legislation would assist the ministry to prevent crime?

Mr FITZGERALD: Legislation has a part to play in crime prevention. If we focus on primary prevention, the causes of crime and the factors that are most important to target risk factors agencies must work together so we get the biggest return for the dollar investment in services. However, other forms of crime prevention have a potential for legislation to have an effect; for example, changes to the legislation relating to pawnbrokers and the requirement that people wishing to pawn goods must produce evidence that they are the owners of the goods. I understand that police research has shown that has had a significant impact on stolen goods being laundered through pawnbrokers.

Mrs ROBERTS: According to the police that has had the unintended consequence of increasing armed robberies and assaults because people are stealing cash instead of goods which they could trade at the pawnbrokers.

Mr FITZGERALD: Yes. In developing policy and its accompanying legislation it is critical to look at both the intended and unintended consequences - for example, the provision of sobering up shelters for alcohol abusers.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: The ministry is applying a holistic family approach in Geraldton. How widespread is that approach throughout the State?

Mr FITZGERALD: We have some other examples which are similar to the Geraldton action plan. For example, we have a multifaceted approach to the problem of petrol sniffing in the central desert. That program is led by the Health Department but it involves other agencies such as the police and Ministry of Justice. Part of that approach is to work with families to assist them to respond to the needs of kids with petrol sniffing problems. I am sure Ms Csaba can present other examples to the committee. The Geraldton approach is unique in some respects, but it has been used elsewhere.

Ms CSABA: Kalgoorlie has a network of community and government agencies that work together on juvenile crime through an advisory committee chaired by Esther Roadnight. They consider ways to pool resources and coordinate services across a range of areas. That is a good example of a multifaceted approach to crime prevention. That is not specific to families but includes juvenile offenders and youths in a range of related areas.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Is that specifically for Aborigines?

Ms CSABA: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your contribution; it is appreciated. I assume you would be willing to assist us if we need to follow up issues that arise during our investigation?

Mr FITZGERALD: Yes, certainly.

[The witnesses retired]

VAUGHAN, MR IAN WALLACE,
Acting Director, Prison Operations, Ministry of Justice,
residing at 525 Homestead Road,
Mahogany Creek, examined:

CULLEN, MR WILLIAM CHARLES,
Research and Evaluation Officer, Ministry of Justice,
residing at 2 Bertram Street,
Dianella, examined:

The CHAIRMAN: There are a few formalities to start with. Have you both read the note on the bottom of the witness form and understand it?

Mr VAUGHAN: Yes.

Mr CULLEN: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Have each of you received and seen a copy of the terms of reference of the committee?

Mr VAUGHAN: Yes.

Mr CULLEN: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any issues you would like to clarify with respect to the terms of reference?

Mr VAUGHAN: No.

Mr CULLEN: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you received a letter indicating the committee's intent to establish an understanding of crime and its varying causes before we pursue programs in detail regarding crime prevention?

Mr VAUGHAN: No.

Mr CULLEN: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions in respect to the committee's intent?

Mr VAUGHAN: No.

Mr CULLEN: No.

The CHAIRMAN: The hearings are open which means the media may attend. There are no media here at the moment. Do you have any objections to the media attending at any stage?

Mr VAUGHAN: No.

Mr CULLEN: No.

The CHAIRMAN: I start by inviting you to give us a brief overview of the role you are currently playing within the broader field of crime prevention. My assumption is that your work will refer mostly to part (c) in the first term of reference in preventing reoffending, but I invite you to give an overview. It is an opportunity for you to inform the committee of issues or facts that you think may assist in our work.

Mr VAUGHAN: We would like to give you some information about the activities that are currently taking place within the Ministry, which are designed to reduce the rate of recidivism. To do that, I propose to describe some of the thinking in the redrafting of the legislation governing the activities of prisons in this State. I will outline some of the thinking in prison management and prisoner management in this State, and Mr Cullen will describe in more detail the program activities including work and training, education, and other treatment programs in this State. Mr Cullen, who is the officer primarily concerned with drafting the discussion papers in respect to the proposed new Prisons Act, can address you about some of the thinking behind that. Following that, I could come in with some of the prison management issues and then revert back to Mr Cullen in respect of specific program activities.

Mr CULLEN: The current Prisons Act was enacted in 1981, and it was drafted in response to concerns about the preceding philosophy underpinning the imprisonment. It is worthwhile for the moment going back over some of those developments because they are important to where we are today.

In the period from the late nineteenth century through to about the 1960s, there was a strong focus on rehabilitation. It was a period in which lots of professionals, other than prison officers started to come into the prisons, and an era in which prisons were opened up much more than they had been previously. There was a belief that through psychology a lot could be done to change prisoners from the sort of persons they were into much more well adjusted people. A lot of psychological counselling and programs took place with a view to that end. While many of them had good intentions, many were less than successful.

A seminal paper was released in the early 1970s titled "What Works: Questions and Answers About Prison Reform" (1974) by Robert Martinson. The author looked at a range of rehabilitation programs that had taken place in prisons, conducted a meta-analysis on them all and concluded that not very much worked. The paper was very influential across the United States, Europe and Australia. A view was generated which took the paper's title at its face value and people largely believed that nothing worked in prisons. Under the guise of the treatment of prisoners, a number of abuses of human rights occurred, and a range of other problems arose in prisons which led to a rethinking of what a prison was all about. Certainly the current Prisons Act 1981 is a product of that rethinking. The word "rehabilitation" does not appear in the Act. It refers to programs, counselling, and a range of things, but not rehabilitation. Nor does it refer to

an objective of reducing the offending. Largely, that is because of the era it came from.

The Prisons Act was conceived in an era that came to be known as the justice model of imprisonment; prisoners were sent to prison simply to do their time. They were expected to do it in a peaceful way and to constructively use their time but, beyond that, not much else was asked of them. It is interesting to note that the word "work" for example appears under welfare programs in the current Act. Prisoners cannot be forced to work although they may be required to work. Programs are offered, according to the Act, almost as a smorgasbord for the prisoners to select from. The emphasis in the Act is not upon engaging prisoners in any strong way in any type of program or in any work activity; it is about having some programs available and if the prisoners want to take advantage of it, that is well and good.

Over the last few years, and indeed some might argue right throughout that period, a small number of professionals have held on to the belief that rehabilitation programs can be effective, and it is a matter of getting the right programs for the right people. Over the past few years we have seen a resurgence in the literature in this area which supports that contention, and we know a lot more now about what works in prisons. As a consequence of that and a number of other changes, the Prisons Act is currently under review and a proposal will go to the Attorney General shortly to develop a new Act. Part of that new Act will incorporate some of the new thinking on rehabilitation. We want a very strong emphasis for rehabilitation to be stated in the Act. The ministry has already moved part way down this track by setting up rates of recidivism as performance indicators for prisons for the offender management division. Part of the general thinking is moving much more towards engaging prisoners in programs that tackle the offending behaviour. We do that not just from commonsense or observations, but because there is now a substantial body of evidence to point us in the right direction as to how we might do that. We anticipate that the new Act will have a strong influence on the shape of corrections in the coming years and it may well be introduced within the next 12 months.

Mr VAUGHAN: I will set the scene for the changes that are part of the package of services to prisoners and their families that can assist in reducing recidivism. It is important to appreciate that there is no single magic bullet that will stop prisoners re-offending. It is not simply a matter of plugging them into one program and expecting a perfect result. The programs which work are designed to reduce the risk of recidivism rather than eliminate it. Effective programs might reduce it statically where there are a considerably large number of prisoners. The chances of that group re-offending from say 50 to 30 or 20 per cent represents a substantial number of prisoners who do not re-offend. However, it is not intended to claim that every prisoner will have a perfect result after engagement in a program.

There are a number of other correlates of successful reintegration into the community by prisoners. Family support always has been and continues to be a key element in the re-engagement of prisoners with the community. Prisoners who are able to maintain stable family relationships and stable work performance have a much better chance of surviving in the community. We are therefore looking at an overall package of assessment of prisoners and at identifying the whole suite of skills and services required to get the best result with offenders returning to the community crime free.

We have a sentence planning system which assesses prisoners and engages them in services

throughout their sentence. The first element is a central planning system. Another key element is the notion of through care; that is, retaining the focus that prisoners come from the community and they will return to the community. It is all too easy to treat prisoners as though they are a separate species or subspecies who are out of sight and out of mind. It is too easy for our systems to ignore the reality that by far the majority of prisoners will return to the community and that we need to maintain their links and skills to enable them to get back into the community.

To engage in family support we are establishing family support centres increasingly throughout the State where prisoners' families have contact as part of the visitor process and where family relationship issues can be aired and some intervention can occur. There is a family support or visitors' centre at Bandyup Women's Prison, Canning Vale Prison and Casuarina Prison. It is planned to increase the number of these centres throughout the State over the coming years.

Members might recall that recently a major initiative was announced about increasing prison beds throughout Western Australia and revamping the Canning Vale complex. It is intended that the Canning Vale complex should take all the remand prisoners and become a major reception and assessment centre for newly sentenced prisoners. It is intended that prisoners be subject to a detailed assessment of those parts of their makeup which relate to offending. The technical term is "criminogenic need". Although I dislike technical terms criminogenic need is the best way of describing the focuses we are taking. It is not necessarily about identifying all those things that might make a prisoner unhappy. We are about focusing on those aspects which correlate with the prisoner offending or re-offending. Although I am describing a fairly broad ranging number of inputs, our focus is on asking what is associated with causing people to offend or re-offend. That is the intent of this assessment process.

The CHAIRMAN: Today we are primarily interested in the factors that contribute to or cause offending or re-offending or. I am interested you elaborating on the main factors that lead people to offend and, more important, that lead people to re-offend.

Mr CULLEN: Some of the poor indicators of re-offending are the intellectual functioning of a prisoner and his socioeconomic status.

The CHAIRMAN: Are we talking specifically about literacy or education levels per se?

Mr CULLEN: We are talking about both. Although literacy level is important for general functioning in the community, it is a poor indicator of whether someone will re-offend. Although it helps someone get a job, which might be an important criminogenic factor, in itself it is not a predictor of whether someone is likely to commit or recommit crime. Level of personal distress was suggested earlier. In itself that is not a very good predictor of the propensity to commit crime either.

Good predictors and important criminogenic factors vary among individuals. That is why it is necessary for us to have a regime that assesses the criminogenic factors of each person. Literature has proved that valuable predictors are: Antisocial attitudes, peer associations, replacing lying and stealing with more pro social attitudes, reducing chemical dependency and promoting familial associations. There are more, but they are the main ones. In various measures they tend to be the most important.

The CHAIRMAN: Does that change with age and gender?

Mr CULLEN: Yes. The prisoner cake is a complex one. There is great risk of simplifying the complexities. However, we could simplify it by taking out property offenders for example. Largely property offending peaks at around 15 or 16. By the time we get those offenders in adult prisons it is starting to tail off. Sex offending on the other hand increases in age and continues throughout the lifespan of an offender unless it is checked. Similarly, if someone is violent in his youth he tends to be violent throughout his life unless he has experiences or undergoes a program to check it. Chemical dependency or drug abuse is similar. However, abuse of illicit drugs tends to tail off at around 35. However, none of those sections of the prisoner community are discrete; there is much overlap.

We need to put together the right mix for individuals to tackle the most prominent aspects of their offending behaviour. In doing that it is more important to give priority to tackling the more serious repeat offenders, although they are the more difficult group. It is easy to gain success with a group of soft offenders who are not hardened in their offending behaviour or well established in their offending career. However, it makes more economic sense - we get more value for our dollar - if we address the more hardened offenders who will go out and do more.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Is that not convoluted thinking? Would it not be better as a priority to tackle the non-hardened offenders so that they will not re-offend, and tackle the hardened offenders later? Otherwise you may apply most of your resources to tackling the hardened offenders, and the non-hardened offenders may become hardened because they are being ignored.

Mr CULLEN: I understand your reasoning. This has been a source of continual debate regarding corrections and crime prevention. We have quite a bit of literature on that. Much of the literature suggests that there is a large attrition rate with prisoners. They will drop off anyway. You can put a lot of money into programs for people who would stop offending of their own accord. We know some of the things which make a big difference to offending. For example, it could be the appearance of a significant other person in that person's life. If it is a young male, it could be the arrival of a partner who says that she has had enough of the young male going to gaol all the time. She may say that she wants to settle down and have a family. Those things tend to be the things which make a critical difference. That is part of the reason that we are tackling the hardened offenders.

The CHAIRMAN: This may be a gross generalisation, but do key factors increase the risk of re-offending? You have spoken about family ties and peer pressure. When dealing with hardened offenders, is there a common problem that you must deal with, such as substance abuse or ingrained peer group pressure, or do other aspects reinforce the theory that re-offending is the only behaviour that those people feel comfortable with?

Mr VAUGHAN: Please stop me if you have heard this before. I return to my understanding of how criminals are generated in our society. Studies in the United States and other literature indicate that when a child born into a family where the pattern of parenting is inconsistent - that is, overly harsh or overly slack - where there is no normal appreciation of control, goes to school the schooling experience can be a very negative one. Those children can drop out of school or lose interest. They do not achieve, and relate more to their peers who share a like-minded view

of the school process. Their family environment does not allow them to operate fully or fulfil the expectations of society. They drop out of school; and due to peer group pressure they are more likely to experiment with alcohol and drugs. This is accompanied by a thought process or rationalisation, a distortion in thinking which in itself is reinforcing.

I give the gross example of sex offenders who would allege that the victim asked for it. A style of thinking goes with that. In many ways, we must re-integrate that person; we must address their social skills and deal with their cognitive distortions. We are attempting to do that in a program sense, when a lifetime has been spent generating them in the other direction. However, somewhere along the line with programs we must pick up on challenging and dealing with all the thinking that goes with that antisocial behaviour.

The CHAIRMAN: To follow that line, if we consider offenders as a cohort - whether juvenile or adult offenders - from your comments and from other evidence, it appears that the environment within which a child grows in its early preschool years has a large influence on the child's potential to become an offender, to rebel against society or to not feel part of society.

Mr VAUGHAN: I think you have been briefed on the Geraldton cyclic offending project. In that context, it is almost like conforming to the norms which are different from middle class society. There can be a process of socialisation. I am wary of painting too black a picture - no pun intended! But in a family suffering from alcohol or substance abuse, and inconsistent discipline and control, it can be a process of socialisation of a child into an antisocial way of behaviour.

The CHAIRMAN: A lack of effective guidance in the early years can lead to a distorted view of the way society works or their role in society.

Mr VAUGHAN: Yes. It is a very complex issue. The only way to address it is to deal with that system and engage the system in which the child was raised. That means you cannot just tackle the child, but empower and tackle the whole social system, and the extended family from which the child is coming. Somehow you must devise ways of lifting not only the cohort but also the family circumstance.

Mr CULLEN: If you can envisage the various layers of an onion, with the individual at the centre, the most effective form of crime prevention and social control is the one closest to the centre. If the individual has the values to inhibit behaviour, there would be no need for any others. The next layer is the family, and if it does not exert certain values, it goes to the next layer, which may be the school or the church. Eventually it comes to the police and the Ministry of Justice. At that stage, we are so far from the centre that we are much less effective and efficient in gaining any conformity, social control or normal behaviour. It takes us much longer, and we must deal with much more entrenched behaviour. The point is that the closer to the individual that we can entrench certain behaviour the more effective and efficient we will be.

The CHAIRMAN: Of the complete cohort of prisoners in Western Australia in a year, how many would fit into that hardened group that you refer to? What sort of recidivism trends are we seeing?

Mr VAUGHAN: There will be some riders here because in the prison population we are finding -

particularly with intra-familial sex offenders - that there is a different group that has the problem of cognitive distortion, particularly with regard to rationalising their sex offending and they have perhaps experienced some very poor nurturing or been victims of sex offences themselves. They are very often a skewed group compared with the extremely deprived group which ends up as our bread and butter prisoners, if you like. I could say impressionistically that a very large proportion of people who enter our prison system have experienced that kind of emotional deprivation or inconsistent rearing in order to exhibit the sort of behaviour which is uncontrolled by the various sanctions. The sort of life experiences of many people who come through the prison system is relatively deprived and those people are relatively poor achievers in terms of their education. There is a problem of substance abuse around the 70 or 80 per cent mark, depending on how the threshold is set. The level of work skills and achievement in the work force is relatively poor compared with the rest of the population. They are on the losing side of the ledger as far as life is concerned and they comprise a very large proportion of our prison population. This has considerable implications for the programs in that education programs require a lot of individual tuition and motivation. It requires a lot of effort by our staff in order to deal with the negative perception that many prisoners have had with their life achievements.

Mr CULLEN: We are dealing with a subgroup in society which is affected largely by lots of problems. Over the years through a focus on research we have come to understand that we need to narrow down our focus upon those factors which are crime producing, but that does not get away from the fact that they have all these other problems including have family breakdowns, family trauma, domestic violence. Some of the most horrific offenders of sexual and violent abuse have themselves histories of similar abuse. They all add to the complexities of managing this group of people for the period that we have them, and we are having them for longer. The average sentence for violent crimes has increased dramatically over the past 10 years. We have a problem of dealing with people who are coming into prison for more violent offences - more drug and alcohol related offences - and we have to deal with them for much longer. In one sense that gives us more time to work on programs with them but it also makes for some added difficulties in just simply managing this group.

We cannot fix up all their problems; it is impossible and that is the bottom line. What we think is very important - it was mentioned earlier - is the family relationships. We try to go out of our way to foster and promote family relationships as much as possible and to attack those causes of offending that we can detect through an individual assessment.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the percentage of the hardened offender that you are trying to deal with in respect of the number of people incarcerated annually?

Mr CULLEN: I am not sure I can answer that because we do not have a category that we call "the hardened offender".

The CHAIRMAN: In your briefing at the beginning you were talking about this hardened offender group on which you are focusing your programs. Can you give an indication of the number or the percentage as opposed to the total number incarcerated?

Mr CULLEN: I cannot because I have not come prepared with that information.

Mr VAUGHAN: Some of the research from Canada, where a cognitive skills program for offenders has been run, indicates that, in terms of the high risk group that they target, about half the prison population is deemed worth concentrating on for that "all weather" program. My sense is that we are dealing with the same sort of numbers. We are actually moving to a more individual assessment and a generic assessment of the needs of prisoners. Up to now, we have had sex offenders whom we assess for their need for sex offender treatment. We have had violent offenders whom we assess for their need for violent treatment. We have had people with drug problems whom we assess for their need for drug treatment, but very often there is considerable overlap between those groups and we are moving to restructure our programs so that there will be a generic assessment and some kind of modules of treatment given to them. I think we will be in a better position to answer your question when we go through that process of restructuring our services over the next six months or so.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have an indicator that could determine the level of recidivism that is currently trending, and are the trends going up or down or are they stagnant?

Mr CULLEN: They are stable. They have been stable for as long as we have had the indicator - we are into our third year now. We publish it in the annual report for the Ministry of Justice, and I am happy to leave the committee a copy. The rate of reoffending is based upon the percentage of distinct adult and juvenile offenders returning to the offender management system or the detention system for juveniles within two years. So, it is following release or termination of an order and them coming back into our system. They may have reoffended and not been caught of course. They may have reoffended and been cautioned or received a sentence which has not brought them back to us, so we do not know about it. We can only deal with the ones that we know about obviously and that is what we have set. The figure is around 30 per cent.

The CHAIRMAN: 30 per cent?

Mr CULLEN: Yes. That is for all offenders; that is, for both those in the prison and the community corrections system. For those leaving prison only the rate is 50 per cent. What we know is that the rate for Aborigines is far higher and that the rate for those with an intellectual disability is even higher again. We believe those rates are about 50 per cent and 80 per cent respectively.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: With Canning Vale taking all the remand prisoners, what is going to happen with the women? They are not going to Canning Vale obviously, or are they, for the criminogenic assessment?

Mr VAUGHAN: That will continue at Bandyup. We will certainly apply the same generic system for assessment of female prisoners generally as we use with males. There is no intention to place female prisoners in the Canning Vale complex.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Will a similar program be run for them at Bandyup Women's Prison?

Mr VAUGHAN: Yes. There are some, but there is an extremely small number of female sex offenders. Essentially, the program design will mirror the needs of female offenders.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: You were also talking about the emphasis on the repeat, hardened criminals. Among, say, the juveniles who come in on one or two occasions is there a definite indicator of who might end up as a hardened criminal, or at that stage do these kids fulfill the usual criteria? Is there a personality type? Is there anyway at the juvenile level you can say that a person will end up in a senior prison as a hardened criminal? As a teacher I could often tell, almost in grade 2, that by the time a child had reached grade 6, there would be problems with that child. Programs were set in place when the child was at grade 2 to try to address the situation. Is there any value in doing that in your situation?

Mr VAUGHAN: Harking back to the comments I made earlier about the way the criminals have been created, these people fit a classic pattern of having been subject to inconsistent nurturing and discipline; alienated from the school system; are very poor achievers; and concentrate on peer activities and substance abuse. Those are the high risk factors.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Do all these people end up as hardened criminals? You have said a lot of them drop out between 25 years and 30 years.

Mr VAUGHAN: That is right.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: If we knew what factors made them remain hardened criminals, surely that would help.

Mr VAUGHAN: That is interesting. Somewhere along the line individual choice comes into play. Anecdotally my experience with criminals who have been in the system for a long time is that there comes a time when they say that they are sick of prison and they are not coming back, and they do not. Of course, some of those who say that do come back. However, it is very much a matter of personal motivation and being fed up with returning. It is partly also our capacity to provide those prisoners with a positive experience. One of the smallest successes we are achieving, almost as a spin-off, is with our work camp initiative. We have a pilot work camp at Walpole, which is working on the community facilities around the area and the Bibbulmun track. Those prisoners are living in a Main Roads Western Australia depot, which is essentially a beat-up 30 or 40 year old house they have had to work over to make habitable. They must get themselves up and off to work by eight o'clock in the morning. They knock off and are home a bit after five at night. They then must cook their dinner. It is a small live-in environment with about eight prisoners. They must take a lot of responsibility, which is unusual for prisoners, because they are living in a domestic environment. They must live and cooperate with their peers and they are doing work they find extremely valuable for them, partly in terms of their skills and partly their self-esteem. As I said, these are spin-offs in a way.

The whole object of the exercise is about the prison system returning something to the community. However, the spin-off has been the inculcation of good work habits; the requirement that they must cooperate with their peers; and their capacity to live within a community, walk through the shops, and interact with members of the community for which they are seen as providing a service. The feedback those prisoners have given me is that this has been a great experience for them. It has been a great learning experience because they realise that they cannot get up at 10 o'clock in the morning and expect life to fall into their lap. They are achieving this through some kind of self-discipline, rather than being driven to do it, which is what most of the

prison system must be. Those prisoners who are willing to pick up and exercise a sense of self-responsibility, added to other specific treatment program activities, provide a suite of services that give the community a pay-off in terms of the reduction of recidivism.

The CHAIRMAN: I am conscious of the time.

Mr CULLEN: Can I make a brief comment?

The CHAIRMAN: Before you do, we do have some questions on specific programs. I want to try to get through them and deal with some programs after your comment.

Mr CULLEN: I will make it as brief as I can. We know with a lot of juveniles that setting the boundaries firmly works. Boundary setting has been one of the least explored avenues of crime prevention, and one which is probably the richest vein for us to explore. I am stepping outside my Ministry of Justice position when I say that I suspect we have still to get it right with juveniles in our response to their offending at the lower order. I do not believe coming down too hard is the way. That tends to bring about a hardening reaction from juveniles. It must be an appropriate response to the action. Being too soft or too hard is problematic. We must get that right. We know when we get it right, we get an attrition rate. Out of a hundred offenders who go along to some kind of checking mechanism, some kind of boundary, perhaps 80 of them will fall off at the first one. Of the remaining 20, two or three will fall off at the next level. Criminal justice should be about that graduated approach. We know that and we must build on it.

I believe attention deficit disorder is a highly controversial area, but one which is deserving of further exploration. In juvenile detention centres, we generally have the most difficult to manage juveniles acting in very rational, well behaved ways because the boundaries are very well set. If they have medication, it is given to them, and it is overseen. They have activities to do during the day. They have an ordered life. The problem is when they go outside, there is not that sense of order in their life. For some very serious, repeat offenders, there is nowhere for them on the outside. They very quickly exhaust hostels and other accommodation options, if they cannot live at home, which will supervise them or even have them. Currently we have juveniles who cannot get in anywhere in the community, and that is a problem.

Mrs ROBERTS: I noted in the papers sent to us some comments on the Warminda Intensive Intervention Centre, which the Government announced after the closure of Camp Kurli Murri. It was suggested that the program would be evaluated early in 1998. Has that evaluation been carried out and would it be available to the committee? It also states that it is estimated that over 90 per cent of these offenders in the 16 to 21 age group will have exhibited some form of drug or alcohol abuse. It says that drug testing is carried out and that offenders are excluded if they have continued use of illicit drugs. Are those people picked up by another program?

Mr VAUGHAN: They may then be returned to court for further determination of what is appropriate, if they are in breach of their order.

Mr CULLEN: Yes, it is a three strikes rule.

Mrs ROBERTS: Could you not recommend an alternative program?

Mr VAUGHAN: There may be. A further assessment would be made of the needs of the case. If it is returned to the Children's Court for further determination it is for the court to decide the most appropriate determination. As Bill commented, it is not instant dismissal, as it were, for the first drug offence. There is an acknowledgment that it is important to try to deal with the issue, just as in the community, if treatment services for drug offenders are instantly harsh they are less effective. At the same time some boundary setting is required so that the behaviour is seen to have its consequences. For example, it would be inappropriate for a person to flagrantly breach the rules on drug abuse and continue to receive access to those programs.

Mr CULLEN: I understand that the evaluation is not complete.

Mr VAUGHAN: That is true as far as I am aware.

Mr CULLEN: I do not see a problem in giving you a copy.

Mr VAUGHAN: I am not aware of the status of any evaluation. I imagine that whatever is available will be available to the committee.

Mrs ROBERTS: It says that this program will be evaluated early in 1998.

Mr CULLEN: I do not believe it is complete.

Mrs ROBERTS: If it is not complete, when it is complete perhaps we could have a copy.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: One of the previous witnesses said that one of the turning points is often when a young person decides to settle down. How do you choose your mentors and do you have evidence of the program's success?

Mr VAUGHAN: Could I take those questions on notice and provide you with the information?

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Yes.

Mr VAUGHAN: The scheme was introduced a couple of years ago and it is showing some promising results.

Mrs ROBERTS: Are you experiencing any difficulties emanating from the fines enforcement legislation?

Mr VAUGHAN: You may be aware that at one stage our offender system was grossly overloaded with people who had failed to pay their fines and were, in fact, converting fines to work and development orders. The ludicrous situation arose of people driving up in their Mercedes or Jaguar to undertake some kind of community work because they did not wish to pay the fine. That was not what was intended and a series of steps were put in place with the fines enforcement legislation which, essentially, required payment of fines. The potential to seize goods in lieu of a fine, with a couple of gatekeeping mechanisms, ensured that for the recalcitrants a number of steps were required to be taken before that person would end up in prison.

Mrs ROBERTS: They would lose their driver's licence?

Mr VAUGHAN: Yes. Also the community-based officers - formerly the Community Corrections Officers - were advised whenever the Sheriff's Office had issued a work order so that the person was aware of the terms of his order and that every effort was made to comply with it. If in breach of that order, more was done to ensure a last chance was given to the offender to ensure that he did not go to prison but met his obligations under the work order. My advice is that that has been stunningly successful in the dramatic drop of people ending up in gaol or doing work and development orders. The figures are available - I am not sure whether they are in the annual report.

Mr CULLEN: At the height of the scheme I think, 14 000 people were on the work and development order per year, and 1 000 or 2 000 people were in prison for fine defaulting. The number of prisoners has reduced to about 70 per year now and the number of work and development orders is down to about 100, although it is increasing slightly at this stage.

Mrs ROBERTS: People are at the other end of the scale who are - you may call them recalcitrants - completely unable to take control of matters and who are unable to pay their fines in instalments. People have come to see me who said that they will get the money through other illegal means because they cannot pay their fines in instalments. I have sat down with them and gone through their financial situation and they have put goods into hock and done all kinds of things to pay off fines. I recall a couple of circumstances in which the men involved had one of these changing factors in their life. They had met someone, got married, had a couple of kids, had not offended for some time, then found themselves in a desperate situation. They lost their licence and by losing their licence they then lost their job. They would show up in the system in another way, if they showed up at all.

Mr VAUGHAN: I am not aware of any outcome of the evaluation of that scheme. Surely the question of hardship would have been one of the terms of reference of that scheme. Perhaps we could provide further information about that?

Mr CULLEN: A copy of the evaluation is available. It was done in conjunction with the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Mr VAUGHAN: And did that have a term of reference on hardship?

Mr CULLEN: I do not know; I would have to have a look at it.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Do you see parole as a crime prevention strategy, and if so, how?

Mr VAUGHAN: In setting boundaries and providing a structure which will keep an offender's mind on the job, parole is effective. I understand that the most recently completed statistics on recidivism support the contention that the structure and requirement to report and undertake programs is of assistance to a significant number of offenders. I believe that once again, in terms of the comparison between the offenders who have parole and those who are released without parole supervision, a lower proportion of those re-offend during the period.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that all Western Australian prisoners are tested for literacy levels. I acknowledge your comment earlier about indicators of literacy not necessarily translating to indicators of crime or offending.

Mr CULLEN: It is, nonetheless, a significant indicator and one we take very seriously.

The CHAIRMAN: Can you provide the committee with information on the levels of literacy in offenders?

Mr CULLEN: 65 per cent are assessed as having literacy deficiencies.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Non-functional literacy?

Mr CULLEN: "Deficiencies" is the way we record it. They are considered to have problems.

The CHAIRMAN: Will you provide the committee with some details of literacy levels and the type of offenders? I am not sure whether there is a correlation there, but I am interested in the difference between juvenile and adult offenders.

Over the past decade or so, have detailed research projects been undertaken on WA offenders to try to ascertain those major contributing factors to the causes or bases for offending or do we rely largely on overseas research?

Mr VAUGHAN: At the moment in terms of the research into the causation of crime we are taking our lead from interstate and international research. We are carrying out evaluations of our programs. The sex offender treatment program, for example, has attracted considerable resource and is the best evaluated in terms of its impact on recidivism. The results there are promising.

In terms of the more fundamental causes and origins of crime, I expect the Geraldton cyclic offending project, which is an action project, to inform debate and knowledge in that field. I presume you have been advised how that is to be evaluated.

The CHAIRMAN: We have been advised that it will be evaluated, but we have not seen the evaluation criteria.

Mr VAUGHAN: That is supposed to be of a high academic standard, but it will be some years before it can give us a result.

The CHAIRMAN: Would it be fair to say that the international information the committee may assess could be applied generally to Western Australia?

Mr CULLEN: We need to exercise some caution about that. For example, at the recent crime prevention conference in Fremantle, which I organised, Laurence Sherman spoke about his extensive research - to which I am sure you have had access. He talked about conducting meta-analysis across a range of distinct crime prevention and relapse prevention activities. He arrives at conclusions that I would be very hesitant to apply in Australia, for example, that gun buy-back schemes do not work. That maybe so in the United States, but I am not sure we could generalise

those conclusions in relation to Australia.

However, other aspects of the literature can be generalised. Some of the research being done in Canada and the United Kingdom over recent years, particularly some of the "what works literature" - which is what it has generically come to be known as - has some direct application to Western Australia.

Mr VAUGHAN: There is also the Broadhurst and Maller research done on sex offending, which you probably have heard about.

Mrs ROBERTS: Some other research pointed out to us on juveniles doing home burglaries indicated that the chances of their being caught is a fact they take into consideration. What they do not take it into consideration is the period of incarceration. We also have some evidence of what the police have said. You spoke about the pawnbrokers' legislation and the impact it had on reducing home burglaries, particularly over the next limited period, but at the same time armed robbery figures have increased.

Mr CULLEN: A displacement factor is involved.

Mrs ROBERTS: Why are we not interviewing our own prison population and doing some research to find out why these people do armed robberies? Anecdotally, people say they believe it is because people want the money for drugs, but there does not seem to be any scientific basis for those comments. They seem to be as informed comments as people are able to make.

International research may not have validity. It would depend on state legislation and a set of factors such as why more armed robberies than home burglaries occur compared to some other crime, that may be at work in Western Australia that are not at work in Victoria or New South Wales. The question is: Why are we not doing more specific research with our own prison population?

Mr VAUGHAN: There is some relevant research which is almost generic across the western world that is informative - the things I was describing earlier - inconsistent, harsh, excessively harsh, or excessively soft discipline and all of the "career" that people go through creating criminals. As far as I am aware there are common threads. We have examined the literature in the US and Canada and at some Hawaiian initiatives on intervention programs. They really do have the ring of truth. I also agree that some idiosyncratic circumstances will arise in each jurisdiction which might concern sanctions, or fad and fashion, etc. However, I sound a caution apply research across the world identically, but some of it will be instructive.

Regarding why we are not asking armed robbers why they did it, one of our experiences has been that some methodological difficulties arise in carrying out some of that research. For example, we do it with prisoners who escape. Self-report is from time to time a rather flawed method. People do not always have a particularly good appreciation of all their complex motives anyway, so there will always be some limitations in that. I suppose the other limitation is the funds available to do serious intensive research. Self-report carries some inherent accuracy problems.

Mr CULLEN: I endorse what you said. The Act has nothing in it about rehabilitation. It is only

in the past few years that the ministry has started to look seriously at rehabilitation. We have had a de facto modus operandi of, well, "warehousing" prisoners. There is no easy way of putting it, except we wanted to do it as humanely and efficiently as possible. However, looking to rehabilitate them was not part of the game plan until very recently. A research component is part of a rehabilitation view on life and that is what we have now started to acquire. We hope to provide for that in the new Act, and I have no doubt that more research will flow from that.

Mr VAUGHAN: I endorse that completely. Research and evaluation are absolutely fundamental to any program inputs, otherwise we are operating in hope rather than gaining any kind of accurate progress. Any programs that we provide should be backed up with a commitment to evaluation. Even modest initiatives such as the adult prisoner work camp has been subject to full evaluation on a number of fronts which encompasses the impact on staff, prisoners and communities. Following that we hope to proceed forward.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Can you provide me with figures on people who are released without parole and with parole in order to compare the figures with the rate of recidivism?

Mr VAUGHAN: Yes. My recollection is that the Broadhurst and some guidance in that respect.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your contribution. I look forward to receiving that information. If the committee needs to clarify or seek additional information, we hope you will be able to provide same.

Mr VAUGHAN: We would be delighted.

[The witnesses retired]

BUDISELIK, MR WILLIAM ROBERT,
Executive Director, Industry Development and Service Specification,
Family and Children's Services,
residing at 3 Perina Place,
Wilson, examined:

FORD, MR DANIEL JAMES,
Director, Aboriginal Strategy and Policy,
Family and Children's Services,
residing at 97 Southlake Drive,
South Lake, examined:

RENSHAW, MS SUSAN MAREE,
Manager, Special Projects,
Family and Children's Services,
residing at 8 Lawrence Avenue,
West Perth, examined:

BOWLER, MR GARY JOHN,
Executive Director, Country Services,
Family and Children's Services,
residing at 61 Glenorchy Crescent,
Hamersley, examined:

The CHAIRMAN: Have you read and did you understand the "Details of Witness" form that you signed?

Mr BUDISELIK: Yes.

Mr FORD: Yes.

Ms RENSHAW: Yes.

Mr BOWLER: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: You have seen the terms of reference of the committee, and you have received a copy of a letter indicating the committee's intention to establish an understanding of crime and its underlying causes before examining programs in detail. This is an open hearing. Members of the media can attend if they wish, although none is present at the moment. Do you have any objections to the media being present at any time?

Mr BUDISELIK: No.

Mr FORD: No.

Ms RENSHAW: No.

Mr BOWLER: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you like to give a brief overview of the department?

Mr BUDISELIK: Family and Children's Services is not a department which targets criminal behaviour per se. However, we hope that by developing strategies to achieve our mission, we contribute to a more orderly and crime-free community. Research is not our primary goal, but our programs are based on research and good information.

I wish to quote from an article entitled "Early childhood intervention - a promising preventative for juvenile delinquency", by Zeigler, Housig and Black from Yale University. It is dated August 1992 and is found in *American Psychologist*. The article states that programs to reduce or prevent juvenile delinquency have generally been unsuccessful. Apparently the risk factors that make a child prone to delinquency are based on too many systems, including the individual, the family and the community networks. To make isolated treatment methods effective, surprisingly, longitudinal studies of some early childhood intervention programs suggest they may help to reduce future delinquency. These programs take an ecological attempt to enhancing child development by attempting to promote overall social competence in the many systems impacting on children. Not engaging in criminal acts is one indicator of competence that is related to others, such as being successful in school and in personal relationships.

That article sets the base belief of Family and Children's Services about juvenile delinquency in particular and crime in general. In 1993, we lost much of our responsibility for juvenile justice and the prevention of crime. That has allowed us to develop far more clearly a child and family welfare focus without the stigmatisation. In some ways, by being allowed to focus on child and family welfare, particularly parenting programs and parenting initiatives, we are contributing far more effectively to an orderly community than was previously the case. However, as you are aware, it will be some time before the results from those sorts of investments come in. We really are looking at trying to break a generational cycle.

Sue has detailed knowledge of our parenting programs and the initiatives we are undertaking with our parent information centres, parent link home visiting services and other educational programs. Gary has a good understanding of all our programs in the field. He represents both country and metropolitan field delivery. Danny is a recent member of the executive as our Aboriginal director, strategy and policy. One cannot talk about crime in Western Australia without including an Aboriginal component and analysis, which Danny will offer to the committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I want to pick up on the comment you made about the department's focus and the suggestion in the department's submission that the programs assist with reducing crime, but that is a secondary outcome and not the primary purpose. I find that understandable, but disappointing. The committee's view is that in talking about crime we are not talking simply about the committing of offences by individuals in certain situations but about trying to identify the causes. It appears from the evidence we have received that the primary causes are largely influenced by the family environment or a number of factors associated with the environment within which people grow up or in which they are currently living. Therefore, given the

submission, it appears that Family and Children's Services is one of the primary agencies, if we are to analyse crime prevention, which can forge a lot of the preventative work as opposed to perhaps seeing itself as having a secondary role in crime prevention.

Mr BUDISELIK: I do not disagree with what you are saying. There is a lot of arbitrariness about what is classified as crime in the first place. If you are talking about the sorts of crimes associated with juveniles, such as breaking and entering, car theft, or whatever, we believe that by intervening early in a family's history - probably pre-natal - we are doing the most we can to give those young people a stake in the community, et cetera. However, we are in the process of decriminalising some behaviours and labelling other behaviours as criminal, so it depends on what we are talking about, to some extent. Our department operates with a strong belief that if we continue to invest in family community, the outcomes will be positive for the community as a whole. However, the labels that are affixed to behaviour which is deviant will always be a matter of some choice. We probably do not prevent a lot of white collar crime further down the track, but with regard to the "in your face" criminal activity, I hope we make a difference.

The CHAIRMAN: One of the primary roles of the department is the protection of children. A community view would be that harming children is an offence, and in most cases it is believed to be a crime, although there may not be enough evidence to lay charges. Would the department agree with that philosophy?

Mr BUDISELIK: Some social behaviour, such as domestic violence, is more than family dysfunction, and should be labelled a criminal act. Also we must exercise judgments about parents and how they relate to their children. Sexual abuse of children is a clear cut example, but there are other circumstances where young parents are very stressed, living in inadequate accommodation, and perhaps not receiving their fair share of resources to purchase family groceries and so on. We are better off having a more compassionate understanding of some behaviour, and not labelling it criminal behaviour. Many of our new directions in child protection and family support reflect the thinking that we must be very careful with labels which in themselves can stigmatise and can lead to a secondary deviance. That is an issue confronting young Aboriginal people, because they can quickly become labelled and stigmatised, and end up living out a self-fulfilling prophesy.

Mrs ROBERTS: You said that research was not the primary goal of the department, but that programs are based on research, and so on. Does the department engage in any research; if so, at what level and who does it?

Mr BUDISELIK: We engage in a lot of research. The broad directional research on which we base our parenting initiatives tend to be more from WARICH, and surveys that we have commissioned, rather than our own research. Our annual report lists an extensive number of research initiatives that we have commissioned or undertaken ourselves. Our research tends to be more about the efficacy of particular programs and program evaluation, or research around particular services.

Mrs ROBERTS: It is largely an evaluation of your own programs.

Mr BUDISELIK: Increasingly I think that is the way it will be. Our research will be about their

efficacy, and we will tend to scan literature for good research and, where necessary, commission an expert body to undertake research on our behalf. I referred to the WARICH study, and I presume this has been part of your thinking. You would have seen the document. It contains excellent material about the parenting styles that lead to bad outcomes for young people.

I take this opportunity to offer other information which compares the perceptions of young people and those of their parents about why young people leave home. I was reading this to the team at FCS. For example, in a sample of about 500-odd, 94 young people listed emotional abuse as a primary reason for their leaving home. In the same group, only seven parents listed that as the reason their child had left home. That indicates a terrible mismatch between the parents' perception of why the young person left home, and what the young people feel. We glean that sort of information from our scanning. To delve into that more deeply would be a nice thesis for someone to work on, but it is probably not worth taking the whole department down that line at this stage.

The CHAIRMAN: What was that document, and what is its source?

Mr BUDISELIK: It has not been released yet. It is a draft of the interim report to the Prime Minister on his youth homelessness task force pilot. It should come out towards the end of the year. One of the obvious points is the mismatch, where parent groups state that young people leave home for no reason; but if you talk to young people they have reasons which must be explored. Research is coming at us at a quicker rate than we can absorb.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Most of the information we have received gives a profile of a criminal or someone involved in crime. Much of it comes back to the person having significant persons involved - that is, the family. Does the department keep a record of children and families that are dealt with and whether they have any connection with criminality? Is there any way we can monitor intervention programs which may stop the child going into crime? Do you have any records which may assist us?

Mr BUDISELIK: As far as I know, we do not have data in Western Australia to indicate how many young people for whom we have been responsible move into the adult criminal system. I think a study may have been undertaken in New South Wales by Judy Cashmore on a large number of children and their progression through the systems. There appears to be a lack of information here. It is more complicated than it first appears, because we have such a large through-put of young people for whom we have periodic responsibility.

In regard to the effectiveness of programs, we are starting to get information from our more sophisticated targeting of services and evaluation. From the professionals' point of view, improvements in family functioning and relationships with the community are being recorded and noted.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: How long have you been recording that information?

Mr BUDISELIK: This is a profile of our youth services between 1 July to 31 December 1996. I can table a copy of this document if you like. It is not an accurate measure. It measures the

perception of the work which they believe made a difference.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: We are learning that early intervention is almost from 0 to 3 years -

Mr BUDISELIK: Pre-natal -

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Pre-natal is one of the important times for intervention. I know that in the Midland region you are involved with many children prior to that age. It might be important for us to follow up to see whether it has an influence on whether the children end up in the criminal justice system.

Mr BUDISELIK: We are certainly operating under the belief that it makes a difference. The research is not Western Australian because we have not been operating for that long. However, the trend is to do it that way. You give children a stake.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest we go through the submission and deal with some of those matters. That may provide an opportunity for other members to comment. I turn first to the Best Start program. Although I have a reasonable understanding of that, I am not sure that other members of the committee do. Can you tell us why the program was initiated, the stage it has reached, and what has been achieved?

Mr FORD: The Best Start program has been in place for a few years. The concept began in 1993, I think, and took a few years to gain some impetus. A few years ago it began with the Parenting Plus program, for which funding was made available. There were six pilot sites initially, mainly in the north country. The idea for Best Start was to expand the concept from 0 to 3 out to 0 to 5. When Aboriginal kids get to year 1, they are very much behind the eight ball compared to their non-Aboriginal colleagues. The idea of the program is to give kids the best possible start in their schooling. Best Start involves cooperation between three departments: Family and Children's Services, the Health Department, and the Education Department.

The core functions of the three departments bring them into contact with families. Family and Children's Services provides support to the family; the Health Department can pick up ear or eye problems, and provide nutrition programs; the Education Department can open up schools to programs and any other support that local schools can give. The Aboriginal Affairs Department has had a role in giving advice, and so on.

The sites have expanded. This document indicates 15, but I thought we had 16. I may have missed something along the line. Some pilot sites have gone from strength to strength. Although some sites are progressing in leaps and bounds, others are still developing. Obviously when communities are offered funding and ideas they may not have the infrastructure to allow them to act straight away. There are various stages of development, but some sites are operating quite well. The fruits of that labour will not be seen for a few years, because the target is 0 to 5 years and even the kids who have been involved over the last few years will not necessarily be those who will break the cycle. The kids who are coming through now will begin to take on board some of the things that the project is trying to achieve. Best Start is very much a preventive program.

The CHAIRMAN: You have covered the education issues. I understand that the program was focused on assisting parents to provide a better environment, and on helping young parents. What are the issues with regard to parenting, and why were the targeted groups families in remote or semi-remote Aboriginal communities as opposed to urbanised Aboriginal families?

Mr FORD: Obviously in more urbanised areas parents can tap into many more types of support than are available in remote-type communities. The reason that remote and semi-remote communities were targeted is that the information and knowledge is not there. The program provided an opportunity for the parents to learn and to pass that knowledge to their children. The children are the beneficiaries, but it is the parents who are targeted for involvement in the program, because if the parents are not involved, the program will not achieve its objectives.

The CHAIRMAN: You stated that one of the aims is to protect children from maltreatment. How does Best Start protect children from maltreatment if it is an educational program?

Mr FORD: If parents take a bit more interest in their children, they will learn more appropriate ways of disciplining their children rather than hitting them. They will start to use more acceptable methods such as restricting privileges or sending the child to bed, rather than whacking the kid across the ear, which in many of those remote communities is sometimes the way Aboriginal people discipline their children. If the parents learn better ways of looking after their children, that effectively protects their children from maltreatment.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: How do you get children into the net? Do you just focus on dysfunctional families within the community, or on the whole community? How do you evaluate the results as you go along?

Mr FORD: The community itself must want to be involved. It is difficult to set up a Best Start program when only two or three families want to be involved. The coordinator's role is to try to get as many families involved as possible. We are finding that people want to be involved as much as they can. The program in Moora involves virtually all of the children aged between zero and five in the town, and people from the outlying districts are even bringing in their children. It is not difficult to get people involved, because people want it.

Ms RENSHAW: We do not target specific groups within the community, such as children who come from particular types of families. It is more universally available, and children get into the program through things like playgroups. The focus is on the whole community, and within the whole community providing services to a particular group.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: In places like Moora, do any non-Aboriginal communities join in?

Mr FORD: In one or two instances a non-Aboriginal child attends, but it is not the norm. Most communities still have a racist element, where they do not want their child to go to an Aboriginal school or playgroup but prefer their child to go to the mainstream one. I believe that once parents in the mainstream community see the value of this, they will want to send their kids. You will not have this information, because it is in my own notes, but so far we have estimated that 5 400 people will attend the Best Start program in 1997-98.

The CHAIRMAN: That is amazing.

Mr FORD: That is amazing for 15 or 16 pilot sites.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand that the original concept was to try to link in what we regard as the community nurse concept - seeing mothers with their first born child to try to create an awareness of health and responsibilities. Is that still part of the program?

Mr FORD: That is still an integral part of the program. Not only community health nurses but local Aboriginal medical services are involved in the programs. Wiluna has no community health nurse; the AMS comes along. The health aspects of the child are targeted by the Best Start program.

Mrs ROBERTS: Does the Best Start program work with the ALS as a matter of course?

Mr FORD: Not all the towns have an Aboriginal Medical Service that is easily accessible. For example, there is no AMS involvement in the program at Wunkajungka.

Mr BUDISELIK: With regard to our public education campaign, we are also trying to develop specific products for Aboriginal people. An Aboriginal parenting video has recently been developed but has not yet been released. That involves local people from one of the communities in the goldfields.

Mrs ROBERTS: Where you do not have a program, do you make the information available to other groups? For example, the AMS is currently setting up some premises in Midland. As far as I am aware, you do not have a program there. There are large Aboriginal communities in Midvale, Koongamia and other places. If you were developing some material which was useful, would you pass that on to a group such as the AMS?

Mr FORD: Our local children's services officers are very much aware of the material that we have and will give the information to local playgroups. There is actually a Best Start project in Midland. It is one of the newer ones for us. The important thing is getting into the community and letting people know about the program.

Mrs ROBERTS: Is that based at the parenting centre?

Mr FORD: I have not visited it. I just know that one program is operating in Midland right now.

Ms RENSHAW: A coordinator has been employed and at the moment is probably operating out of one of our local offices and linking in with the other agencies in the community.

Mr FORD: That program is very much a community development approach in trying to link in with local Aboriginal organisations.

Mrs ROBERTS: There is also a parenting centre at Midland Gate Shopping Centre that is run by Family and Children's Services.

The CHAIRMAN: Could you provide some information to the committee about from where the Best Start program is being delivered in Midland and the current status of that program?

Mr FORD: Yes.

Ms RENSHAW: Each of the Best Start projects is collecting data about its own outcomes. Therefore, each community project sets up its own outcomes, which link in with the broad outcomes, and collects data on which it reports regularly. Eventually we will be able to compare over time the outcomes of the program for the children and the parents. We are also conducting regular major overall program evaluations, and we are currently conducting one of Best Start. The information from those evaluations will be made available to local government agencies as well, and that is one way of spreading information around.

The CHAIRMAN: I turn now to the positive parenting program. What research underpins the positive parenting program, particularly with regard to the outcomes that the program is designed to achieve for children; namely, decreasing oppositional behaviour, and decreasing conflict disorder and oppositional defined disorder?

Ms RENSHAW: You are referring to point 2.2.2 in our submission, the positive parenting program. That is based on research that has been done over the last 15 years by Professor Matt Sanders at Queensland University and a team of people who have been working with him. As well as doing academic research, they have been piloting projects throughout the country. It is based on substantial research done by a team of psychologists, and also on piloting programs.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that research available?

Ms RENSHAW: Yes, and there are some evaluations that have been done of his work as well which would also be available.

The CHAIRMAN: Could you make that available to the committee. If it is of huge volume, then we would accept a concise precis, but as a committee we would like to have access at least to that basic research that has been used to develop programs. I am also very interested in the effectiveness of the positive parenting program. Coming back to the issue that has been raised by a number of witnesses with respect to the environment in which children grow up in and the link between dysfunctional families and antisocial or criminal behaviour, I ask you with reference to the evaluations and research that has been performed, is there a clear link between a dysfunctional family and that type of behaviour that emanates from members of the family or do you believe that the issues are unrelated?

Ms RENSHAW: Bill referred in his introduction to the research that has been done by the Institute of Child Health Research. I think that research shows fairly substantially there is a clear link between family dysfunction and poor parenting and mental health problems, and the way they define mental health problems is to talk about aggression, juvenile offending, and so on. It seems clear from their research that there is a direct link between parenting and family functioning generally and at least one of the social causes of some kinds of criminal behaviour.

The CHAIRMAN: Are the evaluations of the parenting program showing any sign that it is delivering similar sorts of outcomes or addressing outcomes that have been said?

Ms RENSHAW: Our evaluation of the parenting program is based more on assisting parents with problems such as discipline, and we are finding that parents are obtaining information from the parent information centres which enables them to find alternative forms of discipline for instance, and it shows in the WA Institute of Child Health Research that there is a link between coercive discipline and mental health problems. We are not presently measuring whether there is a direct causal effect of our programs on crime itself, but we are showing that parents are benefiting from the information they receive from us of being able to find alternative forms of parenting behaviour which may therefore reduce the impact of mental health problems on their children.

Mr BUDISELIK: I think it links back to the quote I read in the beginning which is that a child is influenced by a lot of different systems and clearly family is one of the most important. I do not think there is an universal answer in terms of whether people who display criminal behaviour have come from a particular sort of family, it is not that clear, in that there is incipient mental illness, incipient psychological predispositions, and genetic factors that the best family in the world may not overcome. It is the belief of our department that if there is an improvement in family functioning, a lot of people will be pulled into the net that otherwise would not be in there. It is a lot about giving young people stake in the society, making them feel as though they are citizens and having a worthwhile role to play, but that will not overcome some poor soul who has an incipient psychosis or something like that which is hereditary.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: What percentage of Aboriginals are accessing the positive parenting and other parenting programs? I notice there is a school one here - role in parenting groups. Are we getting a large number of Aboriginals bearing in mind that we know there is no representation in our juvenile justice system of the young Aboriginals? How do these relate to the Aboriginal population?

Mr FORD: The triple P program is operated from the parent help centre. The parent help centre recently employed an Aboriginal social worker and one of the things she did last week was to conduct a forum in which she invited many organisations along to basically ask how can a parent help centre start to engage more Aboriginal families and more Aboriginal organisations. It is a cooperative type of arrangement. All I saw on that was a general E-mail congratulating everyone with some positive things so I had chase up more information about the outcome of that, but as I understand it, Aboriginal people have never used the parent help centre a great deal in the past. It obviously had a benefit from the triple P program. The mobile parent information centres in the city seem to have a minimal usage. People are not quite sure where they are going yet. When the mobile parent information centre goes to the country towns, and this is the thing that surprised me a great deal because I would have said it would have went the other way, in the Albany one - the southern zone one - there is a high Aboriginal usage. I would have thought people would not have gone in the big sort of lairy kind of caravan but they have used it quite well. We are developing one for the north country now.

Mr BOWLER: It will be running later this year. We will be having mobile parent information centres in the Pilbara and Kimberley as well as a centre based parenting information centre in Broome. We already have one in South Headland Shopping Centre outside Coles and there is a

significant use of that centre by Aboriginal people in South Headland.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Have you plans to try to do something about getting the Aboriginal people in the metropolitan area into some of these facilities rather than set up new ones?

Ms RENSHAW: In terms of the parenting information centres, they are universal services which are tied with the demands in population. The first step was to get them up and running to target universally and now we are beginning to develop strategies to specifically target them to Aboriginal people to find out what will attract them to those type of centres. We are currently doing some market research into what Aboriginal parents want in terms of parent information and how they will be encouraged to access those sort of services.

Mr BOWLER: I will add some numbers in regard to the parenting information centres. The static ones as well as the mobile centres are currently being used at approximately 5 000 people per month across the State. We have surveyed the people satisfaction rate in regard to those centres and 93 per cent of people surveyed found the information useful and in fact 55 per cent of people surveyed actually made changes to their parenting behaviour, so they have changed some aspect of the way they parent such as introducing new strategies based on the information they obtained, or taking a different approach to discipline.

Mr FORD: I need to make one more point with Sue's comment. Part of the issue has been that the information has been very much targeted at the mainstream as well. That is why we are developing things like the Aboriginal parenting video and it will also lead to the employment of an Aboriginal corporate communication officer in Bill's section. I see a role of that person to start developing more Aboriginal user friendly type packages and parent information for the Aboriginal community. Once that goes into these static pits and especially the ones in the metropolitan area, I can see a change of people coming to the centres and asking for information about parenting and handing them an Aboriginal booklet that they can relate to rather than a mainstream booklet. I think the usage will increase.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I am thinking of Midland for instance where there is a large Aboriginal population and I know from the Midland people that they rarely get an Aboriginal anywhere near the door?

Mr FORD: Once the Best Start in Midland connects up with that parenting information centre, I think you will see some changes.

The CHAIRMAN: I am conscious of the time and I was joking when I said we could spend a couple of hours, that is not the intent. Is the home visiting program that was attached to parent information centres still operating and does it also include also Aboriginal families in the defined area.

Ms RENSHAW: That program is still operating. We now have expanded the number of services we provide and we now have three non-government services as well. That program is still in the pilot stage and we are examining the outcomes, but it does not necessarily seem to be targeting Aboriginal families as much as we would like it to do, but it does seem to be targeting single parents and people from disadvantaged areas. It may need some modifications to target

Aboriginal families but we are also finding that there is a need for different strategies for Aboriginal families so we are developing other kinds of pilot programs targeted at Aboriginal families.

Mr FORD: We have great difficulty attracting Aboriginal volunteers. That pool who could possibly volunteer is actually working so there is not the pool there to fulfil it.

The CHAIRMAN: In your submission one of the aims of the adolescent and child support service is to develop the skills and strategies of the customers to address negative or self-harming behaviour, if my assumption is right, knowing the target group you are dealing with. What research has been done into the contributing factors that lead young people to participate in self-harming behaviour? What do we know about young people in Western Australia who engage in self-harming behaviour?

Mr BUDISELIK: The causes are obviously very complex. The manager of that project, Pat Hanson, has just come back from the United States. She is promoting a particular approach which attempts to encourage moral development. The program she is asking us to look at is called EQUIP. It aims to introduce ways of thinking and analysing for the client which stimulate the client beyond where the client is at. Most simplistically, the intent of model is that young people move from doing or not doing something through fear of being punished if they do or do not do it, through to seeing themselves as citizens of self-worth with their own conscience. There are a number of stages in between that, which we attempt to encourage the young person to think through. Pat has come back with this program which she believes will form the basis of the way in which we attempt to tutor these young people.

Historically in Western Australia we have had a very strong behavioural orientation to managing juveniles, which is not so much getting them to reflect and think on why they are doing things but rather merely stopping them from doing something. This program will aim at bringing together the behavioural and developmental streams, as it were, in the way that people are meant to develop. Basically, we can consider that a person is made up of his personality, intellect, morality and behaviour. We must come up with strategies that really aim to enhance the development of a number of those different streams. I have probably not made it very clear for you.

The CHAIRMAN: What research has been done, if any, into the causes or contributing factors to that lead to or are involved in self-harming behaviour?

Mr BUDISELIK: We would rely more on Sven Silbern and the researchers of WARICH to give us that information. It is so complex. I read in the area but I would not feel expert enough to give a parliamentary committee an answer.

Mr BOWLER: I am aware that there are different views as to what contributes to self-harming behaviour. We could take that question on notice and ask our psychologists and researchers to provide information that may be helpful to the committee. I am certainly not familiar enough with it to talk about it here.

Mr BUDISELIK: The more we look into that area the more we get on to the fundamentals of self-esteem, whether young people can empathise with others and a range of other elements.

The CHAIRMAN: Solvent abuse comes to mind as one of the issues that impacts on the community and also has a major impact on the individual involved in that behaviour. Is there new information about solvent abuse?

Mr BUDISELIK: We have recently concluded a scoping study which looked at the degree of drug usage among young people for whom we have a responsibility. Solvents do figure quite highly but so do some other hard drugs these days, including heroin, but it is still predominantly and at marihuana-alcohol end. The wise emphasis is on alcohol abuse. We can almost pick out by number the hard drug users. Solvent abuse is obviously a huge problem in a number of Aboriginal communities in the metropolitan area and in the country.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: I notice in your introduction you said that it is important to note that although these programs do assist in reducing crime, this is only a secondary outcome and not their primary purpose. Page 20 of your submission refers to agency planning coordination. You indicate that you realise the importance of working with other agencies right across board to solve crime. You also indicate that you have a resource commitment with which you are assisting other state strategies, such as drug and alcohol abuse and the Justice Coordinating Committee. Could you provide us with a list of your programs which you see as across agency crime prevention programs and tell us whether you feel they are working? We are trying to home in on the ones you do for crime prevention.

Mr BUDISELIK: Crime defined broadly?

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Yes, as in the interagency plan referred to in section 4 of your submission, so that we can get a bit of an idea of how you are fitting in the jigsaw of crime prevention.

Mr BUDISELIK: As an entree to what we will send you, domestic violence would figure highly in our thinking of labelling a lot of the behaviour as criminal

The CHAIRMAN: May I take the liberty of jumping through some of the programs? You have touched on homelessness and you talked about some of the young people. I am aware of evaluations that have been made of the supported accommodation assistance program, which I presume is still called that. Will you indicate whether we are seeing trends of people using refuges or seeking assistance as a result of a breakdown in a relationship where violence has occurred or as a result of homelessness? Are trends moving away from the historical pattern of repeat usage? My recollection is that two-thirds of the people involved were using refuges about five or six times. Are those trends still consistent or is there a change in trends now that we have implemented new programs?

Mr BUDISELIK: Honestly, we are drowning in SAAP data. It would probably be best if we took that away and got people to extract the trend. The national data collection initiative with SAAP is producing volumes a couple of times a year, which makes me frightened of giving an off the cuff answer. We will get Julie Rosenberg Russell to compile a note on that for the committee.

Ms RENSHAW: I doubt that there is much of a change in that trend. We are now developing a range of support services for victims of domestic violence and their families. We are focusing

also on prevention, by developing programs for children from violent homes. We are hoping that ultimately those sorts of strategies will reduce the numbers of people who constantly return to violent relationships and also reduce the cycle, which means that less children will eventually grow up accepting that violence in normal. The Government in the last Budget allocated \$250 000 per year for four years to programs targeted specifically at children from violent homes. We have developed a number of different services, particularly one in the metropolitan area, which provide services to children in refuges and when they leave them. Those group programs deal with issues of violence, ultimately with the aims, firstly, of reducing the effects on children of witnessing the violence and, secondly, we hope, of influencing their behaviour as they grow up.

Mrs van de KLASHORST: Do those group programs include Aboriginal families who suffer from violence?

Ms RENSHAW: They would. Some of the people drawn to the refuges would be Aboriginal parents and children.

Mr FORD: I have some statistics on that. Thirty per cent of supported accommodation assistance program customers were Aboriginal. Of all the SAAP services, refuges certainly have a high usage.

Ms RENSHAW: We are certainly getting our target group for the programs from the refuges themselves.

Mr BUDISELIK: One of the new bits of information I have seen is from the Prime Minister's pilot projects. That is based on a form of voluntary acceptance of referrals, so there is a community perception that when a family breaks down and the young person storms out, neither the parents nor the youth will voluntarily accept a referral to mediation. It is a bit early to say yet, but on the first set of figures that are coming through, it looks like about one-quarter of those families want reconciliation, which is really important to our knowledge base. However, it also means that three-quarters do not, and we need to be realistic about that.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for your contribution. We appreciate your time today.

[The witnesses retired]

THE COMMITTEE ADJOURNED
