

# UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Thursday 25 June 2009 - Estimates Committee B (Cox) - Part 1

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

### ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Thursday 25 June 2009

#### MEMBERS

Mr Dean  
Mr Finch  
Mr Gaffney  
Mr Wing  
Ms Rattray-Wagner (Chair)

#### IN ATTENDANCE

**Hon. Jim Cox MP**, Minister for Police and Emergency Management; Minister for Local Government

#### Department of Police and Emergency Management

**Darren Hine**, Acting Commissioner  
**Scott Tilyard**, Acting Deputy Commissioner  
**Scott Wilson-haffenden**, Director, Finance Corporate Service

#### Tasmania Fire Service

**John Gledhill**, Chief Officer  
**Mike Gallagher**, Director of Corporate Services  
**Michael Brown**, Deputy Chief Officer, State Fire Commission

#### Local Government Office

**Jessie Byrne**, Director, Local Government Office  
**Alastair Scott**, Deputy Director, Local Government Office  
**Greg Brown**, Director, Partnership Agreements

#### Ministerial Staff

**Gerald Jones**, Adviser for Police  
**Yasmin Kelly**, Adviser for Emergency Management  
**Jen Butler**, Adviser for Local Government

**The committee met at 9.30 a.m.**

**CHAIR** (Mrs Rattray-Wagner) - Minister, welcome. It is always a pleasure to welcome you to the Estimates process. Would you like to provide a brief overview? That would be most acceptable.

**Mr COX** - Thank you, Madam Chair, for that very warm welcome. I can do the overview, I can tell you we are the safest State in the nation and I can take up five minutes of that or we can just start and do what we are meant to be here for. I would prefer to do the last one.

**CHAIR** - I think the committee will appreciate the fact that you are not about to hand out a lot of media releases to us. I will hand straight over to Mr Dean who would expect nothing less than to kick off this particular session.

## **DIVISION 8**

(Department of Police and Emergency Management)

**Mr DEAN** - I think it is generally recognised that Tasmania Police is doing a wonderful job, and I do not think anybody will ever say they are not.

**Mr COX** - And they have done it again this year.

**Mr DEAN** - Minister, I know a lot of these things came out yesterday and I guess to you and to some of the members here it will seem to be a bit repetitive but we need to go through some of it as well.

**Mr COX** - We accept that you all have a responsibility, you have a job to do and if it is repetitious for us then so be it. We appreciate the reason that you do this.

**Mr DEAN** - I want to start on the budget and the redundancy program. I am across that now; a few things came out during this process about the fact that redundancies can be made up in other ways but that is on top of those other cuts that have to be made to things such as transport and executive appointments and so on.

In the state of the State address, Minister, the Premier made it very clear that front-line policing would not be impacted upon. We now know that that is not right; it has to be impacted on if you start making changes in the organisation. So what is the extent of that? What will we see change in front-line policing services because the cut is quite significant. If you look ahead to the year 2011-12 the cut is quite high. The amount of \$7 million or \$8 million is a huge decrease to the Police budget. How will the police get control of that moving forward in relation to front line policing?

**Mr COX** - Mr Dean, it will not surprise you to know that I will pass this over to the Commissioner and of course to the Corporate Affairs Manager. Can I say that there has been a senior management committee from Tasmania Police and they have worked diligently. This started fortunately prior to the Budget being announced. It came out under Project Meridian, which was looking at how to put in cost savings, how to change some things around within the police service, so the work was under way prior to any budget cuts being required.

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There will be a reduction of about 25 positions in the State Service by way of leave without pay, reduced working hours and some voluntary redundancies. There are other strategies that have been put in place and which you did touch on, and the intent certainly is not to affect front-line policing; that would be the wish of all of us. But to go into the detail of it, Commissioner, would you like to go from there and then we will go to Scott.

**Mr HINE** - Thanks, Minister.

Mr Dean, as you are aware, the budget deficiency for the next financial year is \$3.891 million and we have been working on this for quite some time, as the minister pointed out. Project Meridian has been in place for some time. It does equate to about \$2.1 million in relation to State Service savings and if you put that in a pure FTE or person value, it is about 25 positions. We have already started on our journey. As of today we are having discussion with three people for redundancies. It is also looking at people's leave without pay and those types of issues.

On the other side of things what impact is it going have? We are going to look at those positions and see if we can replace them, see if we need to replace them or whether we need to do those jobs. On the other side of the house our police numbers are the highest they have ever been in my knowledge. We are at operational strength and we are at full strength, in fact we are increasing our numbers in the operational area. For example, with our district support inspectors or district response inspectors we have combined two areas so therefore we have four surplus inspectors, for want of a better term, and they will translate into extra constables on the frontline once we withdraw those positions. Whilst we may be losing 25 State positions or the equivalent thereof, we are actually adding to the frontline. I am not going to sit here and say it is not going to have some impact losing State Service positions because they are a valuable piece of our organisation and they do a great job. So it will have an impact but we are working our way through it.

Some of the other issues we are looking at - we have already lost, or not renewed the lease on, 23 vehicles so that has a saving of about \$700 000 for us.

**Mr DEAN** - Where do those 23 vehicles come from and what areas were they servicing?

**Mr HINE** - In the majority they were administration and support vehicles so we have not taken away from the operational patrol vehicle. As the minister said, our philosophy is we do not want to affect delivery of policing services. I cannot sit here and say that there will not be some effect because when you have an efficiency difference of \$3.8 million it is going to have an effect but we are working our way through it and our philosophy is we do not want to affect the delivery of front-line services. We have had very high-level meetings and meetings with all our people to get suggestions about how we can find our savings and efficiencies. In fact we have taken a commander off-line to help us work through those issues as well. So we are taking it very seriously. We are involving everyone as well. We are enacting the very minor efficiency gains that we can do with airline travel or those sorts of things right up to the very expensive items as well. Someone coined the term, 'from the cleaner to the commissioner'; the savings have to be made in all those areas'.

**Mr DEAN** - With the State Service positions, if the position goes the job in some instances will go as well. Is that the case? You are saying that will not be the case and that you will need to replace some of those State Service positions with, I take it, uniformed police officers?

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**Mr HINE** - We are hoping, in the majority of the cases, that we will not need to replace the State Service positions. For the ones that we have already identified, we have put out expressions of interest. Some 40 people have put up their hands. They were interested in leave without pay or redundancy packages. So our first philosophy is, 'Do we need the job?'. If the answer is 'no' then of course it will not be replaced. Will there be occasions where we are going to have to put on some police officers? I know in the media you have raised it yourself about speed camera operators. Will civilian speed camera operators need to be replaced by police officers? There may be, on occasions. I am not going to sit here and say that it definitely will not happen, because I cannot say that. We will leave it up to the districts as best we can to make those decisions. There may be occasions where a police officer has to man a speed camera. Hopefully we can use that if it is a return-to-work program for a police officer before they are fully operational. They are the people we would like to use first in those positions. Are we going to reduce our speed camera hours? No, we are not. We all know what the road toll situation is at the moment, so we definitely will not be reducing that. We have to make savings, so will police officers be put in those situations? It may occur.

**Mr DEAN** - What benchmarks currently apply to the speed cameras?

**Mr HINE** - There are hours, and I will get them for you.

**Mr COX** - An additional nine cameras are going out and operational police will actually be using some of those cameras. So there will be more hours.

**Mr DEAN** - So nine additional, new cameras will operate?

**Mr COX** - Yes, so we will have increased numbers. I will just wait for the commissioner to get those figures out for you.

**CHAIR** - Given that there will be fewer vehicles, will there be more police officers on the beat, just walking around? If we are going to make some cuts, do you see that as a way forward, having more people walking the streets? That is something that people talk about a lot when we talk about community safety.

**Mr COX** - The commissioner has made it very clear that there will be more officers out and about, but that is not a direct result of this. This was rather fortuitous because, like any good corporation or business, Tasmania Police were looking at how they could best do business through Project Meridian. They have looked at how they could do better business, do better things, and there are now more officers doing beat work. If you were to head up into the city in Hobart you would find quite a few walking around. It is something that is being improved on a regular basis.

**CHAIR** - Obviously it does not necessarily equate to just being in the cities, Minister. I would expect that, if people get out of their cars and if you are not driving them then you are not putting the miles on, you are not using the fuel but you are still having a police presence. So it makes sense no matter where, does it not?

**Mr COX** - Absolutely. I think you would be pleased that in an area that is close to your heart -

**CHAIR** - I have a lot of areas close to my heart, as you know.

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**Mr COX** - Near where you live. A police officer was telling me the other day that when they are actually moving through there they now get out of their cars. They go and walk through some of the smaller communities that would not normally see police. So there is a genuine effort being put together by Tasmania Police at this stage.

**CHAIR** - That could well be a significant saving if everyone is doing it in every area?

**Mr COX** - Are you suggesting we take all their cars and make them walk?

**CHAIR** - No, if there is a time when they are not in their cars. We appreciate in this world that we cannot do without our vehicles. Simple as that.

**Mr COX** - I do not think the commissioner will disagree with your sentiment.

**CHAIR** - It is just an observation, a key point from community safety.

**Mr HINE** - Mr Dean, speed camera hours are not benchmarked. But at end of May last year we had 16 168 hours. This year we are up to 16 813 hours. The number of infringement notices generated last year at that same period was 52 800 and this year is 52 137, so about a 600 reduction. If you actually look at the numbers of vehicles passing speed cameras compared to the detection rate, it is dropping.

[9.45 a.m.]

**Mr DEAN** - Infringement notices are not benchmarked now?

**Mr HINE** - There were benchmarks this year but next year we will change the benchmarking. Last year we had over 30 benchmarks; this year we have reduced that to about 18 to 19. The number of categories that are benchmarked we have dropped by about 250 offences.

**Mr DEAN** - While we are on speed cameras, are you concentrating on the open road areas with the speed cameras or are we still persisting in monitoring the Bridgewater Bridge? There have not been many in Campbell Town of late that I have noticed. I travel all hours of the night so they would probably be gone before I get there. What areas are we concentrating on with speed cameras.

**CHAIR** - That is probably classified information.

**Mr DEAN** - Maybe I should leave that; it is a traffic matter. I will withdraw that question.

**CHAIR** - I believe that is suitable because it is support to the community. This output group covers all areas of policing.

**Mr COX** - Mr Dean, we do not have a problem. The only time is when people get silly, and that will not happen in this committee. I have no problem answering.

If you are referring to the Midlands Highway, 1 January 2008 to 31 May 2009, speed cameras were 1 841 and TINs were 1 635 or a total of 3 476 just on the Midlands Highway.

**Mr DEAN** - The public are wanting to see cameras out in the areas where the major speeding occurs. We are not really interested in the 50 kph or 60 kph or so on.

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**Mr COX** - I think you would be appalled as we are that it was commonly known that speed cameras would be out there a few weeks back but there were 280 infringements. You have just got to wonder what you are dealing with sometimes.

**Mr DEAN** - It takes a long time to get the message through.

In the budget decrease there has been the public sector wage increase. Is that a part of this or is that on top of the decreases and everything else that you are currently wrestling with? In other words will that be a further impact on your ability to run the service?

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - The efficiencies part of it is built into that \$3.891million but there will be additional costs associated with the public sector increases over and above that. Again that is one of the areas where we are working through the efficiencies achievable in relation to that.

In relation to some of the points you mentioned earlier about the reduction in State Service positions, our first voluntary separation was signed yesterday and it was from one of my people within our IT area. We have gone through a program of rationalising our IT infrastructure and bringing it up to speed, which will achieve efficiencies in the salary side of things. Obviously given that more than 50 per cent of our State Service employees are within the support activities, that is our first area to identify and it has been identified through Meridian. A lot of efficiencies can be achieved there that have no impact whatsoever on the districts. That is the process that we will go through in identifying those additional costs over and above the PSWA increases.

**Mr HINE** - I want to emphasise the importance of the State Service people within our organisation. They play a very important role. I certainly do not want to underestimate what they have done and what they continue to achieve but obviously there is a situation that we have to go through. It is like the vehicles. A lot of the vehicles came from our corporate areas where they do not impact on the delivery of police services but we understand and appreciate and acknowledge the hard work and the good work of public servants in our organisation.

**Mr DEAN** - Thank you for that. The one area that I had difficulty with is the budget cut in relation to the specific position of public order and safety. There has been a decrease in that line budget. At a time of economic unrest and financial problems one can expect antisocial behaviour and public order offences to increase - they certainly do not decrease in times of greater unemployment - so how is that likely to impact, Minister, on the police being able to work within that area and to provide the service and ensure the public are safe, secure and all of those other things?

**Mr COX** - I think Scott again can give you a breakdown as to where and how that has occurred.

**Mr HINE** - I will just give an overall answer, Mr Dean, if that is okay. Basically our police numbers are not going to change. That is first and foremost - our police numbers will not change - and as I said before, for the first time in my knowledge we are up to operational strength with the full-time numbers. That is not going to change. From a budgeting point of view I will hand over to Mr Wilson-haffenden.

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**Mr DEAN** - As I understand it, it has been a decrease; the budget for public order and safety has gone from about \$112.693 million to \$106.558 million.

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - The level of the appropriation has moved from \$110.2 million to \$100.4 million. Obviously the items in there have some external funding.

As Mr Hine said, the police numbers are as was previously the case. The administration side of things is spread across all of our output groups so that cut in administration is shared across all the output groups. There is an increase in the base-level funding of \$3.2 million, but coming out was a \$7 million capital provision for the trunk mobile radio network so that immediately comes off the bottom line. It is not required anymore. Also we have had a restructuring of our outputs and you will now see that under output group 4 the State Security Unit is established as an output in its own right. Previously that was sitting across output group 1, Public Safety, and output group 2, Crime. We recognised that it did not adequately fit within there so we have established it as a separate output and that change in itself has been a decrease of \$5.5 million across there.

The actual deficiency applied across this line item is approximately \$1 million and, again, that is that administration component which is shared across all output groups.

**Mr DEAN** - It is hard at times to keep track of the increases and decreases because they cross over in so many different areas.

**Mr COX** - No-one is disagreeing with you.

**Mr DEAN** - You just about need to be a Rhodes scholar.

**CHAIR** - Is that intentional, Minister, to try to confuse the members of parliament?

**Mr COX** - It was intended I think to simplify the process. But the question that you raise is basically the one that Scott referred to about the Eriksson.

**Mr DEAN** - Headlines have been running in the *Examiner* in the last few days about the attacks that are occurring in Launceston streets and so on. I do not know whether it is simply a perception but it appears to be, once again, increasing and therefore there is a greater need for police out there on the streets. Minister, can we be assured that we will have the required numbers of police out on the streets to be able to carry out the functions that are necessary to get control of these things that are happening out there now?

**Mr COX** - Can I personally say the Public Order Response Team will not be reduced. That will not change and, yes, there will still be the people required out and about in the cities. I am not sure that there has been a particular increase in Launceston.

**Mr DEAN** - The perception is that there is, but I do not know.

**Mr COX** - Going back to what Madam Chair was saying a while ago, one of the programs that currently operates in the schools - I was trying to think of the name of it before - is called Stop, Walk and Talk and that requires members to undertake at least 20 minutes walking each day within the local CBD, to speak with business operators and members of the public. That is a follow-on from your earlier question. So there will still be police out there and the Public Order Response Team will not be reduced.

**Mr HINE** - I can only echo the words of the minister. Regarding our operational numbers, we are in the best situation we ever have been. The number of total personal offences is reducing. In some areas our public place assaults have been stagnant and some are increasing but any public place assault is a concern for us and we keep addressing it, whether it is the Launceston council or the group that looks after the business district. We keep treating it as a very serious issue and we will keep a track of it. Our commanders are working with local government and businesses to address the problem.

**Mr COX** - Madam Chair, the police in Hobart have a program called Adopt a Shop. Police officers in Hobart are actually taking over a shop in their business area and that is something we may extend into other areas.

**Mr DEAN** - Minister, when are we going to address the situation of police at Launceston having to carry out court work? We recently had a gentleman come before the Launceston City Council who was very upset about the fact that he never saw police in the mall in Launceston. He said when he checked on this to find out what was going on he was told, 'We unfortunately have a commitment to the courts and therefore we do not have the police available at all times to be out in the mall area' and so on. So it is not an attack on the commander; the commander is doing whatever he can. When are we going to get rid of the police out of the courts in Launceston and put them where they belong, on the streets and working where the public want them to be?

**Mr COX** - I think it probably would be a wish for senior police officers not to have to go through that process. There are circumstances, I believe, where it is necessary to have a police officer in the courts.

**Mr HINE** - As you know, Mr Dean, the situation of the courts has been around for longer than I can remember. We removed the police from the courts in Hobart but that was also a budget adjustment as in if someone else has to do that, you obviously have to adjust your budget to make sure someone else can pay for it because we have been funded for it. We did recently review the MOU in relation to the courts between Justice and ourselves, about the police in courts and transport of the prisoners, to make sure there were no grey areas. There are occasions when those police rostered to courts are not always required for the courts and if they are not required for the courts, obviously they can do other duties, so there is that advantage. They are not 100 per cent of the time in courts but when they are, yes, they are obviously doing that. Also, the Northern District was resourced to be able to provide that as well. If another organisation or agency took it up, obviously we would have to move that costing across to go with it, as you can well understand.

Just recently I know a Commander Frame held a function under the auspices of Crime Stoppers with all the business people within the CBD to explain some of the crime figures and some of the issues in relation to it and it went down very well. I know he works hard and liaises with the council and local businesses quite regularly in relation to the situation in the Launceston mall, and he is addressing it quite satisfactorily as well. Obviously, you have to do with what you have to do with the resources you are allocated.

**Mr DEAN** - When I was there as Commander of Police I was always told to that if we put security in there I would lose 10 police officers to cater for that. I always saw that as a bit of a blackmailing tactic, so I did not go down that track.



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**Mr HINE** - It is always a budget issue. Obviously there is a budget that has to go with it to help pay for whoever else is going to do it, but that is also a government issue.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Just following on from that, there seems to be some efficiency in using paraprofessionals to take over some of the roles of police who might be stuck behind a desk or whatever, and it has taken a lot of years of training to get them to that stage. What exploration has the Police department done to have some of those less demanding jobs, I would think, being undertaken by other people who could do it for lower wages so you can have more police out on the beat, so to speak?

**Mr COX** - Mr Gaffney, firstly can I say welcome. This is your first Estimates session with us and the last with me.

This is something that I know that the commissioner is always mindful of but as far as detail.

**Mr HINE** - There is always those explorations of the best skilled person, the correctly trained person to do that job. For example fingerprint experts - they are not all police officers. We do have civilians doing fingerprint jobs now because they have the adequate training and they can perform the job. Perhaps we will be able to have forensic people undertake those duties. In IT areas and sometimes people in customer service areas are state servants so we look at where those best trained people can provide the best service because I agree with you there is no use putting a trained police officer into a position that someone else may be far better trained than the police so we are always looking at that to make sure we have the correctly trained people in the correct areas. It is not always possible. Sometimes we do have to have a uniformed officer in some of those positions.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Going back to the case of the Launceston Court. In Hobart you made some changes. In the north is it a legal requirement that you have to have a police officer there or is one there just for safety and security of the people. I am not sure of the -

**Mr HINE** - I understand your question. In Hobart a security firm does it and in Launceston, because of the funding situation, police do it. Again it comes down to if security guards then took over or whoever took over that function and not police, then that proportion of our budget would have to do it. It is not 100 per cent of the time that a police officer is in the courts. There is a chunk of time and on some occasions a fair chunk of time that they can get out and do other things and they are not in the court, so not 100 per cent of the time.

**Mr COX** - Mr Gaffney, it is an MOU with Justice and whether it will stay that way forever I do not know, but that is currently the situation.

**CHAIR** - What does it cost to have the security aspect of courts? I am sure the figures were handed over to you. Do you have a breakdown?

**Mr HINE** - For Launceston?

**CHAIR** - Obviously you have a security company in Hobart and you would equate it -

**Mr HINE** - Justice do it. We handed it to Justice so they look after that side, not the police department.

**CHAIR** - Yet in Launceston -

**Mr HINE** - We do it.

**CHAIR** - You pay?

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Minister, why doesn't Justice pay in Launceston?

**Mr COX** - That is something you need to take up with Justice. Perhaps you would like to start the program?

**CHAIR** - It is a fair question. If they pay in Hobart -

**Mr COX** - It has happened in Hobart, that was the answer I gave to Mr Gaffney. The situation at the moment is that there is an MOU in place. That is not to say - I cannot speak for Justice - that will always be the case. The fact that it has changed in Hobart, it may well change in the future, although the commissioner may have a different view or it may not change in the future.

**Mr HINE** - The fact of the matter is we are budgeted for it so if we did not do it and Justice took over - we have had the discussion with Justice in relation to that aspect - we would have to proportion our budget across.

**CHAIR** - So it makes no difference.

**Mr HINE** - At the moment we are still discussing with them but it is a matter of how much it would cost and our budget would have to go across to Justice to perform those jobs.

**CHAIR** - Then am I to take it that you have obviously made the choice, Minister, to actually keep the police as part of the security in Launceston.

**Mr COX** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Because they do other roles at other times. I mean the court is not open the whole time. Is that why -

**Mr COX** - That is a fair assessment of it, yes.

**Mr DEAN** - Is that still the position in Burnie on the north-west coast - police in courts?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, police in courts, but we are always exploring those issues because it has to be a win win for us and Justice so it is a matter of using your resources from a global situation and we often talk with government agencies and make sure it is a win win and we are getting the best efficient value for money for the community, not only our department but for other departments.

**Mr WING** - There are two aspects of this. One is the question of funding and from what source. The other is the fact that police officers are highly trained in the police academies, a six month course, and it does seem a waste of the expertise that they have developed to have them

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sitting around in court after hours so it is not just a financial matter of who is paying for that security measure, it is a question of getting value for money for the officers who have been trained.

**Mr HINE** - I agree with you, Mr Wing, as in our police officers are very well trained. On occasions, even at the after-hours court, our people have to take them along to court because they are in our custody and it is our responsibility but the advantage is the courts are not always going, so the ones allocated to those duties can perform those policing duties. There are some advantages to having police in courts. You get to see who is appearing in courts, who those offenders are, those issues.

**Mr WING** - Yes, I acknowledge that.

**Mr HINE** - You get to talk to those people who are appearing in court so it is also putting a police presence within the community that is going to court so there is not all disadvantages but I agree with your point, if we had the opportunity but we are always discussing those issues to make sure it is a win, win for other government departments and us as well.

**Mr WING** - Using the expertise that police officers have to the best advantage, applies to random breath tests as well, where we often see about 20, sometimes, at places like Epping, 30 police officers conducting random breath testing, when having about eight or 10 officers would be adequate, and other people who have not had the full police training, performing the routine functions?

**Mr COX** - Yes, you are right, there is usually a large police presence there and the commissioner may well correct me on this because we have never had a discussion but in my experience, there have always been senior officers there in a supervisory role. There are always younger constables, some of whom may have just come out of the Academy and this may be their first breathalyser situation. They do need some guidance and my experience is that, even with that number of police officers, it is not always possible to detect and pull up every motorist so I do not know that 11 or 12 would be sufficient. I may have that wrong but the commissioner will, I am sure, reprimand me if I do have it wrong.

**Mr WING** - I was using that as an example and I acknowledge you need to have senior police officers conducting that and being responsible and some experienced officers but just to hand the breathalyser equipment to the motorist and say, 'blow in here' and perform the routine functions, it is not necessary to have six months training at the Police Academy.

**Mr COX** - Keeping in mind, Mr Wing, with your history, if they do it wrong, there is always an out for somebody so we would like them to get it right every time.

**Mr WING** - Yes.

**Mr HINE** - It is those situations, you never know with that car that you are going to put the breath testing unit to the driver, who you are dealing with. A situation can appear a normal situation and become an abnormal situation very quickly and no-one knows when that is going to occur. Therefore, that training, whether you were six months out of the Academy or 26 years out of the Academy, each individual driver, you have to treat them the same and they have the potential, whether we like it not, to be a risk to the police officer so that is where that nine months of training comes in handy because you do not know who you are pulling up.

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**Mr COX** - I will extend that. I saw a list and I wish I had it, I could have given you a couple of examples of things that have occurred recently at random breath test stations and it would horrify you. There are people who get to the breath testing point, will do a u-turn, drive back into the oncoming traffic, abandon the vehicle. There are some very crazy people out there.

**Mr WING** - I had one drive right into my property, do a turn and then go down and back the way that they were coming.

**Mr COX** - Which is why we want experienced and trainee officers on these sites.

**Mr HINE** - The minister launched our road safety campaign for Christmas and whilst we were there filming there was a vehicle that did a u-turn and went down a two lane highway, the opposite way.

**Mr COX** - Saw the police, saw everybody there, panicked, straight around in the middle of the Southern Outlet in Launceston.

**CHAIR** - Was he apprehended?

**Mr COX** - Yes.

**Mr WING** - You say that the police numbers are higher than they have ever been. Could you give us the actual numbers?

**Mr HINE** - There are 1 218 sworn police officers which equates to 1 245 people, as in some work part-time. There are currently 24 in training so our operational number is the highest it has ever been in my memory.

**Mr WING** - Will it remain so, even after you make the cut-back of 25 State service positions?

**Mr HINE** - Mr Wing, the 25 State servants do not affect our police numbers. We were planning to have a course in October normally through attrition but attrition has slowed right down. We have dropped over about 40 per cent of our attrition rate since September. We used to have about five-and-a-half people - I do not know where the half a person came from - per month down to three, so the attrition rate is down to about 2.87 per cent where it used to run at about 4.5 per cent. People are not leaving so our next course will be now into next year because we are not losing numbers.

**Mr COX** - Can I just add to that, Mr Wing, that it has nothing to do with financial constraints. The decision was made not to run that third course purely because we do not need it. People are staying on, in some cases, for very obvious reasons, the financial situation, and it is their best interests to remain employed. Before anyone suggests that we are not running that course for financial reasons, that is not true.

**Mr DEAN** - Can I just ask what the approved establishment strength of the service is right at this very moment?

**Mr HINE** - It is 1 218.

**Mr DEAN** - And that is how many you have?

**Mr HINE** - The headcount is 1 245 and we actually have 1 219.6 so we are one 1.6 over as at 31 March.

Can I say, Mr Wing, if I may, that we actually have 20 people lined up as in what we call fast-track candidates, those who may have left Tasmania Police and want to come back or from the mainland police services. We not only have a very large pool of people who want to join Tasmania Police but we have 20 people who actually wish to join us who do not have to go through the nine month training course.

**Mr WING** - As soon as you have funding to employ them they are available and do not have to be trained.

**Mr COX** - Which makes a little bit of a mockery of the story by the Police Association that officers were lining up to leave the State. It is actually the reverse. He got his words wrong, they are lining up to come to the State.

**Mr WING** - I see, very good. The 25 State Service positions, I take it, are civilian ones within the police force?

**Mr HINE** - That is correct.

**Mr WING** - What functions would those 25 service people perform in the main?

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - We are actually working through that at the moment but, as I said, the first step in this is that we have actually gone out to people are asked if they are interested in voluntary redundancies, are they interested in part-time employment, are they interested in leave without pay and as a result of that about three people indicated that they would like to take leave without pay for a period of 12 months. About four or five people indicated that they would like to take up the option of part-time employment. As to the actual positions they are occupying, our first preference is to go through and say what positions are a duplication of effort that through a change in our processes or procedures we can basically abolish with the most minimal impact on anyone else within the area. For example, we have gone through a whole program of reviewing our IT infrastructure and making that more mainstream, if you like, and less dependent on people maintaining that software. As a result, one of the positions went yesterday.

We are continually going through some options in terms of some of our administrative processes such as processing of leave, et cetera, to see how we can do that better and how that can provide us with efficiencies. The first step is that we have identified whether people are looking to leave and how we can maintain that. Then we are working through the process of where those positions sit and then actually making that separation and minimising the impact on both our State Service employees or police employees, and we are in the process of discussing that with both the Police Association and the CPSU.

**Mr WING** - I was more interested in ascertaining what type of duties they perform - civilian, clerical ones are they?

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**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - Yes. It might be things such as IT and it might be some front-counter work. We need to work through some of those things. We have not identified every single position but our first preference is anything that is of a backroom nature which through refined processes we can identify, and that is those clerical-type positions.

**Mr WING** - Thank you. So there is a good deal of satisfaction with the numbers of police officers at the moment? -

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - Very much so.

[10.15 a.m.]

**Mr WING** - If you could use additional ones, it would be if and when that could be afforded. Minister, as this is your last appearance before budget Estimates committees, I want to give you the opportunity of talking about the potential for volunteer police officers.

**Mr COX** - He got in earlier than I -

**Mr WING** - Last year we had a discussion about this and we were told that consideration was being given to that and there seemed to be some potential so I am very eager to know what advances have been made.

**CHAIR** - And what numbers have been enrolled.

**Mr WING** - We know that no numbers have been enrolled.

**Mr COX** - I did mention to the committee the other day, that I also had some joy with this over the years with your assistance, Mr Wing. He did not seem unduly impressed with that comment.

**Mr WING** - Hopefully you might be able to achieve something before you retire, Minister, and before I retire.

**Mr COX** - I suspect that you probably should not get your hopes up. It was reviewed. The commissioner has had another look at it and I do not know how to soften the blow to you, Mr Wing, but there is not currently any intention to revisit the subject of volunteering. I hope that was not too harsh.

**Mr WING** - Well, no, but I think it would be good to have on the record your personal views about the advantages and the potential for this.

**Mr COX** - My enthusiasm is certainly toward those who volunteer for SES and we do have volunteers in those areas. I know everyone in this room certainly supports them. The commissioner has looked at, as has the previous commissioner, where best you could use volunteers and it really did not come up as a beneficial exercise. The decision has been made to stick to the SES volunteers. We cannot get too many of those, but it is not going to happen within policing. The commissioner, however, might like to soften the blow to you. I doubt it.

**Mr HINE** - Thanks, Minister. We have had these discussions in relation to it and we have had various people look at the situation as well, but at this stage we feel it is better to put our resources and our research capacity into developing what we have at the moment. There are a lot

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of issues around volunteer policing, training, uniforms and all those things. We feel it is better to put those resources into utilising what we have now to get the efficiencies out of what we have now.

**Mr WING** - I cannot speak for other areas but I can for Launceston. At nights it is almost rare to see police officers patrolling the streets and I would have thought that was one area where you could have volunteer police serving with a permanent member of the force in duties such as that to help curb the bombing and hooning around the streets that occur and to provide support to vehicle patrols.

**Mr HINE** - I certainly do not deny that it has some success in other countries in different circumstances as well. Again, that is part of modern-day policing. You need to keep looking at what other situations evolve around the world and also within our own jurisdiction. I am not saying that we will not continue to look at it. I am not saying that it will never occur but at the moment the feeling is that we need to put those resources into developing into other things that we currently have. In relation to the bombing around the streets, I have had numerous discussions with Commander Frame and basically it is his responsibility. I know he is very much aware of it and as is the local division inspector. They work very closely with the community and they work very closely and hard at reducing those matters you raised. We certainly were aware of it and we appreciate the cooperation of the Government, Parliament and the community and the local government as well. We will continue to work very hard to address those issues.

**Mr WING** - I recognise that now is both a good time and a bad time to be considering volunteer police - a good time because the police numbers are at a maximum but a bad time because of the budget cutback but I hope that will be borne in mind.

**Mr COX** - Mr Wing, just on that subject, it was interesting that I discussed this with some police officers in the United Kingdom. You would be aware that there has always been friction between volunteers and police officers.

**Mr WING** - Not so much in the last decade since police conditions have improved.

**Mr COX** - My advice as of 12 months ago was that that has escalated and there are some real problems. That is not to say that is the reason we are not doing it but it is 'us and them' very much.

**Mr WING** - I know the Police Association in the UK has always been opposed to it even though there are 15 000 volunteers and the police forces in the UK could not operate without the volunteer police. I met with five or six representatives of the permanent force and about the same number of the volunteer force in London about five years ago and at that time everything was very compatible and they were mutually supportive and dependent but the Police Association was still opposed and that is the problem here I know.

**Mr COX** - Perhaps if you could get Mr Wierenga to come on board then we could have another look at it.

**Mr WING** - Yes I understand.

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There is another area I was going to go on to but I see Mr Dean has a newspaper cutting on it so I do not want to steal his thunder. If Madam Chair agrees, I will let him ask a question and I will come in on it.

**CHAIR** - I will ask Mr Finch if he would like to have some input before we go back to Mr Dean.

**Mr FINCH** - What I would like to do, Minister, is to have a look at some of the performance information on table 9.4 page 9.6 in volume 2. One aspect of crime that is all too obvious -

**Mr DEAN** - Could you speak up? Sorry, Kerry, I can't hear you.

**Mr FINCH** - I can't even hear myself.

**Mr HARRISS** - I can hear you, Kerry, that is all that matters.

**Mr FINCH** - That is all that matters.

In regard to public assaults in public places I find the performance figures interesting. Assaults are running at around 1 200 a year with a target of 1 085 the coming year. Can I get an understanding of what is behind that sort of optimistic expectation?

**Mr COX** - Across the board you would be aware that we reviewed this area and again Tasmania was the safest State in the nation, which is absolute credit to the Tasmania Police Service.

**Mr FINCH** - That is a good comment to be able to make in your overview.

**Mr COX** - Well, it is a fact. Absolutely, and I think it is one that all Tasmanians should be very proud of.

Assaults in public places, you are right, have risen. It is minimal, but it has risen, and that was one of the areas I think that had gone down everywhere else.

**Mr HINE** - Those figures were done two years ago so they need to be put into context. Personal offences last year for the same period were 2 661 and we are now down to 2 568. If we go to public place assaults, we were last year at 1 083 and we are at 1 119 for this year to date so it is always going to be an area that we are going to need to target and to make sure that we keep a handle on it.

**Mr COX** - The problem with this, Mr Finch, and I am not making excuses for anybody, tragically and unfortunately there is a worldwide trend now that these types of things are escalating. You only have to read the newspaper or look at television and see what is happening in other jurisdictions to see that this is now a problem and it is one that Tasmania Police are very aware of. I think you would be very foolish to think this is something that is going to go away or get any better.

**Mr FINCH** - Perhaps if I can draw on maybe the commissioner's experience. Is this a roller coaster ride in respect of these public assaults? We talk about the fact that it might escalate but



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are we coming off a low in the past or has there always been a fairly high incidence of public assaults in our community?

**Mr HINE** - If you look at the national figures where there is a report on national trends, assaults are down 7.6 per cent from 2007-08. Assaults themselves, whether it is a public place or at a private dwelling, have actually come down by 7 per cent compared to 2007-08 so that as a trend is coming down. Our personal offences, which include assault, are coming down. Our public place assaults are starting to level off but we certainly want to drive them down - as in every crime category - and it is a concern for us.

If you look at the public place assaults back in 2004, they were at 1 300, and what we are projecting this year is a figure of about 1 200 so it is a bit of a bell curve but we want that curve to certainly go down now. We will not sit here until we can get them down consistently. That is the public-place assaults are different. Overall assaults, whether in a private dwelling or a public place, were down 7.6 per cent between 2007-08. We want to continue that.

**Mr FINCH** - Thank you. I am heartened by figures about perception of public safety which are in the same table. How do we compare with other States?

**Mr COX** - We are the best in the country. That is true. Those were the figures that came out about a month ago.

**Mr FINCH** - On the figure about satisfaction with police in dealing with public order problems: I want to get some sense of how you view those figures, Minister, because they are around 58, 56 and 60 per cent. I am wondering why those figures are lower than other figures I see here?

**Mr COX** - Could you please clarify your question?

**Mr FINCH** - The figures about confidence in police -

**Mr COX** - Yes.

**Mr FINCH** - show that is around 84, 85 per cent, but this figure is for satisfaction with police in dealing with public-order issues. So it probably indicates people's perception about how police have dealt with a situation. Do you interview the people who actually get into trouble here to give you a low figure?

**Mr COX** - I would think some of the people that have to be dealt with would be far from satisfied. I am not exactly sure how that final figure is reached. Maybe the commissioner can give you the answer. I am sure he can.

**Mr HINE** - We did very well, overall, in the National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Police. Compared to the rest of Australia, we are down on most categories where we should be down and we are increasing where we should be increasing. Which figure were you looking at?

**Mr FINCH** - It is the second figure down on table 9.4: Satisfaction with police in dealing with public order problems. Who do you talk to to get these figures which I suggest is a percentage that might be of concern because it looks fairly low?

**Mr HINE** - It is a national survey called the Report on Government Services -ROGS. We paid money into ANZPA which then contracts a national survey company. Normally survey about 1 200 people per quarter throughout Tasmania. It is done nationally and the survey company structures its questions to come up with that answer.

**Mr FINCH** - It might be a line item you want to take out of there because it does not reflect well.

**Mr COX** - That is where my confusion was. I was thinking you were talking about a Tasmanian specific figure, but it is a national figure.

**Mr HINE** - As I say, it might not serve you well to have that national figure there or you might want to have a footnote here to say that it is a national figure rather than a reflection of the work of Tasmanian police.

**Mr HINE** - I take your point. It is also the point that we are doing very well in the national figures we have at the moment. In fact this external report is something that we use to demonstrate how current services are provided to the Tasmanian community. We are compared nationally and in every category.

**Mr COX** - I think it is done by Roy Morgan.

**Mr FINCH** - On an optimistic note, table 9.6 on page 9.8 shows a reduction of both the number of recorded offences against persons and against property. Is this because of a police presence or are we, as Tasmanians, becoming more law abiding?

**Mr COX** - I would like to say it is a combination of both.

**Mr HINE** - One of the greatest deterrents you will ever have in people committing crimes is catching people committing crimes. So therefore if you have your strategies to prevent crime and you have your strategies to actually catch people committing crime, then you should see a reduction. So we have put a lot of the effort in intelligence-driven policing; you have to try to target partners and make sure people lock certain things, like their cars, as well as having a strategy to catch people. So we are working on prevention and well as catching people. You also have got to deal with youth as part of a prevention strategy. Economic times play a part as well. Overall that combination of strategies helps reduce crime in most categories.

[10.30 a.m.]

**Mr COX** - I think it is the best clean-up rate in Australia.

**Mr HINE** - We are certainly way up there, if not at the top.

**Mr COX** - The other thing that may have helped this is that Tasmania Police has spent a lot of time talking to businesses and assisting them with security camera technology. There has been a lot of work put into a protective system rather than just catching criminals.

**CHAIR** - Assaults in public places and the need to more work on this was mentioned a couple of questions ago. Can you tell me what strategies are in place to counter those numbers that have unfortunately been increasing?

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**Mr COX** - The short answer to that is a police presence. I do not know how I extend it beyond that actually.

**Mr HINE** - We have a lot of strategies for dealing with assaults in public places. It is a very localised issue. What happens in Launceston or Hobart is different to what happens in Burnie so the commanders in each district have different strategies because it has to be a localised response to a local problem. For example, in Burnie they have an accord with the licensing establishments.

**CHAIR** - That is my next question.

**Mr HINE** - It works very well in Burnie and we are looking at the same sort of strategy in Hobart. There are certain sectors of Hobart that we know cause problems. We know a lot of people congregate and we know that alcohol is an issue where there are groups of hotels or other licensed establishments, so therefore that is where intelligence dictates where you put your resources.

It is not all about police being there, that is not the solution. You have to address the youth problem and you have to address the binge-drinking problem also. So you have got to work on all those issues and work with all your stakeholders to make sure you have the joined-up solution.

We have had alcohol in our community for many thousands of years and it is going to remain a problem for us and we still need to address it. We had an alcohol forum last year in which we got a lot of stakeholders to discuss those issues. The police presence is part of the solution and we need to be there at the times when it is most needed. However, is it all our responsibility? I would say, 'no'.

We must work with the licensing commissions, as we do very closely, we must work with licensed establishments. Together we, as a community including Parliament, have to work towards the solution. There has been a lot of research that we are keeping an eye across as also. That was one of the issues that we discussed nationally at the latest commissioner's conference because we are all facing the same issues.

**Mr COX** - On that same subject, there are areas where you cannot take alcohol, there are move-on policies that are in place and, the commissioner is absolutely correct, alcohol has been a huge problem. That has gone some way towards managing that issue.

One thing we did in Hobart was moving the taxi rank from a place where there were lots of problems to a much more open location; it was a very simple strategy but it has certainly had an effect. It was done in consultation with the taxi industry and the hotel associations, and we were able to move it pretty swiftly and there have been some benefits from it.

**Mr WING** - It is accepted that alcohol has an important role in this. I would like to know what role drugs play in crimes and offences of violence.

**Mr COX** - Again I do not have the figures. I know that unfortunately it features, Mr Wing, as it does in with some of the drivers who are detected. It is far too prevalent but as actual facts and figures the commissioner probably has got something on that.

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**Mr HINE** - It is the wrong approach to bury your head in the sand and say that drugs are not an issue in their community. We know drugs are an issue. In Tasmania it is certainly not as prevalent as in other States. The Parliament passed legislation in relation to drink spiking and that can be drugs as well or other things. The Parliament has also passed a lot of powers for us in relation to being able to move on things of that nature. Our drug policy and our drug strategies are focused at the traffickers, those who are supplying and dealing in drugs. The users of drugs we target by means of harm minimisation, as in diverting them away to rehabilitation, so they do not use again. We have those two strategies in relation to harm minimisation, and we work very closely with the health sector and Health department as well. We know that drugs are an issue, as you quite rightly pointed out.

**Mr WING** - There have been some quite vicious assaults in recent years, appallingly vicious, and I know that alcohol is a main contributing factor. I wondered whether there was any evidence that drugs also had an influence on some types of vicious assaults.

**Mr HINE** - Mr Wing, you are exactly right. Drugs certainly have an influence on some of these assaults and sometimes it is a combination of alcohol and drugs. Parliament passed the drugs and driving legislation as well, so we know drugs are a factor in driving, not as much as alcohol but they are a factor and we know they are a factor in some of our assaults. We also received funding to have drug-detector dogs -

**Mr WING** - That is good.

**Mr HINE** - and they are being very successful. We certainly understand it is an issue and are working very closely, again, with the Licensing Commission and with licensed establishment holders because they do not want drugs in licensed establishments either.

We are working across all those sectors, getting a lot of intelligence. It is going to be an intelligence-led approach about who is dealing in drugs so that we can address it.

**Mr WING** - Thank you.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Just switching the goalposts a little bit to major events and issues with police presence and management. There have been some issues in the last reviews and recommendations out of what has been happening with police. It would be helpful to have a quick -

**Mr COX** - Are you talking about the charging for the services at major events?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - No, there have been some major events happening in Tasmania over the last 12 months where there have been some issues with police presence there and how that could have been better coordinated - the Falls Festival, for instance. I do not want to delve into that issue -

**Mr COX** - I think you have -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - but I would like to hear what recommendations have come out of the review for further festivals and events which will make that streamlined and a better event for everybody. Not only that one, but also others.

**CHAIR** - If you are free on that day, Minister, you might like to help out, volunteer?

**Mr COX** - If I were younger I would have probably been there. Let us use that one specific event because that was the one that probably became the catalyst for the discussion. I guess the simplistic answer to that is, there was a misunderstanding at the time. It created problems. There was supposedly a designated area put to one side. It did not happen. We have met, collectively, with the organisers of that particular event and have reached an agreement that we will move forward and do it better in the future. There was fault accepted, certainly on both sides at that meeting. I presume that is still the case.

The police have given an undertaking that they do not specifically say that they will pick one event because it is fair for young people. I think in your area, the Spreyton Cup gets a fair look at as well.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - As it should.

**Mr COX** - As it should. There is now an intent by police to have a presence at pretty much all major events at some level. As long as people continue to drink, drive and do the wrong thing, they are going to be there.

**Mr HINE** - Thanks, Minister. We have been working very closely with the Falls Festival organisers. We have had numerous meetings; Commander Tully has had meetings, as have had we with the Falls organisers and there were some misunderstandings from both sides. So we are working through that.

There was a complaint made to the Ombudsman who looked into it and basically his finding was, and it is on his web site, that there was no administrative fault in relation to how we did things. We have been reviewed and we have certainly reviewed what we did. Are we going to be there next to do random breath testing? Yes, we are. Is there going to be a delay of people getting out of the Falls Festival? If a car leaves every five seconds with 6 000 cars it is going to take eight hours without anyone there so there is always going to be a delay. Are we going to try to minimise the delay? Yes we will, but are we going to random breath-test people? Yes we will.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I focused on the Falls Festival, and was asking how that incident has created a change in policy and procedure across a whole range of events. Have there come out from that other recommendations so that when you have any event where police are needed to supervise and manage, recommendations have gone ahead and been put in so it does not happen again?

**Mr HINE** - Mr Gaffney, it is about the organisation that is running the event having a close liaison to make sure that they have a common understanding because, as sometimes occurs, when two parties walk away they have a different understanding of what is going to occur. If, for instance, there is an area set aside for cars, they need to make sure that it is available at the time, where it was not on this occasion. It is a matter of making sure that the traffic flows but also a matter of picking out vehicles at the time that need to be pulled over without interrupting the traffic flow. We want to minimise traffic flow as much as we can but also want to look at the road safety aspect. So, we need to make sure we liaise better with the organisers to make sure we have a well constructed traffic operational plan, and I am not saying we did not have one at the time because we did, to make sure those elements are actually followed up from the organisers' side as well as our side. It is a matter of having that common understanding and not having those

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misconceptions. Also, the Falls Festival organisers did do it as well - they let their patrons know that there was going to be random breath testing. We have to make sure that the crowds know that when they leave there is going to be random breath testing.

**Mr WING** - You actually said that you wanted to minimise the traffic flow. Do you mean you wanted to minimise the obstruction to the traffic flow.

**Mr HINES** - Yes, you are quite right.

*Laughter.*

**Mr HINES** - But we are never going to get to the stage where it is going to be free and unimpeded when you do random breath tests. You have to have that interruption to the traffic flow. Do we want to minimise it? Yes we do, but we also want to maximise the number of drink drivers leaving events.

**Mr WING** - In actual fact, at the last Falls Festival, the procedure did minimise the traffic flow.

*Laughter.*

**Mr COX** - If it sounds like I am defending Tasmania Police, I am. In the brochure that was put out by the organisers of the Falls Festival, very clearly are a couple of lines that say there will be breath testing by Tasmania Police; expect delays. It was on the front or second page of that brochure. The outcome, to be succinct, was that there will be better liaison in future with organisers and with Tasmania Police, which is really what you asked.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes and, for the record, I did not focus on the Falls Festival; comments went straight there.

**Mr HINE** - No, but that was certainly one that received a lot of publicity and we did learn something out of it, as did the organisers. We will better liaise with these organisers. When you have major events, whether it is a sporting event or a public event and there is alcohol, we will be there to make sure we test people.

**Mr DEAN** - I want to get back to the street assaults again but from a slightly different angle. Most would have read the editorial in the *Examiner* on 14 October 2008 where the editor painted a pretty dismal picture of the situation in Launceston and on the streets of Launceston. I will read the comment that read as follows:

'Northern District Commander Glenn Frame, is no doubt correct when he laments the Australian drinking culture that manages to turn young citizens into drunken halfwits at large on Launceston streets after midnight.'

Then he goes into some more detail about these thugs kicking people on the street, knocking them into states of unconsciousness, brawls, et cetera. So there is this perception, and the reality, unfortunately, of this behaviour in Launceston again. I guess, Minister, you would be supporting very much there some of the things that we need to do; more surveillance cameras in and around the streets, as many as we can get - and publicising the fact that they are there. I think that is

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important as well. Other strategies that we need to put into place to try to get on top of that are penalties.

[10.45 a.m.]

I am interested to know what the police position is there, Minister. These assaults that are being reported now are very serious. With a number of assaults reported in the papers of recent times, the penalties do not seem to fit the seriousness of the offences so I am just wondering what consultation you have with the magistrates and the courts in relation to these issues, and any police input?

**CHAIR** - Minister, before you answer that I would just like to correct the record: that is actually the Deputy Editor of *The Examiner* in that particular article.

**Mr COX** - This has been an ongoing thing for years, for decades, not that I would ever speak for Tasmania Police but I guess I can in this case. There is a source of frustration within the police service about some of the penalties that are handed out to people that they present to the courts. You would be very familiar with this. You actually take somebody to the court, you expect a penalty to be handed out and the court sees it through different eyes and that person is back out and before you know you are doing it all over again.

**Mr DEAN** - Unfortunately the person has had a very poor upbringing, been sexually assaulted or something like that. That is the problem we have.

**Mr COX** - As I said, you would have some experience with this. I have spoken to a previous Justice minister. They always refer it back to the magistrates and to the courts at the time. It is a source of frustration. Whether the commissioner has spoken to anyone beyond that I do not know, but I would suspect that he has shared the frustration of others and perhaps unfortunately will into the future, without being too critical of this issue.

**Mr DEAN** - We need to get serious about this. We need to ensure that we can do everything possible to stop it. Innocent people are -

**Mr COX** - I am a great supporter of security cameras; I think they are terrific. We whip these up in Hobart and that was a very good co-operative arrangement with the Hobart City Council. That was put together very very quickly and I publicly thank the then General Manager and the Lord Mayor for co-operating with that. We perhaps need the same element of co-operation in Launceston.

**Mr HINE** - Out of that national survey, one of the questions asked is your opinion on whether physical assault in a public place is a problem in the neighbourhood. We rated 31.7 per cent, with the Australian average being 42 per cent, so we are actually well below the national average in relation to that. In relation to the courts, the courts have a very difficult job to do in relation to sentencing of offenders. In fact there was a workshop some time ago where the public were asked to sentence on certain things and it was found those people sentenced far below what a magistrate or a judge would do.

**Mr WING** - That was conducted by the present Governor as Chief Justice.

**Mr HINE** - That is right. The courts have a very difficult job to do. If we are dissatisfied with a sentence we can appeal it, so it is for others to debate whether we are satisfied with the

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courts or not in the sentences. We have a very close liaison with the Chief Magistrate. We have regular meetings. If we feel aggrieved or do not think the outcome was adequate we have a legal process that we can and do occasionally go down.

**Mr DEAN** - My next question is in relation to in-home violence. We have all seen the headlines in the papers and so on. This was a headline from 16 August taken from the *Mercury* - 'In-home violence strains policing'. I will just quote a couple of comments from this:

'Police lack resources to tackle domestic violence, a law enforcement symposium in Hobart was told yesterday. The resources shortage was leaving police struggling to deal with other crime. In one incident, two remote police stations were tied up for most of the night attending to a domestic dispute. The incident left police extremely stretched to deal with any other crime. The University of Tasmania researcher Romy Winter found that out of 13 police she interviewed about the new Safe at Home laws most expressed concern about the resources available to tackle domestic violence.'

I am aware of many situations where police have been tied up for four and five and six hours on relatively minor domestic assault issues. Where are we going with this? To be fair, I turn to the next headline about the same time or shortly thereafter which says - 'Domestic violence policies praised'. I am just wondering where we are going with this.

**Mr WING** - Who is praising it?

**Mr DEAN** - It was praised by a national domestic violence worker and researcher, Dr Lesley Laing, who 'is envious of Tasmania's legal response to family violence'. She is the University of New South Wales social worker who came to Tasmania and had a look at our domestic laws. But the policing is the issue. I have spoken to a number of police and they continually raise the issue of the time that they need to spend in and on these matters while other more serious crime, they say, or as serious or more serious in some instances, is out there not being investigated and attended to.

**Mr COX** - I guess it depends on your terminology of serious. I think a lot of those are alcohol-fuelled, again, but it is a matter for the commissioner.

**Mr HINE** - Family violence is an issue in our community and it has obviously culminated in the change of the laws and the change in the way we address family violence. I think we were one of the first jurisdictions to recognise and take action from a legislative point of view in relation to family violence, because no matter what violence is in the home, it is unacceptable. Some of the laws that were passed and the policies that were changed to address this did take extra police time; we accept that but family violence is one of those underground situations. Now, we are addressing it because it is a serious issue in the community. Does it take police time? As I said, it does. We accept that. We are trying to streamline the process for reviewing handbooks as best we can to minimise the amount of time that it does take a police officer to deal with what may seem a minor matter, but a minor matter, as you well know, could turn into a quite significant event if it is not dealt with appropriately at the time. We accept that it does take time. If we actually address it properly in the first or second instance then hopefully it does not occur later on. So, sometimes your initial response and action may prevent it escalating into something far more serious, which is a greater cost to the community. We are certainly looking at it and we certainly want to reduce the time but we also do not want to reduce the effect on our response as well.



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**Mr DEAN** - I understand all that but it is an issue for police. They are concerned about it and this report goes on to say:

'Ms Winter said there was also some concern that police discretion had been removed as a result of the law changes. Both want more discretion in dealing with one-offs, she said.'

That is from the symposium where there was a large police contingent present. So there are some issues and I have put them.

**Mr COX** - Can I say there is more being reported because more people are being encouraged to report. I think there are additional officers to actually deal with this as well.

**Mr HINE** - We received 27 extra police to deal with this situation and we got extra prosecutors as well to prosecute these matters. So we were not given the extra powers of responsibility without extra resources as well. We are looking at and working with various reviews by the Justice department as well to address these issues. We accept that it is a problem.

**Mr COX** - It is not just adults either, and that is the tragedy of it.

**Mr DEAN** - Do the statistics show that the hours spent at domestics is increasing for police or is it decreasing annually or however it is captured?

**Mr COX** - I do not have the figures in front of me but we are actually streamlining. Anecdotally I think the hours are actually decreasing overall. But I would have to get out some of those statistics -

**Mr DEAN** - Can that be tabled, please?

**Mr COX** - Yes, we can get that for you.

**Mr FINCH** - Are we making progress in respect of family violence?

**Mr HINE** - I think the fact that more people are reporting family violence is a good indicator that we are making progress. Again, it is not one of those underground crimes or offences that is kept underground; people are actually more confident and comfortable to report those matters to the police, so overall we are making huge strides in relation to family violence. We always knew that once people became more confident in reporting then we would get more reports, and I think that is a positive. We are addressing it and we are starting to see the reports of family violence flatten off and hopefully it will come down at the other end. I think it is a huge positive that there are a lot of reviews, as Mr Dean read out, where we have been to national conferences and it has been reviewed and we are getting a lot of ticks for what we are doing. I think overall we are doing very well in relating to it but it was a crime that went largely unreported, so overall I think we can give ourselves a big tick. Are there some matters that we need to address? Yes, we will keep addressing those.

**Mr FINCH** - As you say, Commissioner and Minister, there is that building and experience by officers as well -

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**Mr HINE** - Yes, absolutely.

**Mr FINCH** - out in the field with respect to this issue for counselling and supporting the process early in the piece.

**Mr HINE** - Yes.

**Mr WING** - Have there been any problems with situations where a person charged with domestic violence must satisfy a court, to enable them to get bail, that that person will not reoffend rather than the courts having a wide discretion in such matters; the onus of proof is reversed in domestic violence cases so that a person charged with domestic violence cannot get bail unless the court is satisfied that that person will not reoffend? Does that cause problems that you are aware of?

**Mr HINE** - If we do not give them bail and we put them before the court then obviously we will put up objections if we do not think that person should be released so ultimately it is up to the court to decide whether bail should be granted or not. It is up to us to present the evidence or the information to the court so the court can make a proper assessment and make that determination.

**Mr WING** - I am aware of at least two cases where a wife has complained about her husband's conduct and the husband has been detained in custody for quite some period of time, only to find that the charges could not be sustained and it was felt clearly the action taken by the wife was to get the husband out of the house and to keep him out of the house but there was no justification for the complaint. Are you aware of such situations occurring?

**Mr HINE** - I am not aware of any individual cases but of course when you have a police officer attending those situations and you have a highly emotional situation, the police officers do have to take action and take everything that they can into account. Therefore they make that judgment. What happens down the track is a matter of all court cases or situations so they must make a judgment at the time and on the evidence that they have at the time as well. I am not aware of individual cases but they are difficult situations.

**Mr WING** - I would like to ask about the extent of false claims being made.

**Mr COX** - In family violence specifically?

**Mr WING** - Yes, on family violence issues.

**Mr HINE** - No matter what crime that you have to deal with, there are occasions when people make false accusations and there are specific charges where people, whether it is family violence or it is other crimes, make false allegations and if we can prove it is false then obviously we take action in relation to that.

In relation to family violence, there is what we call a risk assessment situation, a RAS, where we make an assessment according to certain criteria about what is the risk to the victim in relation to it, so there is a very detailed process a police officer must undertake at the scene to assist them in their judgment and put the best evidence before the court or to present the best evidence to what action they should take. We know that on occasions people make false allegations no matter what it is but again, there are laws that we can investigate or charge people under if that occurs if we have the evidence.

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**Mr WING** - Can you give us some idea of the extent of the false allegations over, say, a period of a year?

**Mr HINE** - I do not have the figures before me, Mr Wing, but I can certainly have a look to see what we have available and to supply to you.

**Mr WING** - If you would, thank you.

Could you supply us, not now, I expect, with details of the salaries, all levels and ranks, in the police force? Salaries and any other relevant remuneration.

**Mr COX** - I reckon we can table that today, Mr Wing, or now actually.

**Mr WING** - Thank you, whenever that is convenient.

[11.00 a.m.]

**Mr DEAN** - Could you include in that whether overtime is increasing or decreasing; where overtime is going in the police service as well?

**Mr COX** - It depends on how many forestry protests we have, doesn't it?

**Mr HINE** - We have the overtime figure here for you now.

**CHAIR** - I hope we do not fall off our chair like we did yesterday.

**Mr DEAN** - No.

**Mr HINE** - Our overtime cost for 2006-07 was \$3 905 000; for 2007-08 it was \$3 029 000; and up until 31 May it was \$2.7 million. So it is dropping, I would say. But it is one of those issues where when you get up to your full numbers, you do not have to rely on other police officers to do overtime so we are actually bringing that down.

**Mr FINCH** - We had some information from the custodial system from the Prison Service that their overtime is up to \$3.8 million and I just feel that that is really quite an outstanding figure. Even though you are concentrating on the figure that you have mentioned, I think that there should be more reflection on maybe getting more people in the force so that you do not have people working overtime. In some areas, like at Ashley, they are working 12-hour shifts. I cannot see that they are going to be functioning in that area properly when they get around to their tenth, eleventh and twelfth hour.

**Mr DEAN** - There is a big difference in the numbers employed in both organisations.

**Mr FINCH** - I know, absolutely.

**Mr HINE** - That is an area that we are always concentrating on to bring overtime down and to maximise the use of overtime like court overtime. We are always talking with courts to make sure that if we can roster someone on and not get overtime we can do it because we realise police officers' time is valuable and they like to spend time with their families and days off as well. It is

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a welfare issue so we are certainly concentrating on it to bring it down as best we can but also to maximise the use of it because there is an advantage to when we can use overtime as well.

**Mr COX** - Unexpected circumstances create the need for overtime.

Madam Chair, here are the salaries that were requested so I will table those.

**Mr WING** - Thank you very much.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Minister, one of the things to do with communities that I have been very impressed with over perhaps the last five or six years is the work that police do in connecting with different groups in the community. One of the programs that I would like to have some numbers on is police presence in colleges. I think that has been a terrific program, having a police presence in our years 11 and 12. I am also aware that in my municipality we have a couple of Neighbourhood Watch groups which are, I suppose, supported by council in conjunction with police. I am wondering what Neighbourhood Watch groups are like across the State, whether the number is being maintained or whether it is decreasing and any other proactive projects that the police are involved with in terms of trying to connect with the younger generation so that there is a better relationship and understanding between that section of the community and our police. I would be interested to hear about the numbers, whether we are sustaining those or whether they are going out of the system, the Neighbourhood Watch and whether the community is still being involved or whether we are losing some of those and if so, why, and some other strategies.

**Mr COX** - Mr Gaffney, I will get the commissioner to give you the figures. I think, from memory, there are seven colleges that have an officer participating with them. They obviously pay for that service. It is a very beneficial service; you have only got to go and talk to the colleges that have an officer there. The last one I spoke with, I think, was Launceston College. From memory, Rosny, I think, is up to their eleventh year so it is a well-trying and true exercise and one that I would hate to see cease.

The Commissioner will give you more detail on community projects but one of my favourites is Project U-Turn. I said yesterday that you are not meant to have favourites but you could go to that one and see what transpires with some of these kids, what they have done with a motor vehicle and then they give it to somebody who has had theirs stolen, burnt or whatever. It just makes you realise what a worthwhile project it is, and there have been hundreds of young people, male and female, who have gone through that project. They do not all stay on the straight and narrow but the majority do so that, in itself, is worthwhile.

The Neighbourhood Watch one is a little more complex. The Commissioner might want to give you some figures on that.

**Mr HINE** - In relation to Neighbourhood Watch, we see some drop off and then we have had two just recently start up. At the moment there are 75 around the State; in the Eastern District there are 14; in the western district there are 21; in the northern district, 25; and southern district, 15. In fact, a month ago now I went up to the western district coordinators meeting for all the Neighbourhood Watch associations and spoke to them. Again, they are looking at the same issue that everyone else is: how do you sustain Neighbourhood Watch when crime is actually falling, and maintain interest. I have also spoken to the national president of Neighbourhood Watch at one of the conferences and they are starting to renew themselves and reinvigorate themselves. They realise that they have to really invigorate themselves because if they do not, they will get

less involvement from the community. So, at a national level they have done a strategic plan and they had a recent meeting as well of all the national coordinators and presidents to ascertain how they can do it.

The Neighbourhood Watches are actually realising themselves that, okay, with crime down and the involvement of the community going down, how do you sustain yourself. I had a very good meeting with them up in the north-west coast and they realise that and they are working hard towards getting more involvement of the community. Some areas are actually looking at it and saying, okay, maybe it is not just Neighbourhood Watch; there are other volunteer organisations or community groups they can join with in a common interest, whether it is another social club or a volunteer organisation. They are realising that they have to do something different. In Glenorchy they have what they call a precinct meeting where a lot of community-minded groups, including Neighbourhood Watch, get together. I think the future for Neighbourhood Watch is not all doom and gloom. I actually think that they are starting to reinvigorate themselves and we will assist them; it is not always up to the police to do it. We have police officers that assist them from a State level as well and we have got resources to do that. It is not always up to us to actually drive them but it is up to us to assist them. I actually think it is not all doom and gloom. From a national level down to a State level they are starting to reinvigorate and provide the opportunities for other groups to join them or them to join with other groups to help us address crime because we work very well with Neighbourhood Watch.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Are there any places in Tasmania where the crime statistics show that it would be helpful for a Neighbourhood Watch to be started or to have a bit more resources put into it, because it is successful in some communities as a concept?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, and I think that was one of the issues in New Norfolk where they just started. I would have to check the figures. There was an area where there were some problems and therefore a Neighbourhood Watch group was started. But, of course, you have to get someone driving it within the community and other people to join in. As much as we can sometimes try, sometimes it does not always occur. Two new ones just started up. Sometimes you need that catalyst and that driver to do it and we will assist that as best we can but you need someone to take up that rein and actually drive themselves.

**Mr COX** - I will not go into the details but some of the programs include iParty and Party Safe, where police give advice on the parties; the Rotary driver awareness program; and the Crime Stoppers Youth Challenge. Something like 2 000 students, statewide, will take part in it this year. Last year's was absolutely brilliant. It was about bullying in schools and it certainly opened my eyes. It was bullying by phone and for those who are unaware of it, it is a pretty frightening experience. So there are 2 000 students in the Youth Challenge. There is the Adopt-A-Cop program, high school liaison program, the Junior Constable Police College program and, of course, police station tours. So there is a whole heap going on that the police do with the younger members of our community.

**Mr WING** - The list of salaries does not include any extra benefits by way of remuneration for the ranks listed there. Are there any other benefits such as provision of a motor vehicle or other financial benefits?

**Mr HINE** - There are a couple of things in relation to that list. It is base salary. I think, without exception, all of our police officers at the moment receive their 20 per cent minimum shift penalty allowance - a requirement to be available to undertake shift work.

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**Mr WING** - So do we add 20 per cent to these salaries?

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - That is the base rate, Mr Wing, so you add. We can get you the full details.

**Mr WING** - I would like that, thank you. Also, this does not show any amount for the Assistant Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner. It refers to contract. We would like to have the effect of the financial benefits by way of remuneration in those contracts. Also the Commissioner is not referred to here, so if we could have full details of all of those.

**Mr COX** - You want the total packages?

**Mr WING** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - While we are searching for figures, you might provide how much is the accrued annual leave and long service leave that the agency is liable for.

**Mr DEAN** - What specific programs have we in place where police are working with youth at risk - Ashley youth, kids that are causing difficulty and problems out there.

**Mr HINE** - The inter-agency support teams are operating at the moment. They specifically work with youth at risk and they involve other government agencies. I think there are 20-odd IASTs around the State. There are more than 200 kids in those programs, again working with Education and Health as well. It is a very successful program and works very well.

**Mr DEAN** - Specifically targeting those kids out there that we know cause problems that we are currently having with -

**Mr HINE** - Yes. Some 291 youths are actually in the programs at the moment and it is targeting those ones who we know have issues. It is a whole-of-government joined-up approach to actually assist them to get through the various issues. There is U-turn and there are other ones as well.

**Mr DEAN** - The Adopt-a-Cop program - is that still running within schools?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, very much so and I can give you some facts and figures.

**Mr DEAN** - That has been a very successful one.

**Mr HINE** - Whilst some police officers actually do it in work time a lot of police officers do it outside of work time in their own time. They are very committed, very dedicated; it is a very successful program and it is still going on.

**Mr COX** - To be specific, it is 126 officers and 186 schools.

**Mr DEAN** - That is wonderful. The other one I was going to mention is the Officer Next Door Program. How is that operating? How many do we have and what is the responsibility of police in those circumstances in relation to that community?

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**Mr HINE** - The Officer Next Door Program is working still. It is actually being reviewed by the Tasmanian Institute of Law Studies and by the Housing Department to ascertain its success or otherwise. I can get you the number of houses we have in the program.

**Mr DEAN** - A community recently come to me - I do not want to identify them - who said they have an Officer Next Door program but they never see the officer. That is the reason I ask the question.

**Mr HINE** - If that is the situation we can certainly talk in private about it. It is being reviewed at the moment to ascertain success or otherwise. I take your but there are certainly a lot of others that have been very successful as well.

**Mr DEAN** - What is done to ensure that they are honouring the agreement they have in relation to that program?

**Mr HINE** - It is actually centrally managed. We did go through a process many years ago where maybe the intention of the program was not being fulfilled for various reasons, so it is managed centrally. Our community policing area do follow it up and actually liaise with the people in the various houses and the community to ascertain if it is providing the benefit it is supposed to provide.

**Mr DEAN** - It is a great program, providing the police are out there doing what they should be doing.

**Mr HINE** - We do follow those issues up.

**Mr COX** - I am told, Mr Dean, that they actually provide a report every six months - the ones that are in the Housing Commission areas.

**Mr DEAN** - On what they have been doing in that specific area?

**Mr COX** - Yes, so it is monitored very well.

**The committee suspended from 11.15 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.**

**CHAIR** - There are still some questions relating to 1.1 for 'Support to the community' albeit that we have tended to wander just a tad which surprises me a little, but it is Thursday.

**Mr DEAN** - What has been the success rate with drug detector dogs? How many detections have we had and can you describe the functions that they perform?

**Mr COX** - Two dogs came on line recently with great fanfare. From 1 July 2008 to March 2009 there were 130 searches conducted by the explosives detection dogs. There are two drug detector dogs with two handlers; one dog and handler located in Hobart, the other dog and handler located in Burnie. They work statewide as required. In the period from 1 July to March 2009 the drug detection dogs performed 255 searches and there were 119 positive finds and they located controlled drugs valued at \$168 895. I am not sure whether it is true but there was a story around that one of the dogs actually succeeded on its first day - brand new on the job.

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**Mr WING** - They are very good.

**Mr COX** - They are wonderful dogs.

**Mr DEAN** - It is a good result and these dogs go down well with the public too when they are seen out and about.

**Mr COX** - That is the problem. They are such nice dogs everybody wants to come to them.

**Mr DEAN** - That is a good result. Where are we with the issues of stress leave for police officers and workers compensation?

**Mr HINE** - As a general remark, our sick leave has been fairly, constant if not reducing, over the years and our stress-leave claims have certainly been decreasing. The number of staff off work at any one time is certainly greatly reduced now if you look at a 10- or even a five-year average.

The number of workers compensation claims over all categories from 2008-09 until 31 March is 120.

**Mr DEAN** - 120 claims.

**Mr HINE** - Claims. If you just get some flavour about the years before; 07-08 was 158, 06-07 was 206, 05-06 was 197, 04-05 was 223. So if you take the figure at 31 March as being the year to date, we are still about the same.

Then the number of lost days in relation to that is about average at 870, up to 31 March. Last year was 960, but if you go back to the early 2000s; in 2001-02 it was 2 700 days lost. So for this period we are at only 870, so the number is certainly coming down.

The number of stress-related claims up to March is three. The year before there were three, the year before that there were six, the year before that there were nine, and the year before that there were six. Again, stress-related claims are a very low number and we are pleased with the way that is going. A lot of work has been put into that by a lot of people to manage it and to make sure we have the proper staff support to be able to focus on reducing the number of staff who go off work with these types of illnesses, but, if they do, then to help them back to work as quickly as we can.

**Mr DEAN** - Can we identify a main cause for the workers' compensation and stress claims? Is it assaults on police or are there other main causes for it?

**Mr HINE** - It is mainly slips, trips, sprains and strains - try to say that quickly!

*Laughter.*

**Mr HINE** - That is the main cause, rather than assaults on police. It could occur during an assault or an arrest but I think that is pretty common across Australian policing.



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**Mr DEAN** - What about assaults on police? Where are we going with that? There may be a perception from some reports in the newspapers that it could be increasing. I do not know if that is the case. Have we got an increase in that area or has it gone down?

**Mr HINE** - Last year, there were 283 assaults on police. Currently we are above that at 302, so that is about 6.7 per cent increase. Resisting arrest: last year was 389, this year 347 so that is a 10 per cent decrease. Obstructing police - and this is basically offences against police - it was 106 last year, this year it is 107 so that is a 0.9 per cent increase. Threatening, abusing and intimidating police: last year it was 335, this year it is 326 so that is a 2.7 per cent decrease. Criminal code offences, as in serious assault of a police officer: it was eight last year, this year it running at seven so that is a 12 per cent decrease. The majority occur in dwellings and also licensed premises. Dwellings was 1 300 occasions, licensed premises was 270 occasions.

**Mr DEAN** - It is a concern that we are having these numbers of police assaulted while doing their job for the public. What strategies or practices are being put into place to help police with the situation regarding assaults on them?

**Mr COX** - Training is definitely the answer.

**Mr HINE** - We take the issue of police officers being assaulted very seriously. That is the last thing we want to occur. Policing is not a dangerous profession but it has inherent risks and we concentrate, from a training point of view, on avoiding having our police officers involved in any situation where they may get injured. It is a matter of communication strategies and there is a continual force and then they have other tools available to them for dealing with violent situations.

**Mr WING** - Do they learn judo at training?

**Mr HINE** - It is not judo itself but it is self-defence. There are various techniques; there are bits of judo and there are bits of other self-defence techniques. It is mainly about restraint holds and those things. They pick suitable techniques out of the various disciplines.

**Mr DEAN** - In relation to the specialist groups within the police service, how are those groups going? Do we have an anti-terrorist group or is it a combined group now with the SOG group? How many make up those groups?

**CHAIR** - We are probably wandering into State Emergency Services. I think we might -

**Mr DEAN** - No, I do not think SOG is State Emergency, Madam Chair.

**Mr COX** - It is a particular specialised arm of police. Those two are combined. As you would know, there was a drop in numbers with SOG. My memory tells me that those numbers are now increasing. I do not have the exact figure here.

**Mr HINE** - Just off the top of my head, I think we have about 23 members. We are training people in relation to containment as well, so SOG are our highest-trained specialist people in relation to situations. The next group down is containment. We are training people to a lesser degree so they can contain.

**Mr DEAN** - So you have another group?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, within the SOG. Between 1 July 2008 and 31 March they were deployed in 12 high-risk operations and a number of other lesser risk. There are 21 members and now nine members make up the containment team.

**Mr DEAN** - Do they perform in the riot area? Do we have riot police trained now in this State?

**Mr HINE** - It is a different group. The SOG are trained in Public Order Management Teams. We have more than 40 people trained in that. SOG are trained in it as well but our public order teams are trained in that discipline, as well as other people. They are fully geared to deal with the very violent crowd situations and are also trained in relation to crowd control. We have very highly skilled and trained teams, whether it is SOG or our Public Order Management Teams. So we have those two different teams now.

**Mr WING** - And Mr Hodgman's mounted police?

**Mr COX** - We did look at that and, again, unfortunately, a little like your volunteers, Mr Wing, it is not going to happen.

**Mr DEAN** - Commissioner, have we undertaken any integrity-testing exercises in the service in the last 12 months?

**Mr HINE** - There have been situations where we have had what you probably class as 'integrity testing', but it is very targeted, as you would well understand, if we are going to do it. There are very strict guidelines that must be followed. If there is a situation and we need to do it, we have the ability to do it.

**CHAIR** - Before we leave 1.1, Minister, obviously engaging the community and also consulting with the community and advertising different events or programs is important, so what does the department do in the area of media? How many are in the media unit?

**Mr COX** - They have their own media. It is three part-time, or 2.4.

**Mr HINE** - Yes, it is 2.4. One person is marketing, basically internal communication and assisting in Crime Stoppers and those sorts of areas. We have 1.4 in the media, a manager who is a part-time manager and another two part-time people who share a role as well. So 1.4 in relation to media and one in relation to internal communications and assisting others, whether it is Crime Stoppers or other groups.

**CHAIR** - Do you expect that area to come under the Government's management strategies process? Do you expect any cuts?

**Mr HINE** - The short answer is no. They are extremely busy dealing with the inquiries from the media. Media management is very important to police. The media needs information to be able to do their job and we need to be able to supply the media with that information. They are certainly extremely busy. If you get any major events, our media people are trained up to national counter-terrorism standards. If we get an incident that would be classed as counter-terrorism, they are trained up to be able to supply that information and coordinate other media areas as well. So the short answer is no, there will not be any cuts in that area.

**Output group 2**  
**Crime**

**2.1 Investigation of crime -**

**Mr DEAN** - In relation to car stealing - or the unlawful use of vehicles as it is now referred to - and the burning of the vehicles, what is the service currently doing to try to get on top of this? As I understand it, that is one area that is currently on the increase. What do you think is behind that increase? We have more youth out there obviously running rampant. Is there an explanation for the increase and motive in stealing? What are police doing to try to counteract the problem?

**Mr COX** - There was a spike at one stage. I think the police, through very good intelligence and very good work, were able to contain that. It was narrowed down to one specific group and one particular brand of car. I do not know how much detail the commissioner wants to give you.

**Mr HINE** - Motor vehicle theft is an issue for us, as was highlighted in the media, and we are certainly working hard to make sure that that does not get out of control. Any motor vehicle theft is one too many because we all know the value of a motor vehicle to our modern-day society. We have had year-to-date up until the end of May 1 255 motor vehicles stolen, compared to 1 209 the previous year. But we are going back to the days in 2005-06 when we had 2 192 stolen. That was just way too high so we had to put some resources into that to ascertain how we could reduce it.

**CHAIR** - Would you acknowledge, though, that obviously the quality of security in a vehicle now is a lot higher than it was back then so that would have to have impacted on numbers?

**Mr HINE** - We work very closely with the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council. We have worked very closely with them, and they have worked very closely with the motor industry to make sure vehicle immobilisers are fitted to modern vehicles. They can also be retro-fitted. We have had a lot of programs - whether it is various operations to where we encourage people to fit immobilisers to their motor vehicles as well. In a lot of the districts where there is an issue at the moment they work very closely with the community to make sure that they lock their cars, to make sure keys are not left in them or valuables are left in them, to make them less attractive. It is called 'target hardening'. It is an issue for us at the moment. We also upgrade our forensic capability in relation to examining these vehicles.

**Mr WING** - There are considerably more vehicles every year, are there not?

**Mr HINE** - Yes, and Tasmania does have - I think the latest statistic was - the oldest fleet in the country. With that comes inherent issues with car security, as you mentioned as well. Modern-day cars have a lot of security measures. Older cars do not have the security measures therefore sometimes they are easier to steal. But we have certainly had some successes, mostly to do with charging people with motor vehicle theft. The recovery rate at the moment is about 88 per cent. We want to get that as high as possible. That indicates a lot of them are not being transported out of the State or being stripped down. But there is certainly a percentage where we have charged people with that as well. We are certainly going to continue to look at it. Some of the districts have bigger problems than others. I know the commanders are working very hard with their Criminal Investigation Branch to bring this down.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr DEAN** - The other question I have is in relation to robberies. Again, the perception is that they are on the increase. By that I mean people walking into service stations and chemist shops and demanding property et cetera. What are the police doing in that respect, Minister? Are they changing methods or are the people themselves - the establishments - getting more training in that regard as to how they should secure their premises and their personnel?

**Mr COX** - Absolutely, and that is something that I touched on earlier. You are quite right. Again, police have put in a lot of time and work into advising store owners and shop owners about the security equipment they can put in place, what is beneficial to them collectively. It would seem that a lot owners have taken that on board. You would have to question as to why they don't do it. It is an expense that can be claimed, it is beneficial to their own safety and I think the work that has been put in by Tasmania Police has been beneficial. The total number of robbery offences is on the decline so far and the commissioner probably has better figures than I have.

**Mr HINE** - If you take it from a national statistic point of view there was a perception that Tasmania was the only capital in the world but to put it into perspective, per 100 000 of population, Tasmania was 13.2 in 2008. The Australian or national average is 31.4. So we are well below the national average in relation to armed robberies, but of course that is not to say that armed robberies are acceptable in any society. Up until 11 June in 2007-08 there were 55, up until 11 June 2008-09, this year, we have had 49 so there is a decrease compared to the same period last year and nationally we compare very, very well; in fact we are the leaders in it.

**Mr COX** - I guess it goes back to the same thing: if you know you are going to get caught or there is a chance you are going to get hurt, you are going to be less inclined to proceed.

**Mr WING** - That is the greatest deterrent.

**Mr COX** - Of course it is, and some of these things would have to be drug related and people do desperate things in desperate times. The more precautions that shop owners and service station proprietors take then the better the outcome will be.

**Mr HINE** -As the minister alluded to, the launch of the CCTV audits basically gives a standard for what is expected. If people are going to put in CCTV systems in their shops it gives them a guide. The robbery book gives them a guide about what to do and what not to do and our community policing people around the State work with various businesses as well. Mr Wing, you are right; the greatest deterrent is the possibility of getting caught.

**Mr WING** - So, the risk of detection.

**Mr COX** - So if they do not have one in, Mr Wing, through the media they only have to ask.

**Mr DEAN** - My next question was on the Piggott Wood and Baker inquiry, Minister; where are we with that? That has been going on since about the late 1990s. Are we any closer to resolving it? Are we any closer to charging the offenders?

**Mr COX** - It is a specific case, Mr Dean. It is operational. I know that the timing is right because some friends of mine were involved in that but so far as the specifics, the commissioner might want to give that detail -

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr DEAN** - I would like to know where it is at because people are asking me questions about when it will be finalised.

**Mr WING** - Some have been charged haven't they?

**Mr COX** - My understanding is that some charges have been laid but, again, that is a matter for the commissioner.

**Mr HINE** - Basically the short answer is that it has not been finalised but in fact the acting deputy has a meeting with the chief investigator in relation to it on 2 July to go through it. Our senior legal people are also going through it to ascertain where we go through from here and whether or not there is enough evidence for charges, so it is in the process of being finalised.

**Mr DEAN** - So when would we anticipate the matter being completed? Any time frame?

**Mr HINE** - I would imagine shortly after 2 July. We want to bring it to a conclusion as well and that is what we are in the process of doing.

**Mr FINCH** - Minister, I have a comment in respect of the budget this year and the quarantining of the money for policing activities. I think it has been a good thing. When I look at table 9.5 I can see there is a steady increase in the forward Estimates for the investigation of crime. Does that reflect any growing costs that you might have or is it just the increasing effort to catch and convict offenders? Is it salary increases?

**Mr HINE** - It is basically an indexation of the cost. With any crime investigation and new technology sometimes there are increased costs. When you use some of the technology to catch criminals it does cost money and I am more than happy maybe off-line to indicate some of those costs and some of those technologies we use but there are costs. There is a shift in some of the crime categories as well but the short answer is that the indexation is within that cost.

**Mr FINCH** - What did you mean off-line, Commissioner? Are you suggesting there is some technology that you are investing in to assist police work?

**Mr COX** - I think he is suggesting he will talk to you privately if that is your wish.

**Mr HINE** - We do not want to indicate what some of the things are that we use to investigate crime. I do not want to add to some of those things unless you ask me, but there are certainly some technologies now that we can use to investigate crime.

**Mr FINCH** - I was critical at one stage of a lack of embracing by the police of new technologies, so I am glad to see that it is on your radar.

**Mr COX** - If you would like to talk to the commissioner about it later on I am sure he will be happy.

**CHAIR** - I will just remind members there is an opportunity to always go in camera if that is something that you would like to pursue.

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**Mr FINCH** - Yes. No, it is quite okay. I have the answer. I really wanted to make the comment about the fact that you have that situation where you are not constrained now by budget in this constraining time.

**Mr COX** - As we go along, Mr Finch, I am sure there will be a couple of examples where we can explain some of the technology that we are going to use. I am sure that will come up as we go through the day.

**Mr WING** - I am just wondering what the extent of the use of the ferry is in terms of crime, importing drugs and what measures are taken to prevent this or detect anything being imported to Tasmania.

**Mr COX** - Mr Wing, it is an ongoing intelligence process. I have to say that this again is where the dogs are utilised. A lot of that information is based on intelligence and Tasmania Police have very good intelligence links.

**Mr HINE** - I certainly agreed with the minister. It is intelligence-led policing in relation to that area.

**Mr COX** - That is the level of detail we wish to give.

**CHAIR** - Mr Dean has two really sharp questions next and then we are going to get on to poppy security.

**Mr DEAN** - I do have about 20 left. The one that is of concern is offences that have been committed a long time ago on children - paedophile activity et cetera, Minister. Is that sort of offence on the increase? A lot of people are now coming out, 10 and 15 and 20 years later, with these situations. Where are we going with that and what problems are being caused for police having spend time in this area. It is certainly a serious issue.

**Mr COX** - It is extremely difficult and it is extremely serious, I totally agree with you.

**Mr HINE** - A lot of historical crimes are reported to us, whether they be offences on children or on adults, and we do investigate. I do not have the exact figures with me but we certainly put a lot of effort into offences on children, whether it be a national program - paedophilia or pornography involving children and people involved in those offences. I don't have the figures in front of me but there are some historical matters that come to our attention from time to time and we treat that just as seriously as if it occurred yesterday.

**Mr DEAN** - Can you provide those, Commissioner, if they are available?

**Mr HINE** - We certainly have those figures about historical aspects and it is also wrapped up in those matters that are finalised within 30 days from a national point of view. We would do very well to finalise those crimes within 30 days, but those ones that are reported have an historical aspect. So you are looking at children or any crime that is historical.

**Mr DEAN** - Children are what I was really trying to target - committed on young people, children, whether it be a long time ago or whether it be recent.

**Mr COX** - How far back do you want to go, Mr Dean?

**Mr DEAN** - I only want an idea of where we are going with it. I suppose if we had it for the last two or three years perhaps, just to see if there is a pattern of more, or if it is similar or whether it is dropping off or what.

**Mr COX** - You would certainly hope it is dropping off.

**Mr DEAN** - I am trying to get an understanding of whether it is or not. That is the important issue.

**Mr COX** - Over the last two or three years.

**Mr DEAN** - A perennial question I ask is whether police maintain records, Minister, in relation to criminal activity associated with gambling. I was told on one occasion by the then commissioner that those figures were not available, they were not kept within the police service but they would consider putting in the processes to try to get those figures. How many crimes are committed that are directly related to gambling - in other words, stealing to gamble?

**Mr HINE** - In relation to gambling and crime, we do not capture that information.

**Mr DEAN** - Minister, why can't we capture that information? I think it would be available out there. I would think that when people are investigating these issues they would be asking or investing a gambling situation, so why can we not capture that information? It is fairly important.

**Mr COX** - There are some very obvious ones that are related to gambling, and they are fairly well documented. I am not sure how you would do that.

**Mr HINE** - There are several areas where people would like us to capture information. We are also juggling that information capture. There are several areas where they would like us to capture information about the causes of crime in most things. From a national crime statistic view as well sometimes you have to say, 'We can only capture so much information'. I know your question, and you have been asking it for a number of years, so can we capture it? If we do it capture it, it takes time, effort and money to adjust your systems. Our CIB areas do monitor it in relation to gambling per se that may be involved in the crime aspect. Then you have to decide in how much a part of the crime gambling played a part. Was it directly gambling as to why you committed that crime? Was it a direct result of drugs? Was it a direct result of alcohol? Was it because of some psychological reason? The reason people commit crime, you can never say it is 100 per cent gambling, 100 per cent drugs, 100 per cent alcohol. It is not easy to capture that information.

**Mr DEAN** - We used to be able to say at one stage that a certain percentage of crime was related to drugs. It was either stealing to support a person's drug habit or people were committing crimes when affected by drugs. We used to be able to give a reasonable estimation of those figures. At one stage about 60-70 per cent of crime being committed had some connection to drugs.

**Mr HINE** - There are certainly national surveys in relation to drugs and reasons why. I can you give you a lot of information from a national point of view in relation to drugs. Can I give you a 100 per cent accurate figure about our crime rate and what is directly linked to drugs and gambling? No I cannot.

**Mr DEAN** - It is an issue that is brought up by the public on many occasions as to how much crime could be related to gambling.

**Mr COX** - Probably the most prevalent ones are well documented - this or that person stole because of a gambling problem.

**Mr DEAN** - Can I get those figures?

**Mr HINE** - For the prominent ones I would only be going back through -

**Mr DEAN** - I am not going to put the department to that effort.

**Mr COX** - It would be a big ask.

**Mr DEAN** - I am not going to do that but I am wondering if they could consider capturing that information.

**Mr WING** - You referred earlier to benchmarking. Does that relate only to actual offences or to warnings, particularly in traffic matters?

**Mr HINE** - In relation to whether you call benchmarking performance indicators -

**Mr WING** - Sorry, I thought the expression 'benchmarking' was used earlier.

**Mr HINE** - We use benchmarking and performance indicators. In relation to traffic matters, portions are certainly included in that.

## **2.2 Poppy security -**

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I thought the poppy security one would be quite straightforward. The decrease in the funding is consistent with the impact of the Government's budget management strategies. It is a most important industry - \$200 million. However, Minister and Acting Commissioner, I am exceptionally appalled and concerned with the alarming amount of illegal poppy users in our community. I would like to submit, Madam Chair, exhibit A, this picture.

*Laughter.*

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I have three questions. Firstly, has this felon been apprehended? Secondly - it is a good photo, we have his name - Wally B. Do we have an appropriate paw print allocation and do we have adequate Skippy DNA tests?

**Mr COX** - All I can say, Mr Gaffney, is some people will do anything to get themselves noticed at their first Estimates.

*Laughter.*

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Seriously, -

**CHAIR** - I am glad we are getting to the serious question.



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**Mr GAFFNEY** - How many interferences have we had in 2008-09 regarding poppy crops? How many charges have we had?

**Mr COX** - Two persons charged this year, as opposed one last year. Crops stolen increased dramatically - 820 last year and 1 986 this year - maybe some of that is the problem with the wallaby that you were just talking about. Recovery has increased dramatically - 31 recovered last time, 271 this time. The number of interferences last year was eight, this year 17. Persons charged, two; the number of charges, eight.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Last year they thought that poppy crop acreage has been increasing, so that would make it harder for investigations?

**Mr HINE** - A total of 15 752 hectares were sown in 2008-09, an increase from 12 105 the previous year so, yes, you are right.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Okay, so it makes it a little bit harder. So, with that, the number of police on the poppy taskforce or dedicated -

**Mr HINE** - The number of people on the poppy taskforce is 12. They are appointed prior to the season commencing and during the season. But it also includes our general police who patrol the areas as well and our drug squad and our CIB. So 12 dedicated to poppy security, plus general uniform and CIB.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - There were three activities related to this output, if you could give a brief snapshot of those: the development of intelligence and auditing services, investigation techniques and facilitating the protection and security of the poppy industry. They are the three elements. Do you have any comments to do with improvements or otherwise, or some concerns that you might have with the industry?

**Mr HINE** - Liaison with the industry has been excellent and it gets better each year. We have been doing this for a number of years, as has industry, and our relationship with the industry is excellent. Our intelligence gathering, our liaison with the industry and the stakeholders is very good.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Obviously the poppy industry in my area on the north-west coast is very important. I have actually heard comment from some growers and from people within the industry that they sometimes think that the level of scrutiny and security in Tasmania is exceptionally high - which is a good thing from policing efforts - but compared to other States or countries where poppies are grown, it does impact on the profitability of the industry because of the high standards we set. So it is a balancing act. I have had some people say that sometimes the extra costs do not need to be there. I am interested in your opinion.

**Mr COX** - I think it is a double-edged sword, Mr Gaffney. If you didn't do it then you would not comply and we would not have what is needed. I think they should be very grateful that they have that very good level of protection.

**Mr HINE** - By world standards, our thefts and diversions are extremely low. That is what we are aiming to do, to keep the industry safe within Tasmania so the industry continues to use

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Tasmania. We certainly aim to make sure the security of that industry is high so that diversions are low.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I know the poppy industry is a very good corporate citizen so I am very pleased with your responses.

**CHAIR** - And with a new player in the market, that has certainly helped the industry as well, albeit that it took some convincing to allow that player in.

**Mr DEAN** - Does the industry cover the cost of the poppy taskforce? What contribution does it make to that?

**Mr COX** - I do not think it makes any contribution.

**Mr DEAN** - It makes no contribution although special policing is required in the poppy-growing areas?

**Mr COX** - That is a very good thought, Mr Dean. My knowledge is that there is nothing contributed by the industry as far as I know.

**Mr DEAN** - I raise it because I thought it had been taken up with the industry at some point and that it would come on board to make a contribution. This is a special service that this requires policing. Has it never been considered?

**Mr COX** - No, but I suspect that it will be.

**Mr DEAN** - The other question I wish to ask is: many of these crops seem to be grown in areas that are quite open to crop interference. There was a crop grown in the year before last year right on the Midlands Highway, just south of Tunbridge. I think the police are given a list of where the crops are going to be grown but I am wondering whether they have any say at all in the locations?

**Mr COX** - Yes, they do get a list.

**Mr DEAN** - Do they have any say at all in determining appropriate areas with regard to surveillance policing.

**Mr COX** - I know they monitor the crops but whether they have actual input onto the placement I don't know.

**Mr HINE** - In relation to fees; there is a licence fee and some of that licence fee may be diverted into policing, so the industry does contribute through licensing fees in that way. In relation to determining where crops are grown; there is some liaison in relation to it. There are two schools of thought in this matter: if you have a crop on a major highway then there are a lot of vehicles travelling past that provide security and provide reports to us but if it is in the back blocks somewhere, then it is very hard to provide that security. We do have liaison with the stakeholders which includes addressing some of those issues.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - On that point, I would be interested to know the Minister's point of view about the possibility of going down the track of charging for the 12 officers that look after the

poppy industry. Would we start charging individual industries such as the hoteliers where we supply 600 officers to manage accidents and issues that arise from the alcohol that is supplied by that industry? I think we are paying enough taxes already as does the poppy industry.

**Mr COX** - Perhaps I could calm you down just a tad. I realise that you have your constituents foremost in your mind and, whilst it was a very good idea and suggestion by Mr Dean, I do not think that it is something we intend to pursue.

**Mr WING** - Confining that to football clubs, are we?

**Mr DEAN** - I understand at one stage, going back a few years, that the poppy industry did provide a car to assist police in the poppy taskforce area.

**Mr COX** - I think what the Acting Commissioner said was that there is funding somewhere from the industry.

**CHAIR** - It is obviously a policy issue that will be debated at some other time.

**Fisheries security - State and Commonwealth -**

**CHAIR** - Minister, do you consider that fisheries security is a frontline policing service? I ask because there has been a decrease in the budget.

**Mr COX** - Scott will give you an explanation of the supposed decrease.

[12:15 p.m.]

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - It is consistent with the earlier discussions about our administration now being spread across all outputs. We do not have a separate output for administration, hence the level of decrease is not in regard to police numbers or anything of that sort, it is simply a spread of the administrative cost in the total budget efficiency across this output group, as with other groups.

**CHAIR** - Could I draw your attention to table 9.6 of the performance information? Why would you not have the same number of sea inspections and marine-land inspections that there have been in the past if there is no decrease in the front-line policing?

**Mr COX** - The answer Scott gave is correct. The figures were spread across all the outputs and there is no decrease, as I understand it.

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - The only decrease that has occurred is in relation to funding received from the Australian Fisheries and Marine Authority. Its requirements regarding sea inspections have reduced over the past three years. So it might appear to be misleading but there has been a decrease in the level of funding provided through AFMA.

**CHAIR** - So there will be no decrease in staffing numbers for fisheries security both state and Commonwealth in this area?

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - No.

**CHAIR** - Definitely not?

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**Mr COX** - I was just looking at the total of sea inspections. It has actually gone up. It is projected to go from 30 778 to 34 248. Total marine offences detected so far this year are 2 370.

**CHAIR** - So the actual figures are above the target for 2008-09? These figures are not up-to-date then?

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - No, the target was set two years ago. This is the actual figure as of the end of May. Total vessel patrol hours are 6 024 compared to last year's figure of 4 400.

**Mr COX** - So it is up by approximately 2 000.

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - That 2008-09 target is consistent with the previous year's budget paper. The 2009-10 target is the revised target.

**Mr DEAN** - I believe you also have a vessel that does not work properly?

**Mr COX** - No, the vessel works all right. There are just a couple of problems with it.

**Mr DEAN** - I said, 'does not work properly'.

**CHAIR** - The vessel is obviously the next issue, Minister. I know much has already been written and spoken about the vessel. When do you expect that the PV *Fortescue* will be in operation?

**Mr COX** - I cannot give you a day or a time on that.

**CHAIR** - What about a year?

**Mr COX** - Hopefully we can give you a year.

**CHAIR** - Before I retire?

**Mr COX** - We went through this in detail. The deputy commissioner, myself and other officers went on board the vessel during the week because I wanted to get some understanding of the issues first-hand. There was a lot of 'he said', 'she said' going on at that stage and it has been a fairly difficult process. When we realised that there were difficulties with this, we have endeavoured to get this up and moving as quickly as possible. We went on board the vessel this week and spoke to the marine police who are the operators. It is fair to say that there are some difficulties with the vessel; basically there is an excessive amount of spray. There is a difficulty with the amount of fuel that it can carry for long distances and there is a vibration issue that they have to track down as well. There is a suggestion now that that the issue be taken to the Australia Maritime College where it will look at some modelling to try to rectify it. Hopefully that will take place very soon. The vessel itself, other than those issues, is a very good vessel. The operators will tell you that it is, in many ways, better than the old vessel but obviously we do not need problems.

**CHAIR** - Has the department paid for the vessel?

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**Mr COX** - The vessel has been paid for.

**CHAIR** - Why would you pay for a vessel that is not operational?

**Mr COX** - Because it was ongoing. Scott can give you a break down of the figures which will give you an understanding of where we are at.

**CHAIR** - I believe it is well over-budget.

**Mr COX** - No, it is not.

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - There is \$60 000 we have not paid to the boat builder at this stage.

**Mr COX** - There is \$65 000 still in credit.

**CHAIR** - Who pays for the modifications that are required to make this vessel operational?

**Mr COX** - It depends on what those modifications are and what is required.

**CHAIR** - Well, it seems as though they are substantial.

**Mr COX** - Yes, but it is a designer or is it a builder? That is what we need to find out because there are two separate entities in this. Do you want me to give you the figures on this?

**CHAIR** - I would like to know how much has been paid for the vessel.

**Mr COX** - There were two projects involved in this. Treasury approved a supplementary appropriation of \$1.85 million for the replacement of the *Freycinet* and for the replacement of the outboard motors. The expenditure to date against that appropriation is: the *Fortescue* contract costs were \$1.179 million, other costs were \$109 000; the total cost of the *Fortescue* was \$1 288 966. The cost of replacement of the outboard motors was \$530 000. Some motors were donated and some were sold. Proceeds from the disposal was \$31 000. The net cost for the motors then equated to \$499 000. The *Freycinet* repairs and maintenance was \$87 975 and the revenue from that sale - and you know where that is going - was \$90 909, so the net proceeds from that sale were \$2 934. The total budget situation currently is appropriation, \$1.85 million; expenditure, \$1.288 million; *Fortescue*, \$499 000; motors, credit \$2 934. The total cost was \$1 785 032 million. Take that away from \$1.85 million leaves a balance of \$649 968.

**CHAIR** - Do those figures include the person who was on the police payroll as well? Was that the \$109 000?

**Mr COX** - Yes, it does.

**CHAIR** - So his wage component is \$109 000?

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - No, his total payments are \$69 028.

**CHAIR** - Is he still employed?

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**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - Yes.

**Mr FINCH** - Through you, Chair - can we get a copy of those figures?

**Mr COX** - Yes.

**Mr DEAN** - What area of policing has employed him?

**Mr HINE** - He is a contract employee on a casual basis in relation to the design of the vessel.

**CHAIR** - To design another vessel?

**Mr HINE** - No, that vessel. It is not 100 per cent employee; it is on a casual basis as in when needed.

**Mr COX** - He was employed by the department on a fixed-term basis to undertake the duties of marine architect on 25 June and a second naval architect was employed in 2007 as an overseer with that project.

**CHAIR** - The original architect was employed as an overseer, or the other way round?

**Mr COX** - Yes, the other way round.

**CHAIR** - So we employed an architect, he got it wrong and then we employed someone to oversee him?

**Mr COX** - No, no. You always have to have two people. There was a designer -

**CHAIR** - Why did we not have two people to start with then?

**Mr COX** - We did, basically.

**CHAIR** - And we still got it wrong?

**Mr COX** - I suppose if I was going to use the analogy of a new house, do you always get the new house right?

**CHAIR** - I expect most people can move into them, Minister, even if they are not exactly as you envisaged.

**Mr COX** - This vessel has been taken down the south of Tasmania. It was taken the other night to Wineglass Bay, where I am told it performed admirably, with the exception of these three faults.

**CHAIR** - Do we expect to complete the three faults that are still outstanding in the \$64 000 budget we have left?

**Mr COX** - I do not have a crystal ball, Madam Chair, and until I am given some indication I would not be foolish enough to speculate, and I do not think anyone in this room would be. Is it a

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matter of fitting something to it, is it a matter of replacing something, I do not know. I am not a boat designer.

**CHAIR** - But is your understanding that the State of Tasmania is still responsible for the modifications that are needed or does it belong with the builder or the designer?

**Mr HINE** - It is going to be a matter of whether it is a design issue or a manufacturing issue as to who is going to be responsible for those costs.

**CHAIR** - Who decides that?

**Mr COX** - If it goes to the Maritime College and they find that there was a design fault, that would be the responsibility of the designer. If they find that there was a construction fault as a result of something done then that would be the responsibility of the constructor.

**CHAIR** - So given that the designer was under the employment of the Police department then who pays for the fault - the Police department and the people of Tasmania?

**Mr COX** - Yes, which is why that \$70 000 is still in there.

**CHAIR** - But that may not clear the modification.

**Mr COX** - No, or it may be \$40 000 too much. I dare not speculate on something I do not know the detail of.

**CHAIR** - So back to my initial question, do you have any idea when the PV *Fortescue* will be operational?

**Mr COX** - I cannot give you a date.

**CHAIR** - Not even a year?

**Mr COX** - I would like to think it will be well before that. The fact that it is now being progressed fairly quickly and the fact that an agreement has been reached to get these trials done, everybody is enthusiastic to get this done as quickly as possible but having said that, the proviso in all this is that we collectively will not allow this vessel to be used and we will not send police officers into something that we consider to be not safe. So it will take as long as necessary.

**CHAIR** - I can appreciate that we would not want to put anyone's safety at jeopardy but you can also appreciate with that amount of money being spent on a vessel we have a responsibility to question.

**Mr COX** - You might like to spare a thought for us. We are dealing with this as quickly as possible.

**CHAIR** - When you have a designer with a designer overseeing a designer, I cannot imagine how we even got this point.

**Mr COX** - The design may not be a problem. The design is basically a good design. Everybody who is using it is telling me the design is good; they are telling me, as I have just told

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you, what the faults are. I would not imagine that they are insurmountable but, again, I am not a naval engineer.

All I can do again is put on the record that when we became aware that this was bogging down, we collectively moved this as quickly as we possibly could, we brought other people in. The other thing too I have to add to this is that the Auditor-General has agreed, and he has already spoken to the Commissioner, that he will bring forward a complete investigation into the process of what was done, whether it was done correctly and, if not, what was -

**CHAIR** - It is perfectly entitled to go down that path but it does not help the situation that we have spent, I would expect, a considerable additional amount of money to provide a service that should have been in operation by now.

**Mr COX** - We hoped it would have been too.

**CHAIR** - I will invite any other members of the committee who would like to explore that further to do so. I think I have exhausted my questions.

**Mr COX** - The answer will probably be the same.

**CHAIR** - I expect it will be but, as you could well appreciate, it is a significant issue.

**Mr COX** - Madam Chair, again I ask that you share our concerns because it is something we want resolved.

**CHAIR** - I would expect, Minister, that it would be your highest priority at this point in time to make sure that somebody is accountable for what has happened on behalf of Tasmanians.

**Mr COX** - We are exactly working down that path.

**Mr DEAN** - How many police do we have directly involved in this area of policing?

**Mr COX** - In marine?

**Mr DEAN** - Yes.

**Mr HINE** - There is certainly a spread but I can get you the numbers breakdown.

In marine services there are 25 in total plus the other marine officers in other districts so that is in total for the operational support and there are other marine officers around the State.

**Mr DEAN** - Do we see that there are real problems in this area in illegal fishing? Are we pretty much on top of it with the data that we get on it, Minister? I guess we get a lot of feedback from the industry as to where it is going. It is a lucrative business.

[12.30 p.m.]

**Mr COX** - Mr Dean, I think that the illegal fishing activities have reduced.

**Mr HINE** - The numbers that we actually charge in relation to that are fairly constant. Is poaching an issue? Our intelligence-led policing would indicate that there is still an issue with it



and if we do not keep addressing it then it may increase. Is there widespread poaching? We know there is some going on. We know that we have various investigations going on in relation to it as well. Is it a huge problem? I would say no, but if we do not continue to police it at the same level we are now then it could turn into a huge problem. We have various investigations going on at the moment in relation to a lot of the different aspects of marine policing.

**Mr DEAN** - My position is that of course you should be doing it but the question is whether or not enough resources are available.

**Mr HINE** - We also get support from other government agencies in relation to this; they put resources into it as well. If we find there is a major issue, or a major investigation in relation to this area, we put extra resources into it. We already have a number of dedicated resources now but if there is an issue where we need to bolster those investigators to investigate those offences, we will put in extra resources, as we have done.

**Mr DEAN** - Are we doing much in the area of aerial surveillance in relation to poaching? Where are we going with that?

**Mr HINE** - We have certainly used aerial surveillance on an as needs basis. If there is a need then they use those techniques, whether it be helicopter or light plane.

**CHAIR** - We are not going to commission one of those though.

**Mr HINE** - Commission a plane, a light plane?

**CHAIR** - Or a helicopter.

**Mr HINE** - No.

**CHAIR** - Good.

**Mr HINE** - Unless you can give us one.

#### **2.4 Support to judicial services -**

**Mr FINCH** - In this area of judicial services, we have touched on this subject a few times particularly with the efforts of the policing service in the criminal justice system. I do not know if the minister wanted to talk in the same area about the services to the Coroner, on behalf of the Coroner, that occur in this area. As I say, we have touched on the issues there of having police provide their services to the criminal justice system.

In my investigations I was heading down this path of juvenile prosecutions in table 9.6, which is on page 9.8 of the budget paper 2, volume 2. There is a target for this year for the juvenile prosecutions of 1 175, well down on last year's actual figure, but the projection for the next year is considerably higher. But then I have noticed here in the notations for this area that there are some changes in the collation of these figures and the reporting on these figures. I am wondering, Minister, if you are not aware of the detail of that maybe the acting commissioner might care to give us some detail on why the methodology has changed in respect of this area.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr WILSON-HAFFENDEN** - In relation to the numbers, I guess again I can give the explanation that those numbers and the projection of 2008-09 is actually a two-year hence projection in the sense that that projection was based around the 2006-07 actual. That has now been reviewed in line with our performance for 2007-08, hence our performance for 2009-10 is more consistent from where we currently trend. In regard to the changes in the reporting mechanisms, I am not sure that we have that information to hand.

**Mr HINE** - To just give you some numbers as at the end of May where we are with juvenile files, last year at the same period there were 4 681, this year we are at 4 361. Just to give you a further breakdown, we have prosecuted 38 per cent of those. Where they went into a conference situation there were 9 per cent; a formal caution, 20 per cent and informal caution, 33 per cent. Our aim is to try to divert as many as we can from the justice system because we feel there is a better outcome if we can intervene at an early stage to stop those people re-offending. We think that is a far better outcome than placing them before the justice system and the courts.

**Mr FINCH** - So here we have a situation where the conferences and cautions are up to 3 000 projected in the forward situation, juvenile prosecutions increasing - I think it is higher than that figure of 1 800; you were saying over 2 000 -

**Mr HINE** - Prosecutions are 38 per cent of 4 300 and, of course, these are figures that you usually cannot predict. They are historical figures and you base your figures on history but you cannot predict how many people are going to commit offences and be charged so our main aim is to try to divert as many away as we can from the court system. They are historical figures that we are using and an estimate where we can predict what it is going to be but occasionally during the year it changes.

**Mr FINCH** - Maybe you could apprise me of the situation in respect to the conferencing and the cautions, the way you are going about that and whether you think it is being effective in stopping a lot of your people going on to juvenile prosecutions. Are you being effective in that area of conferences and cautions?

**Mr HINE** - Mr Finch, I think the short answer is yes. I think the amount of effort that we put in and the resources that we invest in diverting juveniles through many programs, whether it is U-Turn, whether it is police in schools, whether it is inter-agency support teams, informal caution, formal cautions or community conferences, we invest a lot of money into diverting youth and stopping them re-offending. There have been various studies that have been conducted into how effective it is and I think it is fairly unanimous that our methods are successful in preventing youth recidivism.

If you have the opportunity to sit in on a conference I would suggest that you take that opportunity because it is quite a powerful tool when people get confronted by the victim and learn the harm that they have caused the victim. I would certainly invite the members to take that opportunity because it is such. In fact if you speak to some of those youths who have been through that formal caution process they would say it is a lot harder option. I think we are being quite successful in diverting a lot of crime and youth from offending. It is also assisting us in getting crime down.

Sometimes you have to invest money in the short term to get a long-term benefit. You may not get it through the first or second generation but you might get it in the third generation. You have to invest early to get a long-term benefit and that is what we are committed to do.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr FINCH** - I suggest that your invitation might be put in a more formal way to all members of Parliament.

**Mr HINE** - I would be more than happy to do that and invite people along in a controlled environment to observe a conference in progress because it is a pretty powerful tool.

**Mr FINCH** - While we are on this subject, the member for Windermere made a suggestion yesterday or the day before in respect of the Ashley situation that there might be - I do not know if it is a step-up or a step-down place, that before young people go into Ashley there be another facility provided that might not be as confronting as an Ashley. Whilst we realise those young people come from troubled backgrounds and in a lot of ways they are not the main contributors to the situation they find themselves in, those people who do go to Ashley are going to be in the company of people who are a fair way down the track and probably that track is leading to Risdon. Here you have people who are starting out on a path that might not be the right one but they are coming into contact with people who are well down the path. I do not know the operation fully; that is an assumption on my part.

I was interested to hear that suggestion by Mr Dean, in effect having that next place rather than it being as severe as Ashley. Has that been given any consideration?

**Mr HINE** - Obviously it is not under our portfolio, but from a policing point of view our interagency support teams identified 296 people who were working with other government agencies where we hope to divert them and put them on the right track. We realise they have some issues so we are working with other government agencies to work with those people even before they get into the Justice system. Some of them are in the Justice system anyway. In relation to what you are suggesting, it is not within our department so it is very hard for me to comment on that suggestion.

**Mr FINCH** - But it might be of interest to you, something that might assist this work of stopping the young people from going on to juvenile prosecutions.

**Mr DEAN** - Do you know the number of youths who are going through the diversionary conferencing program and then moving onto the next level of going to Ashley or going before the courts?

**Mr COX** - We would not have those figures; Justice would have them.

**Mr DEAN** - I thought police might have an idea because when the acting commissioner says that it has been a successful program, I thought they may have been able to give an idea of those who are progressing from there to the courts.

**Mr COX** - We could probably tell you those that have gone through community audit and those like that, but for the question you are asking the answer is no.

**Mr HINE** - I can give you some research in relation to the re-offending rate. I think maybe that is part of the question you are asking. In relation to the re-offending rate, I can supply that to you later on.

**Mr DEAN** - If you could do that for juveniles, thank you.

On support to coroners, we still have police working in those offices. From the police point of view, where are we with the cases being dealt with? I know the police do not control this but there was a huge backlog at one stage of these matters in being dealt with? Where are we going with that, Minister? Can the police provide that information?

**Mr HINE** - Overall we have been working with the Chief Magistrate, who has responsibility for that, and we have been working with our own districts to try to get that backlog down. There has been an improvement in the number of files that go to the coroners in a more timely manner. We have been addressing it and we have seen an improvement in it. I do not have the number of files on hand at the moment and the length of them, but we certainly do keep an eye on those things. Each district commander has that responsibility to make sure it is in a timely manner.

**Mr DEAN** - It has been raised on many occasions and some families get distressed because they go on for so long before the matters are finalised.

**Mr HINE** - I take your point. We did have a conscious look at that and we still monitor to make sure that they are done in a timely way.

**Output group 3**  
**Road safety**

**3.1 Traffic law enforcement and road safety -**

**Mr WING** - During the long weekend earlier this month it was very noticeable that there was a much greater visible presence of police on the roads. That had the desired effect because there was not one fatal accident during that busy period. What extra resources were used and made available during that weekend, and in what way?

**Mr COX** - You would be aware, Mr Wing, that there was a random breath-testing station that weekend - and I think there may have been more than one, from memory - near Campbell Town.

**Mr WING** - In the City of Launceston there was at least one.

[12.45 p.m.]

**Mr COX** - Keeping in mind that there is always a police presence, be it covert or overt, available now. Historically it is interesting to note that, whilst these certainly help to make people aware it is a patchy process. You can say we have had a really good week and they are the ones we want - no fatalities and no serious injuries. I would like to think that does contribute to it, but I am not too sure whether it always works that way. For that long weekend you are quite right but only a matter of weeks after that when there was another huge police presence over 200 people were booked for exceeding the speed limit on the Midland Highway.

**Mr WING** - People who travelled from Launceston to Hobart and back on the Saturday of the long weekend saw a number of marked police vehicles on the Midland Highway and at least three of our members travelling to Hobart on the Monday afternoon were impressed with the number of police vehicles on the road, which is not usual. There was that dramatic effect of no fatalities during that busy period.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr COX** - Yes, and that is good. You would be aware that yesterday we announced - and this was an undertaking that was given last year through Project Meridian - that we would look at some high visibility police vehicles. There will be four of those going around the State. We had those down yesterday, with very good photos in the *Mercury*.

**Mr WING** - Yes, very good of your face and good photos of the vehicles as well.

**Mr COX** - Yes, and they came up very nicely. With high visibility presence, hopefully that will have the same effect as what you refer to. People are aware, seeing these and knowing that they are out on the road they will have a greater chance of being detected. We hope that this is just another tool in the box.

**Mr WING** - It is very good to see that but even the design and painting on the existing marked police vehicles makes them quite prominent -

**Mr COX** - I agree.

**Mr WING** - though they could be more prominent, but they were certainly more evident over that long weekend with greater numbers. Could we have some indication of what steps were taken that weekend? How many extra police vehicles were there on the roads?

**Mr HINE** - Mr Wing, as we discussed when you were chair of the other committee we appeared before, normally on a long weekend or when we know that people are travelling about, that is when we will commit our resources to major highways and so on. So we will actually increase our police presence during long weekends when we know people are travelling about. Therefore on most long weekends you will actually find more police vehicles out on the highway because we know people are travelling throughout our State. It is planned and we also have statewide lockdowns, therefore travelling from point A to point B you know you are going to an interaction with a police vehicle. Hopefully, it is a positive one and you are not breaching a traffic law.

We do plan for long weekends. We do plan to have more police officers on the road because we know there is also more movement on the road than over a normal weekend. Those highly visible police vehicles will be used in those environments on the highways because they can be seen from a greater distance. People will get to observe them and they will mainly be used to travel those sections of highway. It is also a safety matter. The better the public can see the police vehicles the better they can realise they are there and hopefully make our police officers safe as well.

**Mr WING** - Absolutely.

**CHAIR** - And slow down quicker.

**Mr HINE** - Visibility is about making people obey the traffic law, but you also have to have that in combination with unmarked police vehicles as well. If people are following you do not know if it is an unmarked police vehicle or not, so there has to be a combination. We obviously are going to put it into the high visibility traffic patrols because we want people to obey the law.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr WING** - I know extra efforts are made during the holiday periods - Easter, Christmas and New Year - but it seemed this long weekend - and people were commenting about it - there seemed to be even more police vehicles visible on the Midland Highway. Would that be so?

**Mr HINE** - We are at a time when there are increased serious injury accidents and fatal accidents, so we are making a greater effort to make sure our visibility is increased compared to another long weekend. I could not give you the exact figure on how many vehicles travelled which piece of road. With the AVL - automatic vehicle locator - fitted to these highly visible police vehicles we will actually be able to tell - and we are going to fit it to these highly visible police vehicles - where they are patrolling so we can also make an assessment of how effective some of our strategies are as well. So there is all those combinations of things that we want to do to make sure that our visibility is up. But also we want to tell the public that just because you do not see us that does not mean that we are not about.

**Mr WING** - I know you said you could not compare the numbers of marked police vehicles on the Midland Highway with other long weekends but was it a policy to have more this last long weekend than usual? It appeared that way.

**Mr HINE** - It was certainly planned and it was certainly done intentionally to make sure we maximised our presence on those highways at that time.

**Mr WING** - It was very effective visually and in terms of the reducing road toll. So it would appear evident that if it were possible to do that all the time, that would have an effect on reducing the road toll. What are the chances of having anywhere near like that operation on a permanent basis?

**Mr HINE** - We had that discussion in the committee that you chaired, Mr Wing. It is difficult to have that sort of resources dedicated to just highway patrol at any one time. When you know there are more vehicle movements on a long weekend obviously you are going to put your resources into that. During the weekdays you know your vehicle movements are going to be within an urban area therefore you have to put your resources in there. The movement on the highway during those times are less than on long weekends. So you have to put your resources to where they are going to get maximum benefit. At the moment, about 46 per cent of our accidents are on the highways so that means the majority of our fatal and serious accidents are within urban areas. So you have to take all those things into account to make sure you maximise your resources, get the best service and the best deterrent you possibly can. We would like to have a policeman and a car on every street corner. Is that going to stop fatal accidents? The answer unfortunately is no.

**Mr WING** - It will stop some.

**Mr HINE** - It will stop some, yes.

**Mr WING** - Nothing will stop them all.

**Mr HINE** - No. That is the unfortunate thing about it. With those ones that we can prevent and have a deterrent effect, we are going to do everything we possibly can to do that. We are just as concerned as every other member of the community about the numbers of fatal accidents and serious injury accidents at this stage.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr WING** - Yes, thank you for that, and I agree with what you are saying. Perhaps I should ask the minister this one because it involves finance. Minister, are you able to make any estimate of the extra funding that would be necessary to enable the police force to conduct on a permanent basis the same very successful operation that we were just talking about particularly on the Midland Highway at the last long weekend resulting in no fatal accidents?

**Mr COX** - No, Mr Wing, I have not. I am just looking at the figures for the fatal crashes so far this year: Tasman Highway, three; Bass Highway, six; Midland Highway, one; Lyell Highway, two; West Tamar Highway, nil. I have been involved in this road safety business for a long time. Unfortunately I believe that you will always find a small percentage of people who are prepared to break the law. You could have a police officer and a police vehicle on every corner and somebody would find a way to avoid them. They would slow down and you would still - I will tell the story I told you yesterday of an example that was given by a speed camera -

**CHAIR** - A short story?

**Mr COX** - It depends on how long we have.

**CHAIR** - We do not have long.

**Mr COX** - A speed camera was visible on an outlet in Launceston and everyone slowed down. They then put a hidden speed camera further up the road and they booked about 50 per cent of the motorists that went past because they all thought they were safe. I could certainly arrange for you to look at these statistics. I bemoaned this yesterday and I will continue to do so, although I understand the reasoning. We are not allowed to show what caused fatal accidents around this State. There is a map that is produced and it gives the reason and the example and the cause of that fatality. The reason we are not - and you would appreciate this - is that it is usually still before the coroner. There is also another matter of respect for the families because any of these accidents tend to have a tentacle effect. They are far reaching; it is not just one person, it is families, it is communities. They are, without a doubt, tragedies. But if you look at those fatalities that occur you will find - and I know it is a well-related story - it is speed, it is alcohol, it is drink driving, it is unlicensed drivers, it is people with bald tyres and increasingly, and heaven knows why, it is people who do not wear seatbelts. If you put that combination together, I do not care how many police officers you have and I do not care what you do, unless you can get some commonsense into these idiots that get behind the wheel of a motor vehicle, you will never ever stop it.

You would be familiar with the work that you are now doing in road safety and, again, I made a comment about this yesterday, Vision Zero has a policy that you will never ever stop accidents but what you will endeavour to do is minimise the damage that those accidents cause. The gentleman who runs Vision Zero in Sweden said that originally when man built the motor car he built a road so that the motor car could travel. We then proceeded to paint a white line down the middle so that we could separate those vehicles and we failed, hence we now have Brifen fencing of which I am a great supporter. I put that on the record every chance I get.

I go on about that, Mr Wing, because I firmly believe that unless we can get some sort of message through to these absolute dills who get out on the road and do not give a damn about anybody else, including themselves, then this is a fight that we are never going to win. We will confiscate their vehicles; we will get that up and running this year. If that helps then, good, that is another weapon.

## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

**Mr WING** - Summing up, that depends on the attitude of drivers, doesn't it?

**Mr COX** - It is totally attitude.

**Mr WING** - I want to suggest that if normal traffic regulations were enforced to a greater extent or if police had the capacity to enforce it to a greater extent, that would have an effect on the attitude because so often we see drivers moving from one lane to the other or turning right with no signal at all or giving it halfway around to confirm what they are actually doing rather than giving an indication of what they intend to do. People wander all over the road and hardly ever, it seems, are regulations such as those enforced. If police had a greater capacity to enforce them then that would affect the attitude of drivers; it would make them more careful. Would you agree with that?

**Mr COX** - I agree that that would probably be the case but, again, I come back to the same point: as long as you have people out there that have little regard or no regard for the law, you can do that but you will still have a couple of young blokes tearing through a country town in the middle of the night seeing how fast they can go up the main street.

**Mr WING** - I am not suggesting it would eliminate accidents or fatalities but it would have the effect of reducing them and I want to know if that can happen.

**Mr COX** - Can I ask you a question: have you ever seen the map that I referred to that shows where the fatalities occurred and the reasoning of them?

**Mr WING** - No.

**CHAIR** - You just said it was not available.

**Mr COX** - It is not for publication; I cannot give it to the media.

**Mr WING** - Could you give it to us?

**Mr COX** - I can show it to you.

**Mr WING** - Thank you. That is exactly what I would like to see.

**CHAIR** - We would have to take that in committee otherwise it would be on the public record.

**Mr COX** - Mr Dean has seen it; I know he would have seen it in the past. It is the most horrendous piece of reading that I suspect you will do.

**Mr WING** - It is just the sort of information that I would like to have.

**Mr COX** - It only reinforces what you already know.

**Mr WING** - I do understand there are some people who will not be influenced by anything much and will take the risks but if there was a greater enforcement of traffic regulations around



## UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

urban areas even to stop people wandering all over the street, it would make them better, more attentive drivers because inattention is quite a big reason that accidents happen.

**Mr COX** - Having said that, when you know that there is a police presence on the Midland Highway and there are still 280 people booked, you tell me.

**Mr WING** - But if that happened on a regular basis -

**Mr COX** - Well, this was after, I think, a very big sporting event. They were there everywhere.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Minister. We will break now for lunch. There are more questions in this area and we are not going to complete it before lunch

**The committee suspended from 12.59 p.m. to 2.01 p.m.**