

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
ADMINISTRATION B MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE,  
HOBART ON TUESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2012.**

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**INQUIRY INTO PRISON OVERTIME**

DISCUSSION WITH **Mr DAVID HUSKINS**, DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES, **Mr GLENN THORSBY**, MANAGER, OPERATIONS SCHEDULING UNIT, AND **Mr DAVE FARRELL**, CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT, OPERATIONS SCHEDULING UNIT, NSW DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES, BY PHONE.

**CHAIR** (Mr Dean) - Thank you, gentlemen, for agreeing to be a part of this and to talk with us on this very important matter. We have now been inquiring into it for some time and, as you are aware, I was over there and had that very good briefing, which I appreciated very much. I passed that on to our committee who were receptive to some of the comments, and I might have to talk with you further on these matters. We currently have with us Tony Mulder, Michael Gaffney and Kerry Finch, and Adriana Taylor is on the line. They are the committee members. We also have our secretary, Sue McLeod, Jill Mann, and we have *Hansard*. This is being recorded by *Hansard* and the transcript will be available to the public in due course. Please identify yourself by your first name when you speak so that *Hansard* can pick that up for the records.

**Mr HUSKINS** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - What I think might be the best course of action is to allow you to go through some of the issues that you did with me when I was over there, because they are critical to our position here and relate very much to what we were on about. Is that the best way to do it?

**Mr HUSKINS** - It sounds okay to us.

**CHAIR** - We have one hour set aside so if you can stay with us for that period we would appreciate that.

**Mr HUSKINS** - My name is David Huskins. It is probably worthwhile to cover the experience of David Farrell, Glenn Thorsby and myself so you can understand the depth of expertise and our background in discussing these matters. Firstly, Dave Farrell is Chief Superintendent of Corrective Services. He looks after the centralised scheduling services with 39 years custodial experience, he is a former regional commander with New South Wales extending into several regions, so Dave has looked after units, correctional centres, regions and in that 39 years has a lot of experience of seeing the culture of the prison service, how it has improved over that time and the changes made, which he will talk about.

**Mr FARRELL** - My background is basically the operations; the sharp end stuff: working in a gaol, understanding the challenges and the difficulties confronting prison officers, and the big advantage, seen from a management perspective, of trying to operate a

correctional facility successfully at a reasonable cost. The other person with us is Glenn Thorsby. Glenn is the manager of Scheduling Services. Glenn is a clerk now, but has a custodial background with 27 years' experience. He has worked with the rank and file. He has worked in overseer roles and also custodial roles in a number of official centres around the state. He has been in an administration role for the last 14 years in HR and operations. I have been with Corrective Services for nine years, back to Health and some other commonwealth agencies, mostly in HR, and I have been in staff scheduling for the last five years.

The matters we touched on when we met with yourself, Ivan; it is probably best to look back about ten years ago and work forward from then. Ten years ago was a pivotal point because that was when we moved from a paper-based scheduling system to an electronic scheduling system, and we can cover the changes made in that time. That was around 1990. We jointly developed our [inaudible] provider [inaudible], which is [inaudible] a scheduling system that embodied everything that was needed from the ground up to manage rosters and workforce planning, so it joins two areas. One is our forward planning; we prepare rosters 28 days in advance in most locations, and that is displayed so that people can have shift swaps et cetera a week before that roster starts. It is displayed by shift, so people know about their work in advance. We encourage people to have input into their rosters, because we believe that it is attractive to our workforce, our work environment and complies with the government's philosophy of trying to balance non-work commitments with work commitments. That is one of the factors, we believe, which contributes to our level of absenteeism. The second part of scheduling is managing the immediate schedule the day before and the day of the schedule of work. There is a lot of work put into arranging replacements for absentees and calls if there are offenders who need to go into hospital or attend funerals. Escorts and all those sorts of things are arranged in that 24-hour period, up to and including the shift on the day of the schedule.

The changes in the last 10 years started in early 2000, when the senior assistant [inaudible] commissioner, who made the custodial services with the commissioner, put forward a number of reforms under the umbrella, *The Way Forward* [NSW Corrective Services 2004], and those reforms were to run a correctional facility in a standard way across the state and in a structured operating routine that included working industries, having offenders out as much as they could during the day, but also having overseers and custodial staff involved in the [inaudible] and locking of offenders, and a less-structured working environment so that custodial staff worked in roles during the day that were a priority for the organisation.

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, on *The Way Forward*, Ivan, the variational operational routine. If sick leave was at such a level that you could not afford to open the gaol you would go to a restricted routine where certain areas of the gaol would be locked down. That is okay in the short term, but I must be brutally frank; there are negatives when you consider locking centres down for a number of days a month, because with programs that you run for prisoners it comes to equate in savings in the sense that you may save three or four shifts of a custodial person, but then you are depleting the value of the program people because they do not have access to the prisoners to deliver the programs that they need.

It should be thought out very carefully about where you lock down, how you lock down, and how flexible your staff is to get access to the prisoners to deliver programs.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr HUSKINS** - Is there anything you want to add in relation to *The Way Forward*?

**Mr THORSBY** - In the introduction of *The Way Forward*, we centralised the rostering, which used to be done by a custodial officer in every centre. We centralised the rostering to a central unit, and replaced any management or transactional-based administration of the rosters by our clerical person in every centre. We then redeployed the custodial officer to the coalface where they are trained to be. From doing that we were able to manage the deployment of rosters, and the deployment of overtime in that period, more from the centralised point than from every centre managing their own replacement officers.

**Mr FARRELL** - Beyond that initiative there was a belief that there was influence in the forward roster preparation by local staffing, and under a centrally prepared roster people are not susceptible to that influence. They do not know the people they are preparing rosters for, therefore the equitable allocation of work - still bearing in mind those preferences for working and non-working shift - is still achieved. I think it has been quite successful over the last three years, when we have had every correctional centre under the one location - we have 29 correctional centres.

Clerical staff replacing custodial staff was another effort to remove that possibility of influence, and to reinforce that the roster work was undertaken and the decisions were not made by these clerical staff - they were doing transactional processing work - the decisions were made by the facility managers as to who worked where on the day. So there is a clear differentiation between the work of a clerk who is looking after the rostered transaction work and the manager who is determining how the centre operates by day.

**CHAIR** - Before we leave the area of rostering, it might be convenient if I ask members whether they have any questions on that? Are you happy to take questions on rostering now?

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes.

**Mr FINCH** - I'm wondering about the skills of the clerk, in the centralised location, who did the rostering. Did that person need to have hands-on skills back in the custodial system? What type of person did you utilise to do that initial rostering work?

**Mr THORSBY** - I was one of the original people who helped set up this unit. I come from a custodial roster clerk background. With a few others with custodial roster clerk backgrounds, we transformed the unit into a central rostering unit. Then we trained our own staff. We trained many of the clerical people that were recruited externally. We trained them ourselves, therefore, over the last few years we've managed to have our own training regime and we basically look after our own.

**Mr FARRELL** - I'll add that we advertised externally for these positions, and internally. There was a reasonable field internally, and we made some external appointments. If you're suggesting you need an operational background to prepare rosters - to some extent

it's useful, but it can be learnt. In demonstrating that it can be learnt, we had people who were appointed from police backgrounds, from Qantas and from private industry. After a few months, with some instruction in training, as Glenn said, they were quite proficient in understanding the business and the rostering requirements. It's certainly not an argument to say that you've got to have heaps of expertise. It's important that some people in the unit have that, but it can be passed on and it can be learnt. There are other cultural benefits in that too. That's been a big emphasis on our centralised unit. We want to be, as Glenn often says, the best unit in Australia, if not the world, for rostering and we can lift our professionalism by having our own sub-culture of focus on customer service, commitment to timely work and doing that extra bit to provide service for our customers.

**CHAIR** - Thanks very much for that. I will move across to our other members.

**Ms RATTRAY** - My question is probably best suited to Dave, but anyone else can feel free to hop in. You talked about *The Way Forward* with reforms and you indicated a ten-year time frame. Was that ten years from the time you came up with the reforms and then implemented them, to be where you are today? Can you give me some idea of how long it took to get to where you are? Am I right with that ten-year time frame?

**Mr HUSKINS** - *The Way Forward* took a while to get union consensus. It wasn't really until 2004 that it got some traction, and then in 2006, we seriously moved on centralised rosters. The reforms were partly to do with rosters, and they were partly a cultural change. At that time we had 33 correctional officers. You can appreciate it was a change of culture and a change to the whole central operation. I'll get to a document that was developed, called a management plan, a bit later on, which explains in a very transparent way the purpose of the centre and how it will operate in the future. That was one of the outcomes; that we moved from a very static and structured operating routine to a greater emphasis on efficiency and, as Dave Farrell said, outcomes in terms of out-of-cell hours, program delivery outcomes and those sorts of things.

**Ms RATTRAY** - There was a bit of a trade-off, then? They had extra hours outside the cells for cooperation. Is that the sort of incentives that you have put forward?

**Mr FARRELL** - As David indicated, there were a number of locations and we met at those locations. With the centralised rostering there is an opportunity for staff to get exposure in working in different areas. Traditionally people would work in one post for long periods of time, negating other people's opportunities to develop their skills in those areas. That was one of the big selling points for a lot of the staff because they could see career development and a bit of succession planning linked in with these changes.

The prisoners didn't get any extra time out of cell. We were just trying to work a system whereby if the overtime was such that we couldn't open the gaol we would go to a hybrid thing where there might be half the gaol closed for half the day and then it would open for the remainder of the day, so there was a bit of rotation around. Certainly the prisoners did not get any extra time out of cell; we were trying to make sure we had them out as much as we possibly could, but not costly in overtime.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Did you have any protests around that time? I do not recall hearing anything.

**Mr FARRELL** - No. It certainly was a hard-sell period. David, Glenn, other people and I opted to go to staff meetings and talk with the staff. I think I had an advantage in that my old rough head was known around the place, and the same for a few of the others, and we had the opportunity to talk to staff. We were upfront with them. Many staff could see the benefits of tidying this up and people there with careers were happy to step up to the mark. There were a few people there who weren't happy. Change doesn't always please everybody.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Did you give them an opportunity to depart from that role and maybe even retire or move on? Was that option given to staff through that period?

**Mr FARRELL** - No, I am not aware of any redundancies during that period. It wasn't a restructure in that sense; it was a redefining of roles.

**Mr HUSKINS** - In 2003 and 2004 we opened a new correctional centre at Mid North Coast and shortly after at Windsor and a little after that at Wellington, and there was a new award struck to cover those three correctional centres. It was mooted at the time that the government was considering privatising those centres, so it was in the context of reform that was necessary for the Australian public administration to demonstrate efficient operations.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you for that.

**CHAIR** - I am going to have to move on. We are going to be running short of time because there is so much we want you to cover.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Congratulations, gentlemen, on the way you have managed to centralise the system and keep everybody happy at the same time. You've got buy-in from people; you've talked about unions, and you've talked about correctional officers and career opportunities. Do you think that is the secret? What is the secret of success of *The Way Forward*? Do you think that you did the groundwork and got the buy-in or whatever? Also, has the Tasmanian organisation asked you for advice or been in contact with you to see how you did it?

**CHAIR** - Good question.

**Mr FARRELL** - I think a large part of it is being upfront, honest and frank with staff, meeting with them, letting them know what the benefits are and spelling it out very clearly. Some people are more receptive to change than others, but I think our advantage was that we were all singing from the one hymnbook. We were lucky with the various experiences people had who were doing the course; there was an excellent rapport across the state. Some weren't so happy, but we were happy to talk to those people and listen to their concerns. I think it is very important to have an open, frank and honest dialogue and have your facts there so that you can eyeball people and tell them the home truths.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - So communication is really important?

**Mr FARRELL** - Communication and respect for everybody's different roles, and at the end of the day we had to get to a certain point.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - And the second part of my question?

**Mr FARRELL** - Which was?

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Has the service been in touch with you at all to see how you did your operation?

**Mr FARRELL** - They might have been in touch with Commissioner Woodham but I am not sure of any dialogue they would have had with my unit; certainly not.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Okay.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Have you provided any advice at all, not really knowing where it might have been going?

**Mr FARRELL** - No, I am sorry. Could you hit me with that one again?

**Ms RATTRAY** - When you said that Commissioner - Woodham, was it?

**Mr FARRELL** - Woodham, yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Was there any request for information from that gentleman that you might not necessarily have known where that information was going?

**Mr FARRELL** - No, I wouldn't know. I'm sorry.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thank you.

**Mr MULDER** - Just to get this into some context, you talked about 29 custodial centres. How many custodial officers across all those 29? I am talking about custodials now, not necessarily rostering staff but just the custodial officers.

**Mr FARRELL** - About 3 800.

**Mr MULDER** - Thank you. Is that all full-time officers or do you have a pool of casuals included in that?

**Mr FARRELL** - We never use casuals. We will get into the casuals of that 3 800. At the moment there is a further 315 casual staff and the entry of casuals -

**Mr MULDER** - I guess the way you use them is - we will get on to that in a moment. I just wanted to get this whole thing into context in terms of your rostering - just how many people you are dealing with. Finally, how many prisoners are in the service on average?

**Mr FARRELL** - About 9 000 at the moment.

**Mr MULDER** - Thank you.

**Mr FINCH** - When you started talking again about *The Way Forward*, there was a reference about tidying this up. I am wondering how predominant was the overtime issue in the changes that needed to be made with *The Way Forward*?

**Mr THORSBY** - It was a significant factor, certainly. Corrective Services, like any agency, needed to comply with its budget; the overtime budget was being exceeded quite regularly and it was unsustainable in the direction it was heading.

**CHAIR** - We will now leave it open to Glenn and Dave to move forward from there, the next one.

**Mr FARRELL** - In chronological order, we went ahead in 2008 and recruited a pool of casual correctional officers and they were trained in exactly the same way as the permanent full-time correctional officers at the level of training in our training academy. In December 2008 casuals were used as part of our workforce for the first time.

The role casuals have played is that they have always worked at the bottom end, so our replacement methodology is that if there is a [inaudible] for a higher rank officers will act up and it is always filled at the bottom end, so these casuals fitted in that place where a permanent officer would be working overtime. Part of the initiative was to sever that nexus between an absence and an overtime shift.

Probably relevant to that, Corrective Services had for a couple of years before had the Australian National Audit Office, through the Auditor-General, provide us with reports which indicate their concern at the level of sick leave in Corrective Services and police and other government agencies. So we were also compelled to take action to reduce sick leave and, as a consequence, overtime. With the casuals, we started off with a small number; I think there were about 60 to start with. Over time we've increased that to about 400. To give you an example, if an officer calls in sick, say this morning, for a shift starting at 8 a.m. this morning, they might call in at 6.15 a.m., our first approach would be to look at the roster; the facility advises that the person is sick, if they have reserves or any officer that is able to perform the work of the roster that has called in sick, they will redeploy someone into that role. If that is not possible, they will ask us to contact a casual correctional officer as a replacement.

I'll talk a bit about the system we have developed for that to occur. If we can't get a casual, we will either advise a casual and or go to a permanent officer on overtime so that the officer who is on a day off is called in for overtime. If we are unable to get a permanent officer on overtime day off, and they still want a replacement, we will go to a double shift. The double shifts are officers that are currently at work and stay back and complete a second shift or they are rostered to work, say, an afternoon shift and we call them in early to work a day shift before the afternoon shift. That is pretty much the process we follow.

That process is outlined in the management plans which I mentioned earlier. The management plans were brought in in 2009. For each facility there is a management plan and they explain the staffing profile of the management plan for the purpose of the centre, the classification of the centres they have, what industries they have, the regularity of their consultative meetings with the community, et cetera. They will also outline how they would use replacement staff which includes casuals and permanents, et

cetera. It wasn't without challenge from our Public Sector Association. The PSA didn't like the use of casuals. They thought, on various grounds, it was inconsistent with our Public Sector Employment and Management Act which has guidelines on the use of casuals. They also believed there was a safety and security risk in the use of casuals so they took it to the Industrial Relations Commission to argue, on the basis of those two grounds, that casuals should not be used in Corrective Services. I'm for casuals in -

**Mr THORSBY** - We could have had a perceived fiddle of taking unplanned absences to generate overtime shifts some years ago. It was funny, when we implemented the use of casuals, that when we were replacing staff with casuals our sick leave dropped because they didn't want casuals to get shifts. It was a funny cultural change that went on at the time.

*Laughter.*

**Mr THORSBY** - Part of this - we went through this process that David spoke about at the Industrial Relations Commission over five months and we were able to prove that we were using casuals correctly. The union didn't draw too much light on that and we have since gone on and managed our casuals quite well. For long periods of leave, if a person is going to be absent from a centre for a period of a month or more due to workers compensation or long term leave or for secondment reasons, we are able to utilise a casual on a temporary employment basis where they are actually a full time officer for that period. We rotate that as equitably as possible around all the casuals offered - a period of temporary employment, rather than on a casual basis and that gives them more stability in their roster over a month or two months at a time. We only use casuals and temporary employees.

**Mr HUSKINS** - It has been great in terms of those temporary employees because we have a pool of trained people at the ready who can work full-time and in terms of the safety and security risk it is often in a location they worked previously, so it is good for the organisation and it reduces overtime and you have a skilled workforce working where you need them.

We invite the casuals to indicate work locations that they are prepared to work from. For example, in the Sydney metro area, that could include Long Bay where there are five gaols in the complex - there are four at Silverwater, two at Windsor - and we would say to a casual, 'Okay, where would you like to work?', and they nominate one or two at Silverwater and one or two at Windsor. We put them in our system and the system has their phone numbers and if someone has called in sick today the officer in charge in the centre says, 'Yes, give me a casual to fill that shift'. We look on the system to tell us if staff is on the work location and then ring the casuals who have indicated they are prepared to work at that location, and offer them a shift. It is done through an interactive voice recognition system and they accept or decline the shift by pushing numbers on the keypad on their phone. It will work on a landline or a mobile phone.

When we first had the casuals, either during their training or graduating from training, they undertake an orientation shift at the correctional centre they indicated they wanted to work at, so they are familiar with the work environment and with our key controls and OHS - if there is an incident, where the congregation points are, where the weapons are



and those sorts of things. We have mitigated any risk of there being a threat to safety with a person not being familiar with the work environment.

**CHAIR** - David, I have a couple of questions and what I need to do is let you control it from your end because you know what you want to pass on to us, so we will try to get through all of this in the time we have. We want to make sure we do that. I had a very quick question. With the changes that you have made in the casual area, do you have a costing on the savings that you may have made within your organisations over the Sydney places? What did it mean to you financially?

**Mr HUSKINS** - Off the top of my head I would be wary but, for example, what we did cost is the comparison between a permanent officer working an overtime shift on a weekday, a Saturday, a Sunday and public holiday, and a casual being employed to work the same shift on a weekday, Saturday, Sunday and public holiday. The differential on a weekday is about \$150, Saturday is about \$80, Sunday is about \$50 and a public holiday was in the order of \$20. The magnitude of the savings was in the order of \$20 million. This is in conjunction with some other changes, which I have yet to talk about. Casuals alone have contributed to that, but it broke that nexus about that overtime shift.

**CHAIR** - Thanks for that, Dave.

**Mr FINCH** - A question about training - you said they are given the same training as correctional officers - and I am referring to casuals and temporary workers - I am wondering about the strength of that training. Over what period of time would that occur? If you are bringing in casuals, how much training do they get?

**Mr HUSKINS** - They get 11 weeks and it is conducted on a full-time basis. The training is not conducted on a casual or temporary basis - it is full-time, matching the offer of work. If they start with us, the first 11 weeks of work with us is full-time in training and after that they revert to casual employment. That is possible under the Public Sector Employment and Management Act for a casual worker - meaning a worker who is irregular or intermittent. There are a whole lot of scenarios where casuals can be employed. An example of that is training, where they can work, as necessary, taking training. Also, if a prison officer resigns, you need someone to fill their shifts while recruitment action is undertaken. A casual can work full-time, or they can be temporarily employed while that recruitment action is undertaken.

If there is an emergency, a casual can be employed to work as often and as long as you like for the duration of that emergency. Training is really important in our planning. The training of casuals could not be inferior to that of any of the other staff.

**Mr FINCH** - Those casuals and temporary workers have to make a solid commitment to take this on as part of their work lives. How much work are they guaranteed? Are they assured of a regular income from being a casual or a temporary worker?

**Mr THORSBY** - Under legislation we cannot assure people work but the average amount of work is three to four shifts a week for each casual.

**Mr FINCH** - Thank you.

**Mr THORSBY** - We try to keep it to four 8-hour shifts. If we go over 38 hours we have to pay them overtime and that defeats the purpose.

**Mr FINCH** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Are there any other questions?

**Mr MULDER** - On the question of the short-notice absences - people ringing in sick within a day of their shift and being unavailable - how many are there now, compared to before you brought in these reforms?

**Mr HUSKINS** - It has reduced marginally. There are a couple of drivers, I guess, including our culture. Research has indicated a link between a person's overall leave entitlements, and non-genuine absences of sick leave. I know there are studies in the UK showing that the greater the entitlement, the greater the percentage of non-genuine absences. We certainly have reduced our expenses, as they have showed with the changes, including the cost of casuals and overtime shifts.

We have even been through a stage where we talked about the culture and the earning capacity of people who are working overtime. People factor that into their lifestyle and part of these changes included financial advice and support provided to people to deal with a reduction in income - that percentage of their income that was associated with overtime. It is funny how people change. They once relied on that component, and that took them away from family time. We have had a large shift where people have rediscovered family time. On occasions we all have difficulty, especially on weekends, so at our country locations we are replacing staff, whether they be casuals or permanent.

That is an interesting outcome.

**Mr MULDER** - Thanks for that.

The other question that I had was about the entitlement to sick leave. Does that extend in New South Wales to things like carer's leave?

**Mr HUSKINS** - Yes, and carer's leave is using your sick leave accrual for that carer's purpose.

**Mr MULDER** - So it's not necessarily the employee that has to be sick. Also, would it be of any use to your permanent staff, if they work a double shift, to take time off in lieu instead of claiming overtime? Did you ever have those sorts of provisions?

**Mr THORSBY** - Yes, people can take time off in lieu instead of overtime. They have to take the time off within three months of accruing the time off in lieu, and it has to be at the discretion of the management so it isn't recorded as overtime. We do have instances of time off in lieu, yes.

**Mr MULDER** - Thank you.

**Mr HUSKINS** - In centralising rosters, we have a list full of casual staff in the metro area that can work in any correctional facility in the metro area. The city fringe staff will

travel to work at some of the country locations. We have a 1800 number that people can use to call central to advise of their absence, and that way we can ensure that the absence is entered on the system in a timely manner. It's entered in real time, so a person calls this 1800 number, the operator that answers the phone gives them a greeting, pulls up their record and says, 'Mr Huskins, I can see you've got 10 days sick leave and there is some extended leave. You're calling in sick and that will mean you have nine days sick leave. How many days are you off sick?'. The operator gives them a reference number, and in real time, when that is entered, the roster is updated.

Say, for example I work at Wellington Correctional Centre. I call in sick on this 1800 number. When the operator enters it, in the same system that is used by Wellington Correctional Centre, they see that I am no longer on a rostered working activity on that shift I called in for - I am moved to a non-working activity to indicate I am on sick leave. That sick leave is in the system, awaiting an application for sick leave when I return to work. That was an important initiative because we were concerned that if it was left locally to the centre to call in casual staff, it was an opportunity for resistance - those casuals wouldn't have been contacted and we didn't have control over it.

So, we developed this [inaudible] system I talked about before. We will call casual staff centrally, and then permanent staff or whatever we can afford, or we want. People are called in on an equal basis in accordance with our overtime principles and our casual-employment principles. The system provides an audit trail of those people we have contacted, what time they were contacted and what the outcome of the call was. It isn't a change from past customer practice in offers of work - the change is the vehicle by which the offers of work are made. They are no longer made by a local person ringing someone up, they are made through this call system, centrally.

**CHAIR** - Yes, thanks for that, David.

**Mr HUSKINS** - There was another change at the time. The government, and our department, the Department of Premier and Cabinet, struck an agreement with the associations that was tied to the wage rises at the time. Instead of getting a full 15 days sick leave entitlement from 1 January, sick leave was accrued on a pro rata basis, based on service throughout the year. At the same time we bought in an updated policy managing sickness and other unpaid absences in Corrective Services. That policy put in place measures that include some punitive measures, but also some measures by which managers would speak with staff who had taken unpaid absences. They would call them at home; if the absence was three days or more, the absences of more than two days needed to have a medical certificate attached. We counted up the number of days in a calendar year that officers took with a certificate and without a certificate. If they reached more than five days without a certificate in a calendar year, they got a letter to say their sick leave was unsatisfactory; their manager counselled them, had them sign the letter to make it transparent and, in our first offers of overtime, those officers wouldn't be offered overtime. That's before we get to double shifts. Officers on days off who had an unsatisfactory level of sick leave - that is, more than five days in a calendar year - weren't offered overtime.

Counselling was based on advice. We had a review done by an external industry specialist. Their advice was that counselling works, that if the manager demonstrates an interest in the person's absences, health and welfare and talked about what they could do

to help them, they turn up for work more often in those particular circumstances. They've had results and I think it's been of benefit. We've grown a lot over those four years or so since we've had that policy in place. It's changed the culture quite a bit. It's understood that there are greater consequences for unplanned absences and there's a cost for unplanned absences. They're also managing support for staff and will factor in the roster preferences and make allowances for individuals. We go to great lengths to make allowances for individuals to get to work. We'll help them with car pooling, and we'll help them with sport. If they've got carer arrangements for family members, we'll help them with that as well. Their roster, as far as possible and still servicing the operational needs, really reflects what the officer will be after in an ideal situation.

**CHAIR** - David, on the five-day sick leave policy and not being offered overtime, what sort of resistance did that meet with? I suspect it would have met with some resistance or did it go through fairly well?

**Mr HUSKINS** - We needed strong support for that. The commissioner and the deputy commissioners and assistant commissioners in our hierarchy or board of management, which is our senior executive management team, strongly supported it. Yes, it did create a few waves at the time. That was January 2009 when it came in. People accepted it as part of their culture and realised the consequences. There's still a component of old-school people that have issues when they sit down with their manager and try to have an open and frank discussion about their sick-leave and how to embrace the changes. There was a bit of resistance but really, it is about the executive support and pushing on. It was quite transparent that we had to do something about our level of unplanned absences, particularly sick leave.

**CHAIR** - Thanks for that, Dave. We are in a similar position of having to do something about ours as well.

**Mr HUSKINS** - Another initiative in the last two or two-and-a-half years is our system generating reports every day that indicate the level of overtime. Those reports are automatically sent out by email to the senior management team and to the general manager of the particular correctional centre and indicate the level of overtime on the day. The reports are sent out at about 11.30 a.m., indicating the level of overtime on the day and what it was yesterday and compares that against the budget, so we get the figures as well as a little pie chart. It indicates how you are travelling against budget. I know there are certainly questions asked by people in operations: if the expenditure is over budget, why is this the case? It has really made it quite transparent, and it is all up to a number of senior managers on the day to know how they are travelling in this budget.

**CHAIR** - So that report goes to all of your senior managers every day?

**Mr HUSKINS** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Does that happen for all departments, gentlemen, or is that just for your area?

**Mr HUSKINS** - Our system operates under scheduled staff and non-scheduled staff, and our scheduled staff are under our rostering system, so the people under the rostering system

get these reports sent out. The non-scheduled staff, by and large, are flexitime workers or people that have been off. Positions are not automatically replaced if they are absent for a day.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I understand.

**Mr THORSBY** - As far as our scheduled staff are concerned, it is all the custodial staff in the agency and any other clerical or admin staff or community-based staff who would attract any form of penalty rates or anything else. We schedule all of our staff, so while we schedule around 3 800 custodial staff, the total people that are scheduled are over 4 500.

**Mr HUSKINS** - Are there any questions on that?

**Mrs TAYLOR** - I do have a question. I am not sure it is specifically this but it involves this. Is there a downside? Are there areas of weakness or are there areas where you are still going to seek improvement?

**Mr HUSKINS** - I guess there are always areas for improvement. Certainly we are not saying we have achieved all we need to achieve. There are inefficiencies in our roster preparation and more contemporary ways of visibility and opportunity for the workforce to have input into their roster.

We have recently gone to the market to ask for expressions of interest for a replacement scheduling system, a specialised system that embodies functionality, that we are hoping will take us up to the 21st century, so that the things that we do not have in place now are put in place to serve functionality, so that a person can apply for a swap of shifts online, so that they can look at their roster at home or on their portable device. That sort of functionality is needed. It's certainly expected by gen X and gen Y employees, and we need to make ourselves attractive to those people for our future managers and for planning our future workforce and making us competitive. Police and fire are ahead of us in terms of attractiveness, so it is about our brand and making our brand a good place to work, and the system is part of that. Certainly equality is part of the whole employee value proposition that a person considers when they are looking for a job in corrective services. The work environment, how we are rostered, what they are doing, all those things are at the forefront of our minds.

**Ms RATTRAY** - What's the average age of the correctional officers?

**Mr HUSKINS** - I think it is late 40s.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Oh, they are very young then.

*Laughter.*

**CHAIR** - David, we have about eight minutes left, so I think we'll just cover any of those important issues that you still have remaining.

**Mr HUSKINS** - I mentioned management plans. What the management plans include is a verbal operating routine. Each operational change means that each day the officer in

charge of the facility determines, on a risk and officer basis, what activities will be filled and what will be left vacant, how the workforce that officer has will be utilised on the day. That involves filling out a template to identify the risks and mitigate resources. In essence, it means that a facility can operate with vacant activities and those activities could be filled two hours a day by a replacement officer in that role or left vacant for the whole day, so it adds discretion to the amount in DOCS they charge in order to run their facility how they want. Like a casual employee, the variable operating routine facilitates and breaks that nexus between an unplanned absence and a replacement shift, whether it is a casual shift or an overtime shift, because you are reducing your requirement for the workforce. That has been a significant change to our operation.

We had concern from our unions in relation to that and it has manifested in an agreement through the Industrial Relations Commission for a Safe Staffing Levels Award that requires that the overall staffing of the correctional centre be incorporated in the management plan, and the number of staff you need in each area and facility is also included in the management plan. It does not suggest for a minute that the officer in charge is going to be running a risk in terms of safety and security, but it empowers him to have a far greater degree of autonomy in how the facility operates to redeploy people where they need to, in the area of work that they need to be performed. That has contributed, as well as the casuals and the temporary employees, and the policy, in a significant manner.

**Mr THORSBY** - It is up to the officer in charge of the centre each day to address - we have a parade every morning at a standard starting time - and brief that parade on any variances to the routine for that day, so it is transparent.

**Ms RATTRAY** - For example, if it was a wet day and you are a correctional officer down, you might shorten the time that outside is utilised. Is that the type of thing we are talking about?

**Mr HUSKINS** - Yes, exactly.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Interesting, we get a few wet days in Tassie.

**Mr HUSKINS** - You stun me.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Sorry, I've taken your train of thought away, I apologise.

**Mr THORSBY** - We are trying to streamline what we do and cut out spending a lot of human intervention by procuring this new roster system and that will also give managers more access via mobile systems or telephone apps for their smartphones, and they will have access to a lot of data in regard to their centre and they can make informed decisions at any time of the day, so that is another of the benefits. We are trying to implement some technology and take away a bit of human intervention to streamline the customer service we can provide to the management in each centre.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So a text message rather than a phone call?

**Mr THORSBY** - With a text message you can send about 50 of them out in a second rather than phone calls taking minutes. Before we implemented the IBR system we were

ringing people individually to find replacements for vacant shifts. We send out 56 calls at once in the IBR and it is all automated so we save, in man-hours per day, a huge amount of time.

**CHAIR** - The situation in relation to annualised salaries, what was that about?

**Mr HUSKINS** - The union coverage for Corrective Services falls into three areas. There is a senior manager that includes the manager for security and general managers, superintendents, a second tier which is the assistant superintendent and senior assistant superintendents, and a third group which is the correctional officers, and senior correctional officers overseer. The first two groups, the GMs, manager for security, AS and SAS, about seven or eight years ago rolled up their salaries and the penalties paid for weekend work, overtime paid for additional hours worked, were rolled into the base salary.

The consequence is, in their award it says how many shifts they are meant to work on weekends, and if there is a need for additional time worked, they will either work at that rolled-up salary or accrued time-in-leave and take it later on. They will only be paid overtime if there is an emergency, and the emergency we have expressed is basically only industrial action, where that bottom group, the correctional officers and senior correctional officers take industrial action and walk out. We need that middle and top group to work to make sure offenders have out of cell hours, get their medication and all that sort of stuff.

**CHAIR** - David, unfortunately I'm going to have to cut off now. We have the Queensland Corrective Services who we are also going to talk to.

**Mr HUSKINS** - Okay.

**CHAIR** - This last question - David, are you reasonably satisfied that you have broken the culture that exists in all prisons right throughout Australia, and that is the sick leave, the overtime culture, that has existed. Are you reasonably satisfied that you have gone a long way to breaking that culture?

**Mr FARRELL** - Yes, I think we have reshaped the culture into a far more positive way than how we used to do business, not only in rostering, but also in the workplace environment, in staff development and in training. I think we have increased the value, not only in how our staff are, but how they see themselves. I think the equity we have brought in through centralised rostering has opened the doors for a lot of the younger officers to shape their career because they can be rostered in so many different areas to make them far more competitive with other people. So I would use the word 'reshaped'; it is probably better.

**CHAIR** - David, Glenn and Dave, thank you for being a part of this and for passing this information on to us. It will help us tremendously in putting our report together, and we are hoping that as a result of this process we can have a big input into 'reshaping' the prison service - I will use that word.

I was amazed at your answer to Adriana's question earlier about the organisation here not having contacted your units, because I would have thought that that was very important.

That is a matter we will take up. Thank you all. It may be that we will need to come back to you at some stage if you don't mind, and Sue McLeod will take care of that. We appreciate very much you giving us this time.

**Mr HUSKINS** - Thank you.

**Mr THORSBY** - You are most welcome.

**Mr FARRELL** - Thank you.

**DISCUSSION CONCLUDED.**



DISCUSSION WITH Mr CHRIS UDEMANS, DIRECTOR, BUDGET AND FINANCE AND Ms KAREN MCGREGOR, SENIOR PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT, HUMAN RESOURCES, QUEENSLAND CORRECTIVE SERVICES, BY PHONE.

**CHAIR** (Mr Dean) - Hello Chris, this is Ivan Dean. I'm chairing this part of the committee in relation to overtime in Tasmania. We have some issues with it and I think you probably have our terms of reference on it which are very short.

**Mr UDEMANS** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you for attending by teleconference. Is Karen there with you?

**Mr UDEMANS** - Yes, she is.

**CHAIR** - Welcome, Karen, and thanks very much for also being a part of this. The reason that we go to you is that I had discussions with David Huskins and Glenn Thorsby from New South Wales in relation to corrective services on some of these issues and they suggested that we make contact with Queensland. They said that they'd had discussions with your area and gained a lot from that. It is for that reason that we saw fit to make contact with you. Having said that, Chris, we need to say that this is being recorded by *Hansard* which will be made available to the public in due course.

**Mr UDEMANS** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - The members we have sitting around the table today are Kerry Finch, Michael Gaffney, Tanya Rattray and Adriana Taylor on the phone. We will have Tony Mulder here shortly. They are the committee members. We also have Sue McLeod here, who is the secretary, and Jill Mann, as well as *Hansard* in this room.

Time is already running away from us; we did have an hour set aside until 12.30 p.m. It might be best, Chris, in as much as you have our terms of reference, for you to bring out some issues and some of the things that you have done which you believe we ought to be considering in putting our report together to try to get on top of this issue here in Tasmania. Is that the best way to do it?

**Mr UDEMANS** - I am not certain.

**CHAIR** - We can ask questions if you prefer it that way?

**Mr UDEMANS** - If you ask your questions of us, that would help to bring out some of the specifics that you might be after.

**CHAIR** - Okay, Chris. I'll start off. The overtime situation here in this state has got out of hand. It happened over a long period of time with very little inroads being made into it. It seems to blow out every year and even become worse.

I understood that you had made a number of changes in Queensland as well, in relation to breaking that sick leave and overtime culture. What have you done in that area? Am I right in assuming that is what you have done? Have you changed the situation in

Queensland in relation to that area, overtime and sick leave, in relation to your correctional officers, that is?

**Mr UDEMANS** - No, it is not quite true. We still have a bit of a culture where we have that nexus between overtime and sick leave. We do have a sick leave management policy in place, which general managers can use to address the serial offenders - for want of a better term. That culture still exists, but it isn't helped by one of the unique problems we have in Queensland that we lose a lot of workers to the mining industry in Queensland, so we are always struggling to keep our workforce propped up. So when you are short of your required workforce you automatically have overtime, and then, when you have a lot of overtime available to staff they can afford to take sick leave and that starts the cycle.

But it is driven more by the fact that we have difficulty getting enough people, attracting enough people to be sure we have a full complement of people to fill the rosters in the first place.

**CHAIR** - Right, okay.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is that particularly around the wages issue, Chris?

**Mr UDEMANS** - Yes, the mining industry is vastly more attractive from a financial perspective.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Okay. So has the government put in place - I mean, I know you've got budget cuts in Queensland as well as most other states around Australia - but are there any moves afoot to address the wages and perhaps conditions as well?

**Mr UDEMANS** - No. Having said that, though, our custodial enterprise bargain agreement expires in April next year, so we will be commencing negotiations with the union around wages and conditions of work fairly shortly. So there will be some limited opportunities to have a look at those sorts of issues. But as I said, it is relatively limited. To give you an idea, last financial year we had an overall vacancy rate of just over 7 per cent, so on average we were about 150 people shy of our requirement. That's a lot of hours that you cannot allow.

**Ms RATTRAY** - You don't have a lot of available casuals or people you can call in? Is that what I gleaned from that?

**Mr UDEMANS** - Yes, that is a fair comment, we don't have a lot of casuals available. Attracting people who want to work casually is quite difficult because they can get a lot more if, for instance, they drive a truck in the mines.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Right, okay.

**CHAIR** - Chris, what is the sick-leave policy that you have in place to address those people who you believe are taking too much?

**Mr UDEMANS** - I will pass that over to Karen to give the specifics.

**Ms McGREGOR** - They do reviews in the centre. So probably every six months they are having a look at not only the amount of sick leave people take, but also the pattern. If they are taking it every Friday night, the first stage is just an interview - the supervisor with the staff member. It's more of an informal visit, 'This has been noted; is there anything that we can help you with?'. After that, if the pattern continues, it goes into a more formal process where certain restrictions are put on them. It might be that they have a restriction on the overtime they can access. We might say, 'You're not going to get any overtime for the next six months'.

It might be that they have to produce a medical certificate for their absences. The last stage can be through a disciplinary process, which may result in dismissal.

**CHAIR** - Okay, thanks.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So, Karen, in a situation where perhaps there has been a family situation change and a custodial officer needs to care for children every second Friday, for instance. Do you reassess the roster to try to assist that officer in being able to meet their family commitments and still keep their job? Is that something you do in your role?

**Ms McGREGOR** - It depends on the circumstances. We will put people on to a modified roster for a set period of time just to get things going for them. We won't turn that into a permanent roster arrangement. Obviously, everybody has different needs and if you're a shift worker and you need care, you will need to find that long term. Say, for example, somebody's marriage broke down and that someone was the sole person looking after the kids, we might say we'll make modifications for three months to get you through until you can sort out some arrangements.

**Ms RATTRAY** - We heard previous evidence that addressing some of those family type issues and general life issues has made a difference to the culture in another facility in another place, another jurisdiction. I was interested to know whether that is a key component of how you get changes to take effect, if you like, without having union involved or whatever. That's what I'm interested in.

**Ms McGREGOR** - I guess it's about being consistent. You apply the same rules, otherwise some people think that it's a preferential treatment for a certain person. That's why we say we can look at it for this set period of time but we can't enter into it endlessly for the rest of your employment, basically.

**Ms RATTRAY** - It's a bit of a fine line, isn't it?

**Ms McGREGOR** - Yes.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Thanks for that.

**CHAIR** - In relation to the sick leave, what is your position in Queensland? If a custodial or correctional officer rings in and says, 'I'm sick and can't be at work today', what's the process that you are required to go through? Would you automatically and immediately ring somebody to bring them in on overtime? Is there a policy or position that you have to work through that?

**Mr UDEMANS** - We do have a policy which Karen is really familiar with. There's a hierarchy of steps to go through and Karen will talk on the specifics.

**Ms McGREGOR** - Depending on when they're ringing in for a shift, obviously, if it's short notice, sometimes what we can do is limited. We have a stage process which is, number one, can it be filled by a roster variation from our reserve staff? If that's within 72 hours, we can't compel the person to do that unless they agree to it. Then we have people who potentially might owe us some hours, so when we do a change of roster we have what we call balance of hours. A person might owe us a shift so we might draw from those people. In a couple of our centres, we also have part-time models where part-time staff can nominate to do extra hours at single time rather than at overtime. We know what their availability is, so we'll call them in. We then use our casual staff as the next stage. Then, as a last resort, we go to overtime.

**CHAIR** - Okay, that's the process. What's the situation with reserve staff? Are they extra to those that you have rostered each day? Please explain that to me.

**Mr UDEMANS** - No, the reserve staff - it goes back to how we actually staff our correctional centre, how we derive the full staffing complement. We have a formula that takes into account the amount of absences we expect that we're going to need to cover. For instance, for every 12-hour post, our budget model will allow us to employ 2.66 FTEs to cover that particular post. The 1.66 extra is for the hours in addition to their standard 38 hours a week that can't be covered by one person, as well as to cover for their annual leave, sick leave, other leave or off-line training. Technically, those 1.66 hours are relief, however if in our circumstances you cannot get to that full complement, you will not have the full number of reserves to draw on.

For a small centre that might have 10 posts a day, you would have a budget that would allow you to employ 26 FTEs to cover all the rostered posts and any planned absences and unplanned absences that might come up. If you run at a 7 per cent vacancy rate and you only had somewhere in the low twenties, you will struggle and you won't have your full relief available to you.

**CHAIR** - On the casual staff that you call on, Chris, are these people fully employed as casuals and come in to work as they are called on to come to work, is that the way it is? What sort of training do they go through? Are they people who have been specifically trained in that role?

**Mr UDEMANS** - Yes, we call them when we need them and that is the condition under which they are employed. They are given the same training as our full-time staff, so they will go through a ten-week training course and will have the same basic training and they will keep their accreditation up the same way that we do for our permanent staff.

**CHAIR** - What is your position with overtime? Have you over past years been able to decrease that or do you accept it as a part of prison services in Queensland because of the problems that you have with mining and so on or have you put in place some policies and structures to try to reduce your overtime and penalty rates, or isn't it a problem?

**Mr UDEMANS** - I wouldn't say it is not a problem. The gross overtime cost has increased over the years, probably similar to you, and it is a constant point of focus for management. Sorry, I've lost my train of thought.

**CHAIR** - Karen might have something to add?

**Mr UDEMANS** - I had something specific I was going to say and it is completely gone.

**CHAIR** - It might come back to you in relation to your overtime and whether it had blown out or whether you were able to decrease it or whether it was an issue?

**Mr UDEMANS** - It has been increasing over time, but so has our average level of vacancies or our ability to keep our full complement of people employed, that has been steadily increasing over time. It becomes more and more difficult to keep our full complement. To give you an example our average cost per custodial employee last year was just under \$10 000 per employee.

**CHAIR** - On overtime?

**Mr UDEMANS** - On overtime, yes. It is quite a significant spend for this jurisdiction as well.

**Ms RATTRAY** - How many officers do you have, Chris?

**Mr UDEMANS** - Last year we averaged 1 842.

**Mr FINCH** - How many casuals?

**Mr UDEMANS** - I do not have that data available. At a guess, Karen?

**Ms McGREGOR** - Probably only about four in the centre now, very low numbers.

**Mr UDEMANS** - It would be fewer than 50 overall.

**CHAIR** - In relation to the rostering, Chris, you are probably aware of the New South Wales position where they have centralised their rostering situation into the clerical side, rather than the custodial officer, or setting it up themselves. How is your rostering done within your services?

**Ms McGREGOR** - Our rostering is done locally at each centre by an administrative rostering person.

**Mr UDEMANS** - The rosters are not managed by the custodial staff, and probably never have been.

**CHAIR** - Right.

**Ms McGREGOR** - Just out of hours. Normally, at about four o'clock in the afternoon, they hand over the rosters for management by the supervisor during the night shift, and when they come back on duty in the morning they do it. That is the short-term stuff.

**Ms RATTRAY** - What about your full roster, Karen? If I were working in a Queensland facility, how far in advance would I know what my roster is? Is it a 28-day roster or a two-week roster?

**MS MCGREGOR** - We have some rosters that are 100 weeks in length, so most of our staff are on a fixed pattern that they know, and then it is our reserve complement that normally have a notational roster which is what we would call it. They are subject to having their rosters changed. If a roster clerk prepares the rosters, say three or four weeks out from the date that it is going to occur, they start rostering those staff into the vacancies.

**Ms RATTRAY** - So to cover holidays and know sick leave that is going to be taken for a particular operation, or that sort of thing.

**MS MCGREGOR** - And relieving.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Okay.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Can I check the figures that you gave us? I think it was Karen, or maybe Chris, who said \$10 000 overtime for a person. That is 18 and a half million dollars a year for overtime bill?

**Mr UDEMANS** - For last year we spent \$19 million, that is correct.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Thank you.

**Mr UDEMANS** - It is a big number.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Is that budgeted for, Chris? Next year will you have a line item for that?

**Mr UDEMANS** - Yes. I do not have my calculator with me, but if you have a 7 per cent vacancy rate you are saving the entire normal time budget for those people. So the ball set as your normal time budget savings balances with the additional overtime cost that is caused as a result of those vacancies. To give you some rough numbers - and do not quote me on these because I am making them up as I go along - we will budget a correctional centre -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Are you allowed to make those numbers up as you go along?

**Mr UDEMANS** - To give you an example, we would provide correctional centres with a budget that assumes that their vacancy rate may be about - let's say - 4 per cent. We build in our vacancy rate because there is always a lag between people leaving and when you can replace them, particularly with their fairly long leave times for recruitment and training. However, we would say, based on that assumption, we expect overtime to be in the region of - let's say - around eight to \$10 million in total. When the actual vacancy rate turns out to be between 7 and 8 per cent and the overtime is around about 18 or \$19 million, the saving that you make by not having your full complement of staff offsets the additional overtime costs. So in a sense it is budgeted, but we are not spending it the way we would choose to.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - In terms of your annual budget from the state government, do you meet that budget each year, or do you have to ask for extra? Does it blow out to some degree?

**Mr UDEMANS** - Corrective Services has not had a budget blowout. The last time Corrective Services had to ask for permission to incur a deficit was when we closed the David Longman Correctional Centre and that was back in about 2003 or 2004. Baxter was a technical issue because we had to demolish our building, so it was a \$6 million building write-off that we incurred the deficit in respect of. From an operational spending perspective corrections haven't incurred a deficit as long as I can remember.

**Mrs TAYLOR** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - That is heartening, Chris, because it's not quite the situation here in this state unfortunately. While our money isn't equivalent to yours, they continually come back to the government seeking further funding for reasons that we're trying to get on top of.

**Mr UDEMANS** - We do work exceptionally hard at it, I must admit, because corrections is one of those operations that are traditionally leanly funded because they are not a 'sexy' operation. It is always a struggle to get injections of funding, so it's always a struggle to meet budget, but we do work very, very hard at that.

**CHAIR** - If I can just refer back to New South Wales situation again, Chris. They report daily on all of their overtime operations and their sick leave. Do you have a similar situation to that?

**Mr UDEMANS** - At a local level, yes. Every correctional centre has morning prayers and each manager reports to the general manger on what overtime shifts were incurred and why. It is not essential to report centrally on a daily basis. I think New South Wales may have picked up that model from the private sector. I know GEO do that. All of their general managers ring in on a daily basis to report their overtime, but with the private sector there are consequences, as opposed to ourselves.

**CHAIR** - Is there anything else, Chris or Karen, that you think would help us in moving our matter forward?

**Mr UDEMANS** - One of the important controls that we have in place is centralised approval of changes in rosters. If a correctional centre wants to change their roster patterns, it gets assessed centrally by Karen and others, and it is approved centrally, so a correctional centre cannot just off their own back come up with a change.

**CHAIR** - You mean an overall change of their roster, not where somebody rings in sick and there's a change?

**Mr UDEMANS** - No, no, this is if they want to change their roster pattern totally.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Like from eight-hour shifts to 12-hour shifts?

**Mr UDEMANS** - Or if they wanted to change it so that instead of having four shifts there, three shifts here, and five shifts here, they wanted to swap it around so that it's a different shift pattern.

**Ms RATTRAY** - How is the union involved in that process then?

**Ms McGREGOR** - At a local level they sit with the local delegate and come up with what their roster patterns might be and it gets sent down here. We do the checks like fatigue management and the actual budget for the centre to make sure all the posts are budgeted. It then gets signed off by a roster committee, then it goes to the union and they get two weeks to come back with any comment on it before it is formally valid so they can make a change.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Effectively they would be in on the front-end process, so normally their members would have supported a change initially before it was sent to your review committee; is that how it works?

**Ms McGREGOR** - In most cases. We have an annual review process where the idea is to sit down and then if the members have any concerns where they want to change something, or operationally, it does not mean that we can't do change. Some of the things that they do not want to be involved in we have to go through and come up with patterns and then send it to the union without the staff being involved because they are basically refusing to be involved.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Right, okay.

**CHAIR** - I guess you have your ten and twelve -hour shifts?

**Ms McGREGOR** - Eight, nine - up to twelve.

**Mr UDEMANS** - Anything that you can think of from between eight and twelve, but predominantly twelve at the moment. We will be looking to change that pretty shortly.

**CHAIR** - In what way, Chris?

**Ms RATTRAY** - Up or down?

**Mr UDEMANS** - We are proposing to go down on the day shift to an 11-hour shift, changing the out-of-cell hours. So the vast majority of the day shift would be an 11-hour shift and the only 12-hour shift on the day shift would be the equivalent of a night shift complement.

**CHAIR** - Did that pose any difficulties for you going to those extended working hours? Most organisations that you hear from - it has happened here and it has certainly happened in New South Wales - when they went to 12-hour shifts it was having a detrimental effect because employees were seeing it as a second job and were taking other jobs.

**Mr UDEMANS** - Yes, that was one of the unforeseen consequences of moving to the 12-hour model. Prisons moved to the 12-hour model I think in 1996 and fought tooth and



nail to get that 12-hour model approved. Within about a month everybody said, 'Yay, this is great!', and it afforded them the opportunity to work a second job because on average they were only at work three days out of seven. That was one of the unforeseen consequences. In a lot of respects the prison job is now the second job and whatever else they are doing can quite often take precedence. So if they have an urgent concreting job to finish they will postpone a shift so they can finish off their concreting job.

**CHAIR** - I think that has been fairly common in most other areas where they have been operating those extended hours as well. It was unforeseen, you are right, but that is what has happened unfortunately. You would not consider coming back to, say, eight, nine or ten hours?

**Mr UDEMANS** - There is always the possibility of reducing those hours to the day shift a little further if we need to. I don't think there is much support to go back to an eight-hour model though, certainly not amongst the staff; they would be in total revolt. I do not think from management there is much support to going back to the eight-hour model but we may reduce the day shift a little further if need be in time to come. We do have the scope to do that.

A bit of further information for you to consider - the 1996 enterprise bargaining outcome in Queensland also included us moving to an aggregated shift arrangement, so instead of paying the staff the shift penalty that applied to a particular shift we rolled it all up into an aggregated rate. For instance, previously if they worked a night shift they got paid 15 per cent, if they worked a Saturday they got paid an additional 150 per cent and if they worked -

**Ms McGREGOR** - An additional 50 per cent.

**Mr UDEMANS** - Yes, an additional 50 per cent, and if they worked on a Sunday they got paid double time. We rolled it all up and it averaged out to 28.5 per cent and we just paid everybody 28.5 per cent upfront. If you did not work on a particular shift you lost that 28.5 per cent on any particular day.

What it did do was shift the pattern of sick leave taking. Previously nobody went sick on a weekend because that was when the big money was earned. Or on a public holiday - nobody went sick on a public holiday or a Saturday and a Sunday. Any sick leave taken was during the week where the impact was minimal. Now we find that paying that aggregated penalty, a lot of the sick leave taken is on weekends because it is an attractive time to take time off, and all you are losing is 28.5 per cent.

Whether Tasmania is considering moving to an aggregated shift arrangement or not that is just a word of advice from Queensland's experience.

**CHAIR** - Interesting. Thank you, Chris.

If there are no further questions - Adriana, are you happy?

**Mrs TAYLOR** - I'm happy, thanks.

**CHAIR** - Chris, thank you very much for that. We appreciate you and Karen giving us your time on this. We might need to come back to you at some stage if you do not mind and Sue McLeod will be the person who will arrange that if we need to.

**Mr UDEMANS** - It's been a pleasure. I hope we have been able to help.

**DISCUSSION CONCLUDED.**