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**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE B MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE,
HOBART ON FRIDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2013.**

INQUIRY INTO THE OVERTIME COST OF THE TASMANIA PRISON SERVICE

Mr ROBERT WILLIAMS, DEPUTY SECRETARY AND DIRECTOR AND **Mr BRIAN EDWARDS**, OBE, DIRECTOR OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT, CORRECTIVE SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WERE RECALLED AND RE-EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Dean) - Brian and Robert thank you very much for being here with us again. I think this is your second or third time but it is a fairly important matter. We are not sure whether we are comfortable moving forward but we hope we have all the information that we need for this committee to report, which we hope to do very, very shortly now. We have one apology.

What I intend to do is suspend the rest of our agenda items and move straight to the item as listed for the discussion with Mr Edwards and Mr Williams.

Brian, you would be aware of a report from Robert during the last incident in relation to some of the issues. There were further things the committee wanted to talk to you about as you are obviously the responsible person at this stage making the changes and looking at overtime.

I will leave it to Robert and Brian to pass on to us any additional information and issues that you know we are interested in and then I will open up for questions after that.

Mr WILLIAMS - I may as well ask Mr Edwards to start with. You have heard from me and not a lot has changed. I think there are a few updates and you might have some questions from last time as well. I will let Brian take over.

CHAIR - Thanks, Robert. We will ask questions across the table and either one can answer.

Mr EDWARDS - Do you want me to take you through the change program - where we are and how it is going?

CHAIR - I think that would be good.

Ms RATTRAY - That would be great, I would appreciate that, Chair.

Mr EDWARDS - When we started we had to look at a lot of things that were missing from the TPS, like procedures and processes so that we can start recording accurate data and one of the things that we have started on is that very slow incremental change program. It's not only in the processes and the data connection but also - which is a very difficult job - assisting staff change the culture of the place through the bad publicity, et cetera.

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We have now moved through several phases and this phase we are on is moving from looking after a prison to turning it into a Tasmanian prison service.

What we are now currently doing is splitting the two functions - that is, the RPC into one, the high medium prison into one - and the transitional staff, and I have moved the other prisons Mary Hutchison and Ron Barwick, Launceston and HRC, Hobart Remand Centre, into another function. Our aim is to put a directorate team under that, which is what we are working hard on to understand where that directorate can fit. The whole aspect of this is to move into the directorate providing the service level, and the other functions to act as an appropriate prison service.

I think earlier directors and a lot of people have worked very hard for the Tasmanian Prison Service but, with my experience in running prisons, I did not think that you had enough experience in the past of people who had actually run prisons. What I picked up are fundamental flaws on moving forward. For instance, I will give you some examples. I would expect when I arrived to see a drug strategy team because 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the people behind our bars are having problems with drugs, and having problems with most of the drugs that cause crime. We did not have that and we needed to build it.

I would have expected us to know how to deal with violence behind the bars. As you know, with Tamar and the other areas we had to look at that. Those are two very simple examples, but I think it is more endemic than that. So we had to go through that process of building that up. Moving now to two functions enables me where my aim and my vision is to say that a unit in one of those functions can be costed from zero base. We know exactly how much it will cost us in either support overtime, because that is all overtime should be used for; if we can do it during the core day it is not overtime. So what we are moving towards now is a cost centre function and all aspects of running the proper business of the Tasmanian Prison Service.

A very quick overview on where we are going with all those aspects: I have to ask why I have prison officers doing jobs where they should be on the front line and why are they driving the escort van. So we have had to look at how we use our staff and whether we use our staff efficiently. I think staff should be very proud of the way they have reacted. I think there were some questions on personnel covered in the last sitting -

CHAIR - Brian, I'm sorry but I should remind you of parliamentary privilege and that you are on oath.

Mr EDWARDS - What we do is I now look at personnel covered in a different aspect. I look at that on showing how flexible our staff have become through this social change. Where we would normally straightaway call in overtime to cover a post, now we have staff flexibly moving from department to department in order to cover posts and where they are left blank it is because we had a risk assessment on that area and we did not cover it.

There are lots of things going on and I could talk for another hour but I should imagine the questions will tease out a lot more.

CHAIR - That gives us a bit of a starting point.

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Are you satisfied that this time you are on a solid path to arresting the position regarding overtime?

Mr EDWARDS - I think we are on a very solid path, but I am not only focusing on overtime. As a service we should be looking at operating costs for the Tasmanian Prison Service, which would include an aspect of overtime. My view is we should consider whether we have the right amount of budget, the right amount of staff, the right amount of material, are we buying the right amount of mattresses - all of that funding needs to be taken into account - not just overtime.

Mr WILLIAMS - That is a really important point that I tried to make last time. Things like our workers compensation costs over the past years have gone up so dramatically but the way the budget had been put together for many years was that everything was paid for no matter what it cost and everything on top of what we had was just classed as the excess which was overtime when in fact things like the power costs, the food costs, the workers compensation costs had spiralled out as well but they never appeared as such. While the overtime was always too high, it was not a fair reflection of what was working inside the prison budget to create excess costs because there were other things going up which were being masked by always calling the excess overtime.

I think I mentioned last time that the number of workers compensation claims has come down quite significantly as a result of the cultural change program dealing with the safety issues and trying to deal with drug issues because the fewer drugs, the less standover, the less unrest. What we are trying to do now is to make sure we have a handle on all of the aspects of the budgeting. Wages have gone up year in, year out, electricity has gone up dramatically, water charges have been introduced and have risen and all of those things are contributing to the sort of the pressure we are under to reduce costs. If we just looked at overtime, which has been a good thing to work on, we will not make it sustainable for the future because we also have to look at how we, for example, reduce our power costs. We are trying to make sure we focus on proper budgeting across the board, not just overtime.

CHAIR - From the committee's point of view we would need to be satisfied that this is not just an aberration, that this will be ongoing and that your new strategies will have a path moving forward to keep control of this situation.

Mr EDWARDS - If you have brought me into Tasmania, thinking I would want to put in a temporary arrangement, then I should leave Tasmania. As far as I am concerned, what we should be doing is putting the processes in place. I now have people working from a zero base because I am saying that Tasmania should be proud of the Tasmanian Prison Service. In order to do that we have to spend public money effectively and efficiently and we must hold our heads up high that that has been spent properly.

I have never seen a zero-based budget on the Tasmanian Prison Service being done before so we are starting from zero and I will build every bit of budget up. We are on solid ground, we are going forward, there will be peaks as there are in any change. There will be peaks and there will troughs but all our trends should be concentrating on public funds being spent efficiently. Every member of staff has honoured that and every member of staff has signed up to that.

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CHAIR - How far down the line have you passed the position of the control of overtime? Has it gone back down to your bottom-line managers? That was one of the issues that came out throughout the inquiry, that the only ones who were really interested in the control of the budget were the very, very senior people; no responsibility was given to anybody else down the line. How has that gone and how have they accepted the changes in that situation? How do they report on it, how do they receive information back from the top as to where you are at?

Mr EDWARDS - Our new project finance manager has met with every head of function, every head of function are now holding their functional meetings with their managers and we cascade every bit of information all the way down through. I test that with my constant inspections of place on a monthly basis and talking to staff. What pleases me now is when a member of staff will say, 'I know we cannot afford it but can we move in this way? I know this will cost overtime', so they are talking in that language. I think that is the start of a very big change.

We have a suggestion box now from every member of staff who are putting in suggestions for activities and the way we move forward. We have set up a think tank where staff sit down and I will give them problem and a solution. I say we have a problem in 'x' department, 'x' department is spending 'x', what is the solution to get through it and they are from ground level through to senior manager level sitting down at a table and working out solutions. I think we have come a long way.

To answer your question on where are we going on cascading down, every month the head of that senior management function will report back on where they are within their budget and whether or not they have overspent. When I do bilaterals with my senior team who have been given their performance management plans, now we will sit down and I tell them it looks as if they are getting near the top of their spending in this area and ask what they are doing about it.

CHAIR - I'm looking at the new information that Robert passed on to us in relation to the new pie chart for overtime reasons, and you have covered there the period from 1 January to 5 August; this pie chart was right up until that stage. Sick leave is the one that is the major reason for your overtime so what is happening in your management of that now? Do you now have contact with people who are taking sick leave? How do you follow that up and what are you doing in that regard? My colleague Mr Mulder and I are looking at the police system and how they really got on top of that and made huge changes. How are you managing that?

Mr EDWARDS - We make contact within the first 24 hours of staff being sick and help them. We have gone from a family that had 'flu through the children and both parents and we will do everything we can to help that family with shopping, supporting them and taking them through.

As soon as a person goes sick we will contact them within 24 hours for support, find out where they are and keep in contact. Because we keep in contact that is actually saying we care. People are now thinking about where they stand and how long they stay off and I have found people are coming back to work a lot quicker.

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At every senior management team and every group meeting when the managers are meeting the staff they will have a piece of paper which will say we have had 12 off this month, here are the people who are off, how will we help them or have we a bit of delinquency there? If we have, we will have that person in, talk to them and find out where we are going but if they are ill, they are ill and we will care for them. If I find there is delinquency we would deal with that robustly and everyone knows that.

Mr WILLIAMS - It is not just illness, it is workers compensation. The prison has driven the department to have a completely different way of looking at how it supports people who are off on injury. All the support that Brian has talked about is offered to people who are off on workers compensation but we have also instituted a mechanism with some parameters where cases that are going to be off for a longer period are now going to be examined by the secretary and the two deputy secretaries of the department, quite removed from the day-to-day management, care and support for the person but to look at what is going on so that cases do not get left. These cases can tend to roll on year in, year out, unless someone comes in and says this does not look like it is good for them or us so how do we move it forward.

Do we have to deal with it and talk about another type of employment? That, I think, is going to drive not only the claim rate down but affect the return-to-work speed, which is the thing that was languishing. Of course people do not want to return to work to a place where they feel unsafe and we have dealt with a lot of safety issues through the last couple of years. We had a workplace safety audit by Workplace Standards Tasmania and that has helped us put in place a lot of things.

As I think I mentioned before, we have not had any serious assaults in the last 12 months. We have had some assaults but there are two classifications. I think it is a sign that we are just getting to the right sort of place. The number of lockdowns is diminishing and, as Brian said, part of the reason for that is staff are being flexible and instead of slavishly following rules that we imposed as managers they are now free to manage their environment. They can say today it is okay if we are one down because everything is calm and everything is good or today it is not and we need two more people because this place is really a bit unsteady.

That has led us to not locking down for staff shortages on days when, three or four years ago, we would have had an automatic lockdown if one person was missing. So that is a great credit to Brian and also the staff that they are now just not thinking about having to recall; they are starting to think about whether they can operate with what they have now and if it is safe they are. If it is not, they are telling us. That is sending responsibility back to them and they appreciate that as well.

CHAIR - Robert, it is heartening to hear that because that is the New South Wales model; that is how they do that. They do that risk assessment and it worked very well for them.

We can be reasonably satisfied at this stage that you are changing that cultural issue that was obviously a problem for the prison with overtime, absences and so on. Are you reasonably satisfied?

Mr EDWARDS - I am more than satisfied. If every single player on the Hawks does not put their effort into winning that match then they lose, and that is the way I look at the TPS.

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I am concerned I am extremely proud of my staff and I am extremely proud that we are starting to run a business. Irrespective of whether it is the Tasmanian Prison Service we have a business and that business is public money. When I get a briefing from my head of OD prior to coming into Robert's description of the secretary and everyone looking at workers' compensation, they will go through the workers compensation list with me, they will say this person has been off this long, this long and this long. I will ask what their advice is to me, what is their briefing on this person, where are we going with this person. That will then get taken into head office and we are now closing the link on all of that so that we are handling the business properly. I am really pleased with the way the staff have come back into that.

CHAIR - I am pleased to hear you say that because my colleague Mr Finch, who is absent today, for the last eight years has continually pushed down the throat of the prison service that it is a business, no different to the police service, no different to the fire service, no different to all of the others and that we needed to get control of it.

Ms RATTRAY - I am interested to know where the redevelopments are at. They are key to implementing some of those change management processes that are going to build on what you have already outlined to the committee this morning, so where are we with those stages? How is the planning going? I know Mrs Taylor will be just as interested in that as well.

Mr EDWARDS - Not just the planning. I think at one stage we had 50 or more lorries coming through the gate; it was really busy. It is rumbling along now quite quickly. By the end of, I would think, within a month we will have three building sites in one establishment, which causes me to lose my hair, security-wise; I did have a full head of hair.

Ms RATTRAY - Those breakout areas?

Mr EDWARDS - We are building TAFE-style buildings. We are building bricklaying, electronics - those sorts of trade training areas. We have classrooms to try to look at our business of what happens by assessing people who come in, find where they are on their English and mathematics and basic education. We are building in those support channels. We are building so that we can start running more drug courses than we have been in the past and we need to take on professional people to do that. We are building a recreational hall, not for the fact that we want to put in excessive weight training or stuff of that nature but we need to teach people to re-socialise and to work together and engage in teamwork. We have the oval at the back of that.

We want to build a multifaith room in there so people can look after multifaith areas.

Mrs TAYLOR - They are all underway?

Mr EDWARDS - They are all underway now.

Mr WILLIAMS - The managing contractor who is building for us is going out to tender on a regular basis for packages of work. The last thing we have to sort out is at the end of having organised all of these things and including some security system upgrades we

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have to see how much is left for building accommodation, which was not the primary role of this project as this project was about activities, education and training.

We had always said, especially to the Public Works Committee, that there was an accommodation component to this. As it was not the priority we have waited until we have some accurate costings and it looks like we are going to put maybe a 10-bed extension onto one of the smaller units to create a unit where we can segregate some people. It could be drug users or some other category of person that we need to keep separate; they could be vulnerable people, those sorts of people. That is the only thing that is just on the tail of the project but everything else is signed up ready to be built and is just in a program of building over the financial year.

Mr EDWARDS - We have just told you the physical side. We have a lot more organisation going on which I wanted to explain to you.

Mrs TAYLOR - I am happy with that but at the moment I would like to ask about the physical side because we have this money in this budget and the previous budget. I do not know what stage you are up to in spending. I am sure you will have joy in spending it if you get to spend it.

Some of the questions we asked last time were about agreement from the Aboriginal community. Has that all been done now for the whole site?

Mr WILLIAMS - All of those planning permits have been obtained. That was the standard process for development and getting an application through across Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania as well as council.

Mrs TAYLOR - The last time we asked Robert that had not been completed.

Mr WILLIAMS - That is all done. Basically the managing contractors are now free to build everything that is in the scope except for this final package of accommodation which needs sorting.

Mr EDWARDS - On the Aboriginal side, what I asked is why would our business be held up each time if we have the experts coming in to have a look at where we can build and where we cannot build. Why not do the whole estate -

Mrs TAYLOR - I am with you, but that was not what the original plan was.

Mr EDWARDS - That is done.

Mrs TAYLOR - Good.

Mr EDWARDS - We are waiting for that to be signed off. The rest of it has been signed off.

Mrs TAYLOR - Are you still waiting for it?

Mr EDWARDS - No, just that last bit. The rest has been done but while we are doing that I asked the question about getting the other stuff done. So the whole estate is now being pulled in, but the parts you were interested have all been completed.

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Mr WILLIAMS - The third stage is once we have the money allocated we have approval for building.

Mrs TAYLOR - Excellent. Apropos this I was concerned during the week, a few days ago, and you no doubt heard the media report as well. There was a media report and it was not followed up so I do not know much detail about it but it said something like the buildings at the prison were being held up because there was a dispute with Planning about water costs and headworks.

Mr WILLIAMS - It was to do with the water headworks. It is not holding it up. This was an appeal that was lodged quite a long time ago and it was related to when we initially scoped we were going to have a 30-bed unit and the charge that was put in for that. That is no longer in scope, however. There are some legal and technical points that people wanted to pursue as a result of that appeal but they are not holding up the building. I can assure you the trucks are digging the holes.

Mrs TAYLOR - That is what the media report said, but I am well aware of how the media gets things -

Mr EDWARDS - We are forging ahead.

Mr GAFFNEY - You are trying to get the cost down?

Mr WILLIAMS - That was what we were trying to do and then there ended up being a matter of principle about the charging regime and that is what is being sorted out. That has a broader implication for other developments.

Mr GAFFNEY - You and probably 200 other infrastructure projects across the state, I would say, would be in the same sort of boat.

Mrs TAYLOR - As long as it is not being held up by that.

Mr WILLIAMS - No, we are working through with TasWater and I think we are back on track.

CHAIR - Any other questions on this point, members?

Ms RATTRAY - I probably should qualify. The breakout area probably was not the right of terminology.

Mr WILLIAMS - No.

Ms RATTRAY - It is the recreational area. That was something when we visited the prison, Robert, that I thought must be really challenging -

Mr WILLIAMS - It is.

Ms RATTRAY - for prison residents to not have anywhere to wander. It was like everyone was on top of each other.

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Mr WILLIAMS - All those exercise yards have been extended but they are still not the be-all and end-all. The education and multifunction hall and the industry are meant to go out of the units at the moment, especially with the ovals closed because of the construction. It is probably worse for the time being than it usually is because they are stuck in the units.

Mr EDWARDS - That is the key bit that I needed to explain. Following all the building construction, in order for us to be good at our business we have to prepare for these new buildings. There is a very good department under manager Kaye [inaudible] who is handling what we call the Prisoner Employment Activities Board. That board is already meeting now as a steering group ready to profile every prisoner on their need and to go through every activity. As we all put up an activity what we should be doing and what that group is working towards is to provide a structured day for each individual prisoner so that they know they are either working in the laundry or they are going to attend a drug course in October so everything will be planned out into a correct format.

All of that work we started two months ago ready for completion of this. When it is finished we should have a complete plan to deal with - I have set a target of 100 per cent of activity for every prisoner. When we look at the rooms and when we look at the ratio we are not going to have 100 per cent out every time. Some prisoners will move in to allow space and the logistics and that is what this Prisoner Employment Activities Board has to get right.

Mr WILLIAMS - The government put into the budget in the out years the running costs for those activities. The accommodation was covered but the activities were not, so the government has put in the education costs for teachers, the program facilitators so we can do the activity, not just have the infrastructure.

Ms RATTRAY - Is that in the Education budget or is that in your own prison budget?

Mr WILLIAMS - It is in the prison budget papers and we are working with the Education department on how we are going to implement that. We may well contract services out to them. They are certainly heavily involved in the planning for that. We work in partnership with them.

Ms RATTRAY - There have been some significant changes in the education system and the way that they rolled out programs and who was responsible for those programs in recent times. Has that presented any challenges, Robert, to you for getting those programs in place?

Mr WILLIAMS - No. In fact I think I mentioned last time that we have gone from something like 15 000 hours of vocational education and training a couple of years ago to over 30 000 hours now. That has been a spectacular success in terms of increasing availability and, as Brian said, if we get the planning for prisoners industry and education right inside the prison then it has to be aimed at the labour market on exit. We have been working with the Education department on getting the vocational skills right so a lot of the people can be attractive to employers in industries when they leave the gate.

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Ms RATTRAY - From memory, the last time you came to the committee was around the time where those new structures were being put in place. You have not seen any issue around the delivery of those educational programs?

Mr WILLIAMS - No, they have been really good. The Education department has been amazing in the last couple of years.

Ms RATTRAY - That is good to know.

Mrs TAYLOR - The reason that I have been concentrating my questions on the building program, although this is about overtime, is that they are very closely connected. If you do not occupy the prisoners then the stress on your staff is much greater. So that is good to hear.

The other question I have is about your performance management plans. You said that all your senior management now has performance management plans with KPIs. How far down the track are you with that? Last time we spoke you were working all the way down to all your staff.

Mr EDWARDS - As I have always said, I could present annual reports to every member of staff tomorrow. If I do that I do not actually start moving through the change program appropriately. I think you have a copy of our core framework which looks at attitude, how we deliver it. That will take time to get through. We are now at the managers' level, just below the senior managers' level. Our head of OD is setting up new courses. I have a meeting on Monday - we have a training consultant coming in - to take the managers who have just had theirs through their appropriate training on how they deal with cultural change within performance management.

I have not kept it hidden from you when you said you expected it to be done. I have always said to you I expect this year to be the practice of a person saying, 'I have this task to do, this is how I have to do it'. That is key to any cultural change so I am using this year to gradually move through and make sure we have a very good appraisal system in place. At the end of this year everyone should be done as regards to they know where they are and they know how they are going to do it. My expectations are that before the beginning of the financial year not only will this year's be closed off on the practice but next year everyone's will be open at the same time. That was always my aim.

Mrs TAYLOR - I wasn't suggesting you had ever said it would all be done now, but you have told us that you are progressively working through. I was just asking where you are up to now.

Mr EDWARDS - We are down to the senior managers' manager - two levels down.

Mr MULDER - I would like to zero in on the short notice unplanned leave. I notice your pie chart has changed, percentages aren't comparable - the overall pie has decreased - all these accounting manoeuvres make it difficult to compare like with like. I notice that the pie chart now contains sick leave, unscheduled leave and carers' leave. Is that all short notice absences?

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Mr WILLIAMS - Carers' leave is; sick leave is. Unscheduled leave is annual leave taken out of sequence, so that might not be a short notice one. It could be, but it is where people have their annual leave rostered in but say, 'I need to go earlier because I have to do something' - and take it out of the sequence that they were rostered in.

Mr MULDER - The scenario that has been causing this committee some concern - a lot of members concerns over many years and going back 30 or 40 years now - is the idea of the system being rorted, and that rorting was done by phoning up at short notice, sick leave. For me, the hub of this inquiry is to see what action is being taken to get that level down. That has been a constant theme every time we have sat across the table from each other. I am going back now into the table that is associated with that. I am referring to Legislative Council Government Administration Committee B inquiring into the overtime costs, questions on notice and the report that flowed from that. On the second page are the sick days, which I take it is a combination of sick and carers' leave?

Mr WILLIAMS - I think that is right. It is called 'personal leave' in the State Service.

Mr MULDER - Do sick days also cover that short notice absence where they are only absent for one day?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Mr MULDER - Does it now also include someone you call in? Obviously you don't know a week in advance if you are going to come down with the flu, but that you are off for four or five days.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, that would include all sick days.

Mr MULDER - What I am trying to get at is this business about, 'I don't feel like going to work tonight. I'll call in sick', and you are perfectly fine the following day. I am trying to get a feel as to how that type of activity is trending.

Mr WILLIAMS - Before I get Brian to answer that, one of the things we have done is to purchase a centralised electronic rostering system. That will be in the implementation phase over the next couple of months and will give the prison service the ability - and this is a New South Wales system - to know where people should be, to choose how the roster is structured. If people aren't attending, it will be very clear because this system is going to link into the department's HR system. One of the things we are doing at the moment is an audit of sick leave between what the rosters say when people are at work and what their HR record is, and there are some disparities. We are cleaning up that, which is increasing our sick leave level in records because we are getting a better and more accurate picture. We are going through that process at the moment to make sure the records are clean when we start with the electronic rostering.

The electronic rostering system will be critical for us being able to control where people are back-filled into. It won't be a local arrangement but at the same time we have given the local teams the ability to manage their own decisions about when they do want to recall someone based on the risk they perceive, but that will be a centralised function rather than a local function.

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Mr MULDER - At this point in time you still don't have a handle on that?

Mr WILLIAMS - We do, we have done it manually. We brought it in centrally. The new electronic system has been purchased and I think will be implemented before the end of the year. That is our vision and that of the company. That will give us a much less labour-intensive mechanism than we currently have because we have centralised the roster but it takes an enormous amount of work and an electronic system takes away a lot of that work. Maybe Brian can talk to you about how we are managing the sick leave. It's not a policing mechanism, it's a caring mechanism, being in contact and asking, 'How are you going?'.

CHAIR - Also the long weekend sick leave.

Mr EDWARDS - I don't agree that we don't have a handle on that. I think we are doing extremely well.

Mr MULDER - Okay, show us your handle. Let's stop talking about it. If you've got a handle on it, explain.

Mr EDWARDS - It depends what handle you want. The central rostering system is coming in, but we are running a central rostering system now. The handle is the fact that we put out the rostering system to each group. Each group is responsible for then reporting back where there are any differences on that central rostering. If we are sending a central rostering system out to them, I know there is 200 hours that has to be covered, except for the unscheduled leave. When that goes down to the manager, if that has risen to 300 when we get it back, we question the manager on where that 100 is. The handle is we now have managers who are accountable for each of their areas.

We have managers in the OD and I say to him and the rest of the managers, 'I am not satisfied with having this amount of hours shown when there were no hours on the original central rostering. What are you doing about it? Why is it there? I want to know why every member of staff was absent, what were they absent with'. Their job is to say to me, 'This one had flu, this one had this, this one was here, this one we are inquiring into'. So we do have a handle on it and we are driving it forward.

It doesn't matter how you put it, whatever system you are running and whatever organisation you are running, you have to get the responsibility down to the individual, and that's the next thing we are doing. We are now not allowing any unscheduled leave. The unscheduled leave you are seeing here is the system we have inherited where you have leave blocks. As long as you have leave blocks and your family are not off on holiday with you, you are liable to then say, 'I don't want that block of leave. I want to move with my family off'. I think it is an archaic system, but a system that is going to take some movement. What we have inherited is two years ago someone would say, 'We're going to go to Europe but it is unscheduled away from the leave block'. A lot of that 12 per cent is planned from a long time ago that we have inherited. If someone has said, 'I want to go to Europe and we've got the tickets. We got everything two years ago and unscheduled away from the leave block', I am not going to stop them now. That is wrong.

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Mr MULDER - Can I just focus you back onto the short notice, short-term stuff, not the holidays?

Mr EDWARDS - We have a handle every day on who is away and what we are going to do with it. If I find any delinquency anywhere, I deal with that in a robust manner. They will have to come and explain their attendance, or lack of it, to me and then I decide what action I'm going to take with that person.

CHAIR - Have you had to do that so far?

Mr MULDER - You've explained the mechanisms and the handle, but what is it telling you? How many of those interventions have you had to do?

Mr EDWARDS - Three. We deal with every single absenteeism every day for every member of staff. Every member of staff that is off will know that we have managers looking, the OD looking, and we will audit it.

Mr MULDER - How is it trending, the short notice short term?

Mr EDWARDS - It is trending down.

Mr MULDER - Not the European holiday one, the short notice short-term absences?

Mr EDWARDS - You did ask about the unscheduled leave and that's where the European holiday came in. The short term is trending down, except it will go up and down according to the seasons. This particular month, when I have done the analysis of past years, this area has always had a higher peak on short term than others so we are looking at why. We think it's the flu season, et cetera.

Mrs TAYLOR - Is that sick leave or holidays?

Mr EDWARDS - Sick leave. Sick leave will go up and down but we have a handle on that.

Mr MULDER - So your short-term, short-notice sick leave or leave is trending down?

Mr EDWARDS - Yes.

Mr MULDER - Do you have the comparative data with the numbers and how that's trending down?

Mr EDWARDS - Yes.

Mr MULDER - Also, do you have comparative data with other prison services or even, for example, other Tasmanian government agencies?

Mr EDWARDS - I'm not sure we have. I know we are below New South Wales but then there's a comparison in size. I know we are below Victoria.

CHAIR - The data you have in relation to your own system at the present time, can you provide that to the committee?

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Mr EDWARDS - Yes.

Mr WILLIAMS - If you look at the question that came back on notice, it has 2010-11, 12.1 per cent; 2011-12, 12.9 per cent; and 2012-13, 11.3 per cent. When I spoke to you in June, at that point in time it was down to 9.4 per cent. It has spiked again a little bit this year. That's the trend down but I think the important thing, as well as understanding people have a legitimate right to 20 days sick leave - that is in the act of parliament that sets up the State Service entitlements - it's not just how much sick leave people are taking, it's what the response of the organisation is. Until recently the response was that you must backfill every position with overtime, and that's not happening.

CHAIR - The legitimate right, as I understand it, is if you are sick - not a legitimate right just to take 20 days.

Mr EDWARDS - That's a question I ask of everybody.

CHAIR - It is not a right, and that's one of the issues.

Mr WILLIAMS - It is a right if you are sick. To influence something that people can take - higher sick leave taking is often a representation of an unhealthy workplace. We had a lot of injury over the last few years. Some people were legitimately worried about coming to work because of the level of violence and injury they were suffering as workers. That has gone right down and is part of the whole package of how you trim it back. Also, when you're talking about some of the leavers in terms of sick leave, we have had policies in for the last 12 months about what happens if you have been off on sick leave and how soon you can resume working on overtime.

I know that Brian has had conversations with people, coming back off sick leave, who may be returning to work where he has said, 'You won't be working overtime until you are fully fit'. In the past, people were coming back on a graduated return but they were still doing overtime. We put in place those policies that go to the individual questioning of people and we have to be careful not to persecute. If a person is sick, they are sick. If they have a medical certificate, it is really hard to get behind that. If it is a Monday to Friday pattern of behaviour, then it is time for a conversation about what you are doing.

CHAIR - It would be interesting if you had the opportunity, wouldn't it, to check that sick leave against a second job that a lot of them have, as to whether they have been sick there as well?

Mr EDWARDS - Mr Mulder asked about the handle. That is one of the big handles that we are trying to achieve. Even if someone has had several days off, the question I am asking of them is, 'Are you still able to do this job? You seem to be having a lot of time off'. If I feel that they are under strain, if they are giving me that impression - which is beyond what New South Wales and everyone else is doing - in my opinion, for their own health, they should not be working overtime. So I will not allow them to work overtime. We do have a handle on short-term -

CHAIR - That is the New South Wales model as well?

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Mr EDWARDS - Nearly. They have certain days beforehand before we get to that; we don't. We do it straightaway. But, you are right.

Mr MULDER - The sick days that turn up in there, I keep getting the feeling that we are talking about things other than short-term or short period.

Mr WILLIAMS - No. We are talking about what we call unplanned. You didn't have it in your roster; someone rings up and says, 'I am sick today'. That drives the overtime for today because if we need it we have to replace them for that day. It could be a week. But that also includes if someone rings in and says, 'I've broken my leg; I am going to be off for six weeks'. It is in there as well but it's also the short-term.

Mr MULDER - If you have a handle on it and you assure us that you can pick up those patterns, what I have asked for is, is that data available so that we can see what sort of trend it is and how it going? We take out the, 'I've broken my leg; I'm off for six weeks', to, 'I'm off for one or two days on short notice'. I am not saying that one or two short days are not legitimate. I am not saying that every single case is not a legitimate case. But that is where the comparative stuff comes in with other organisations, with the rest of the public sector across the board, because if you have a cultural problem, then that will show up in that level of data that it is a cultural thing, not necessarily a human condition thing.

Mr EDWARDS - I totally agree with that. That is why we have data which will indicate each member of staff's name and whether they have taken a day off or not; we are right across that.

Mr MULDER - We look forward to seeing that information. Is that comparative data too? How many other organisations are doing it and how many other organisations have this thing? Another area we could do it is, what percentage of that full entitlement is being taken up in the prison? I am sure it is not 100 per cent of 20 days, but there would be a figure in there somewhere which would indicate -

Mr WILLIAMS - There are some people who run their leave out and it is a collection of individual days until they get to 20 and then they stop.

Mr MULDER - Then they suddenly go through a period of excellent health.

Mr WILLIAMS - We are talking about one or two cases when the average is 11 and you could take 20. The KPMG report that we had done a couple of years ago showed that we sat in about the middle in terms of sick leave-taking. But that there were influences on the way that the state service triennium sick leave system works, whereby if you have been employed for more than 10 years, every three years you get all of your sick leave back.

It is different from a system like the commonwealth where it accumulates for ever and ever but if you don't use it people think, 'Well, if I get sick I'll keep it', whereas if you know it is going to be topped up every three years then there isn't an incentive built in to say, 'As I get to my late 50s and early 60s it would be nice to have six months there in case I have a cancer scare or something'. There is no incentive in a triennial system to -

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Mr MULDER - These are models and the culture we are talking about is this culture of entitlement and I will give you an example. The Police department for the sworn officers had six months of leave on full pay with a medical certificate and then three months on half pay and then three months on no pay. No way in the world was the culture of that organisation going to take anywhere near that. That is the difference, I think, between the culture of entitlement where you see people taking their full sick leave entitlement which is based around the culture and not the award entitlement.

Mr WILLIAMS - I don't think we have that culture.

Mr MULDER - Good.

Mr WILLIAMS - People could take 20 days and we have on average 11.2 days for the year but that is coming down because if you look at those figures the staffing levels have increased so I think we are going exactly in the right direction with sick leave. It is about this individual focus of support but also when you can see the pattern of behaviour is not what you would want. Really when we look at it, it is a very, very small number and I couldn't say it is a culture of sick leave-taking in the prison service at all.

What is really the issue for the overtime is what we do about it. So 11.2 days for last year is not a bad figure but it is below a lot of frontline industries. It is a fact that it always resulted in overtime costs every time. What has happened now is it doesn't result in overtime costs every time someone is sick because the staff risk assess. That is the huge difference even though we have to deal with the sick leave stuff and it is a serious issue. We are doing an audit to make sure that everyone has reported what they have taken is the response to the sick leave in flexibility that will decrease our overtime costs.

Mr MULDER - I look forward to getting the data on short term, short notice leave.

Mr EDWARDS - The handle is everything that is going on to actually drive sickness down, apart from the data.

Mr MULDER - If it does not get measured how do you know it is being done, that is the question? I just want to see how your measures are going.

Mr EDWARDS - I am not saying that that is not important, I am saying you asked for a handle and I think the handle is everything you are trying to do with that individual to actually make sure they don't go sick and to actually start taking the business along.

CHAIR - I have a question on that point on the sick days. I go back to evidence that you previously gave this committee. In November of last year it was reported by your then director of prisons - and this was Barry Greenberry - that the sick leave absences had dropped from 13 days first up back to 9.8 days. That was a report back in November and that is a report that was countersigned by you on 5 December 2012. What has happened between then and now where you are saying it is back to 11.2 days?

Mr WILLIAMS - They were a point in time. They were for that month so in June - I said in the last hearing that the overtime was 9.4 and that was what it was at the time. The whole year figure, because it had been much higher earlier in the year, was 11.2 for the

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financial year. But at the point in time for the month of June it had been 9.4 was the average if you had that for the whole year.

CHAIR - This is the crux of our inquiry. What had happened then, to your knowledge, in that year, I think November if you are talking about the month, is that what you are saying? You are saying that that was a figure for the month of November only, are you?

Mr WILLIAMS - I can't remember how Mr Greenberry produced that one. I haven't got the data we used for that hearing -

CHAIR - My question is just how and what had happened to decrease it from 14 days, which is quite a significant decrease, from 13 days back to 9.8 days. We are looking at a decrease of 3-plus days, which is a lot when you are looking at across your organisation.

Mr WILLIAMS - All the things that Brian had said - I mean, this whole process -

CHAIR - What has happened between then and now?

Mr EDWARDS - It is like you're sailing; you can't sail in a straight line. The sickness is never in a straight line. I have a difficulty with an international target of 10 because internationally they don't have a workers' rehab compensation scheme and you don't have long service leave like you have in Australia. So what we have to do is work out - 10 is a very, very tight target as far as I am concerned. But through the year sickness will go up and down because sickness does that. At any point in time we have been down to no sickness this month or last month; we were on zero.

Mr WILLIAMS - Two days, in fact.

Mr EDWARDS - We were on zero, and that happens.

Mrs TAYLOR - I think last time you reported to us you had one day; so there you go. You have doubled the number of days with no sickness.

Mr EDWARDS - We had another one as well, which we were quite happy about.

Mr MULDER - A 100 per cent increase - what is going on?

CHAIR - Are you finished, Tony?

Mr MULDER - Yes. I would really like to say my questions are focused on this short-term, short notice leave and that is the data that we are looking at. I appreciate all the other issues and the drivers and the cost factors, but for me that has been the central concern of this committee - that we had a culture of here of entitlement and a rotting of the system. We have lots of assurances and we look forward to seeing the data as to how that is progressing.

Mrs TAYLOR - Two questions. One, first of all, is about the roster. One of the things that was raised in this committee, and certainly was raised personally with me by some officers, is some frustration that they didn't know what shift they were going to be

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working some time ahead. Is there a pattern and how far ahead do people know the roster?

Mr WILLIAMS - I am very surprised because I have been involved in this for a little over four years and the rosters have always been well and truly in advance all that time.

Mrs TAYLOR - Okay.

Mr WILLIAMS - So I don't know if people had particular circumstances but the roster has been produced forever.

Mrs TAYLOR - Okay, good. And they have always known what the pattern was.

Mr WILLIAMS - I think in a three-month block, yes.

Mr EDWARDS - Yes.

Mr WILLIAMS - I think it is a three-month block it is produced in.

Mrs TAYLOR - Okay, good. Thank you. My next question is actually following on from Tony's, I suppose. I understand the concern about the short-term, but really why this committee was set up in the first place was because year after year, extra money was being asked for because of overtime. I hear what you say, Robert, that it wasn't all overtime, but even when we drilled down into it last year a significant proportion of it was overtime. That is not my problem.

My question has been in Estimates. Why can't you work out how much you need for overtime? Because you asked for an annual allocation in the budget there must be a component that you know. If you know you have 11 days - well, if you hope you have 11 days per person, you can calculate the cost of that and so in your budget you say this is what we need and this is how much we need for overtime. That has been done in the past but every year you have had to come back to the parliament and say, 'We need more' - whether it has been \$1 million or \$2 million or \$4 million or whatever. I think that is what, in the end, led to this committee. We are particularly focused on overtime costs because the parliament is asking, 'Why does it blow out every year?'.

Are you now at the point where because know how much overtime there is going to be - at least you have a pretty fair handle on that - that you will, in next year's budget have the allocation for overtime that you expect to have? And do you expect to be able to stick to that and not have to come back for more money?

Mr WILLIAMS - Before I get Brian to talk about some of the zero base budgeting he is doing, which is right in the heart of your question -

Mrs TAYLOR - Well, it is a fair question though, isn't it?

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely.

CHAIR - It is a good question.

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Mrs TAYLOR - If you get a budget and say, "This is how much we need," and the government gives you that amount, then you have to live within that. Yet every year the Prison Service hasn't.

Mr WILLIAMS - This is the whole genesis of the culture change program and the focus on the finances to try to get it to a stage where we can. I have been asked here before, should I ask the government for more money in the budget process? The answer has been until we have a sensible handle on what we really need I can't tell the government in all honesty that I need more money unless we're managing what we have in an effective and efficient manner. That is what we are trying to do now in dealing with the things that drive costs - not just overtime, but power and things like that. Brian is going through a process, which is not complete yet, of what is called 'zero-based funding', where you try to build the budget up from the bottom and ask, 'What do we really need?' I can't tell you until that process is finished where the zero-based budget is going to say, 'We needed more to operate the system' -

Mrs TAYLOR - I'm not asking you do you need more or less, I am asking this year will you be able to say how much you need and be able to stick to it?

Mr WILLIAMS - That's the end result of the zero-based funding.

Mrs TAYLOR - Any budget has to do that. Government departments are in the fortunate position that they can afford to run at a deficit because the government will pick it up. If you're a private business you can't do that, you can't run a deficit every year. You have to work out what you can spend and what your costs are. The prison service, as you yourselves have said today, is not different, so are we going to get that this year?

Mr WILLIAMS - We have very little other focus than trying to achieve that this year.

Mrs TAYLOR - What you're saying though is that hasn't been done since 1970, or something like that. That's terrible.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, but we are making so much progress at the moment that hasn't been made in all those years in the intervening period.

Mrs TAYLOR - That's really an indictment, though, isn't it? Not to you personally, and certainly not to you, Brian, because you were brought in exactly for that reason. You would have gone broke a long time ago if you were a private business.

CHAIR - The culture was not only in the prison officers, it was a culture in the senior management as well. It wasn't going to change, it was going to continue to go the way it was for ever and a day. It has reached this position where it can be taken no longer.

Mr WILLIAMS - One of the most insightful things Mr Palmer said in his report was that the place was full of people who wanted to do the right thing and be proud of the service and they needed good leadership to steer them on that course. They weren't bad people, they aren't bad people, but they needed good leadership to take them there.

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Mrs TAYLOR - Can we have some confidence that your zero budget will have been done? What you asked for this year you would hope would be a much closer calculation to what you were

Mr GAFFNEY - I understand it has to be closer, but if you say, 'We think we're going to have 11 per cent overtime, that's what we put in, and we've got that extra money', and then suddenly it is 14 per cent overtime because of illness or whatever. Then they come back and legitimately say, 'We haven't met our standard'. So it makes it very hard. What they are trying to do is work within this budget, acknowledging that it is hard to get there.

Mrs TAYLOR - I don't care, say 12 per cent then. I don't care what you say.

CHAIR - Could you direct your questions across the table rather than at each other? We can have this discussion later.

Mr WILLIAMS - We simply lost control of the ability to be in control of our budget. A recent example was we had a prisoner who was involved in a particular crime and as a result of that he was severely incapacitated and had to be kept in a health facility for quite a number of months while recovering. He required supervision, not only for his own protection from other people who may have wanted to deal with him, but also to stop him from doing anything to anyone else in that facility. That cost us hundreds of thousands of dollars in overtime that wasn't planned.

We have approximately 260 positions on our roster. There are seven people from maximum security or medium security every day, this many for each section. Then suddenly we have a request to go outside our normal operations because of this particular prisoner. We had to supervise that person in a facility outside ours, so there was no flexibility in being able to deal with that; it's a service we had to provide. It was a very expensive exercise and we can't plan that.

It is more than \$200 000, but even if it was \$200 000 and we said our overtime bill in a well-functioning prison was \$1.5 million instead of what it has been, that would be maybe a 15 per cent overrun just because of one incident - and we have these occurring quite often. We are trying to put in place ways of dealing with it, but there are incidents such as that that we can't plan for, but we still have to do it.

Mrs TAYLOR - You are absolutely right, and the exception might happen. There might be a fire or anything else and I could understand that you could come to the parliament and say, 'This exceptional thing has happened and has cost this much. That is why we have this much overrun. Can we have the extra money?' That is not what has been happening.

Mr WILLIAMS - I agree.

Mr MULDER - Year in, year out, top it up. The new top-up becomes the base and then the next year we top up the top-up base. That is the pattern we are looking for.

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Mrs TAYLOR - I don't think any of us would argue about an exception, when you could say, 'This is the exceptional thing that's happened this year and we need extra money'. That's not what I am talking about.

Mr MULDER - But if they happen every year they are not exceptions.

Mrs TAYLOR - Or unexplained.

Mr WILLIAMS - We are driving in the direction that we know this committee and responsible management wants us to go.

CHAIR - One of the reasons we were given for some of this overtime was the way escorts were being done. Have there been any changes in that area?

Mr EDWARDS - We are trying to use staff more flexibly. We have found where the Hobart Remand Centre does a lot of escorts across to RHH we have the formula - one of the reasons why it might have happened year in year out beforehand is because when I arrived and rechecked the formula for rosters - there were two aspects: The effective hours are worked when you are in - and that's not to do with how effective you are as a person, it is effective hours to the business, and non-affective hours. The non-effective hours were far too low. So, as a consequence, year on year on year your overspend, because you do not have the staff to cover it, would have been blown out of the water, as has been explained by your committee. We have now increased that formula to the correct level.

As a consequence, we are now able to do more escorts with staff who are there and we don't have to shut down or do anything else. The expense of the escorts has gone down, even though it's still up from me running a change program and now taking on this job, I don't accept \$1 over. I am now saying our escort has come down, we have a handle on the escorts but it still is not good enough. We have increased the non-effective hour cover. The increase of the non-effective hour cover in the roster will start getting a handle on the short-term sick, the escorts and everything else that is going around, alongside a zero-based budget where I am hoping we can come back and say, 'This is where we are and this is the funding we need'.

Ms RATTRAY - I have a question regarding staff and their personal development and training, which impacts on your budget. It is in progress in your service delivery plan?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Ms RATTRAY - Can you give me a bit of an idea of where we are with that at this point?

Mr WILLIAMS - When Mick Palmer gave his report he identified what was obvious to everyone, that there had been almost no training in the prison service for as long as anyone could remember. When you started you got some but that was about it. The amount of training that is required to catch up is enormous and it will take years and years and years but we have made a really strong start and we have started to do a whole range of things. We have the performance management framework document and that sets out the sorts of things like what is expected.

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I might get Brian to talk about how we are trying to build a picture of what the training needs are for each staff member, which is based on being able to describe the skills needed at each level.

Ms RATTRAY - I am not so much interested in what they are actually receiving; it is how it is impacting on your budget. Given what you have just said, that it is going to take years, but is it going to take years before we can see some of the really top outcomes of the budgeting process because of that catch up?

Mr WILLIAMS - We used to shut the prison down on Tuesday afternoons for training and that meant the prisoners were locked away at lunch time and they didn't come out until the next morning. It was hardly an ideal thing in a place that was already not running that well. That has gone because it wasn't a very effective system and we didn't get as much training done as we would like. Brian, since he has been here, has tacked on three days at the end of each person's annual leave for training. Instead of paying overtime, as we did for a lot of training, there is now three days scheduled on single time, rather than paying double time. That is a complete structural reform of making sure people get training but it is at single time and not double time. It is simple but it is innovative.

Mr EDWARDS - With our contact with New South Wales, in fact I was there yesterday lecturing on change and other areas, we are now in the process of signing a memorandum of understanding with New South Wales to bring a completely new learning practice across.

CHAIR - That is heartening because it took this committee to get into the New South Wales system to prompt this to happen and it is wonderful.

Mr MULDER - That is a defining moment perhaps to the committee rather than the debate in point across the table, Chair.

CHAIR - There are certain privileges gained with being a chair.

Mr MULDER - One is to do as I say and not as I do, by the sound of it.

Laughter.

Mr EDWARDS - The target I have set the professional training department is to become a centre of excellence before the end of the year. You have heard from Robert about the amount of training that we are doing with the staff on personal development and we are also changing the way that we promote people, which is a learning process in itself. We now provide them with an internal job simulation assessment centre approach. If you want to become a supervisor you will do a three-and-a-half hour written examination on the work of the TPS and the prison service, which is going back to getting that involvement in the business and becoming a part of it. If they don't pass that they can't move to the next stage and all of that is a great learning process.

Something which doesn't cost us anything is a complete government skills staff survey and training analysis for every member of staff and where we are going, which we have just completed. From that this year we will be developing a professional program to deliver against that training needs analysis. The e-learn package is under way and we are

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now working on work force planning documentation. I will know in advance that I need 16 staff because I have 16 separations and we want to get that recruitment done prior to the separations so that we are not moving into overtime.

I am very proud of what they have been doing and when the staff go into the training room, the question I was asked on Tuesday was, 'when can we expect to get our e-learning and when can we expect to get more training' so the impetus is now there for staff to move on which is quite heartening.

Mr WILLIAMS - Some of the things that we have learnt through the prisons which the Integrity Commission helped us with, we, as a department, have instituted a number of different things. One of them is a training package on procurement to make sure that all of our people with delegated authority to buy stuff, using government money, are trained to make sure that they understand the Treasurer's instructions on proper probity. That is going to be rolling out and that will cover the whole department but also the people who procure in the prison.

We have just been training our managers in a program, delivered by the Integrity Commission in ethical behaviour and that will roll down. All our senior managers in the department have had that training. They are now going to be given a package to roll out in a cascading fashion through the organisation. It is a really good package. It is not just making sure you do what is legal but it is about what you are doing is right. This all adds to what we are doing in the prison where we are making sure the culture is one of doing the right thing and if you see someone who has done the wrong thing, you should declare it and challenge it. We have seen an increase in that sort of behaviour in the prison service where people are telling us someone has done the wrong thing. In the past, perhaps, we had a much lower rate of reporting.

They are all signs of an organisation whose culture is becoming a much more positive one. Mick Palmer said that the people in the service are good people who just need the right direction to get the best out of their jobs. They want to be proud of what they do and the publicity that they have had over the last few years has been incredibly disheartening. They are conscious of that and through all the public and media coverage of events, say, around Mr Greenberry, not a word has come from the prison staff. They have been entirely professional in the way they have dealt with it. Some years ago that probably would not have been the case that there would not have been leaks. I am incredibly proud, and it is a sign of cultural change, that the staff have kept quiet and behaved entirely professionally. It is a very difficult thing because they wanted to come out and defend themselves and say that we are not like this publicity says. We are hard-working, in the middle of a change program and we have achieved a huge amount. That has been difficult for them in terms of the media coverage.

Mr EDWARDS - It is very honourable.

CHAIR - The integrity reporting on the two instances has not had an impact on staffing issues and morale. Are you saying it has gone the opposite way, it has picked them up?

Mr WILLIAMS - The two incidents involved a number of individuals and we don't want to talk about that. But that led to a reform of purchasing of stores and a number of things. All of this stuff, and the way we have dealt with code of conduct issues, has been a

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positive message for staff that perhaps has not been sent in years gone past and that is if you complain about behaviour we, as a department, will do something about it and there will be consequences.

It is the same for the sick leave. If people see us not doing anything about people they think are not using their sick leave wisely, then it is a *laissez faire* if they don't get into trouble for it then why should I come to work when I am feeling a bit off. Once they see that sort of behaviour called to account, they say, yes, that's the right thing to do. That is the message we are getting back from the staff who are saying we are so glad that you are taking on some of these issues because we have always disliked that sort of behaviour or people getting away with bullying. We are seeing an increase in some of the levels of reporting of that and it is exactly what you need as you bring the culture up and start to take away some of those things. It is like antidiscrimination. As you educate people about what is right and wrong, you expect a spike in reporting and that's what we have had.

Mrs TAYLOR - I have a kind of a cheeky question. We are trying to ask searching questions here. I realise that they are tough questions at times and we are trying to hold you accountable, but do you think this committee has been a waste of time because you were in the process of doing things and you really didn't need us?

Mr WILLIAMS - No, I wouldn't say that. I think the scrutiny of -

Mrs TAYLOR - Have we been useful to you? Is the scrutiny useful?

Mr WILLIAMS - There is only one answer and that is yes. This committee's scrutiny and the questions and the focus it brings on the issue raise its importance to all who listen and are concerned with this. This committee's interest and Mr Nick Palmer's Workplace Standards report create the drive for change. No-one ever loves being scrutinised but in the end it is the right thing and there should be no dark corners where lights aren't shone.

Mrs TAYLOR - Certainly for me the issue has been not to blame or punish. That isn't the issue; the issue is that I want to get this on track. We need to get a better culture, we need to get the overtime under control; we need to get proper budgeting and the right culture in the prison.

Mr WILLIAMS - There has never been the sense from myself or the people I have worked with that there has been anything but an honest and integrity-based approach to looking at what is a problem that has not been solved for many years.

Mr EDWARDS - That is one of the things we are trying to drive, the professionalism of the service and the fact that we serve the public and the public pay for us to run that business. To have the testing questions is right for everyone from me and Robert to the officers. The officers have to realise that they must be held responsible for the way that we spend money.

I didn't finish answering the question on the recruitment training. We also will ensure that we recruit only off that core performance framework so that the people that we are looking for are the ones that would behave in that manner.

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Ms RATTRAY - The right person for the job. They suit the job.

Mr EDWARDS - The right person for the job and suited for the job. There has not been fitness training for prison service recruitment for many a year but Mr Mulder will be interested to know that this year there will be, which I think is a handle behind a handle to get hold of the short-term sick and other methods of sickness.

Mr MULDER - Now I am deeply concerned as to why you thought I would be particularly interested in that.

Mr EDWARDS - You're interested in the sick. We want to employ healthy people.

Mr GAFFNEY - I am interested in what the baseline wage is for someone, a weekly wage. I'm not saying your lowest common denominator but for the person who is in the yard, an average working week, what do they get?

Mr WILLIAMS - We need to qualify it because if they are on a roster and they lose their weekends, they get a loading for being on a roster that doesn't have weekends, or they accidentally get them.

Mr GAFFNEY - So a ballpark figure?

Mr EDWARDS - I wouldn't have a ballpark figure but I would have thought around 68.

Mr WILLIAMS - If you are on a full roster.

Mr GAFFNEY - It was alluded to here earlier by a member that there could be a number who might have a second job and be on sick leave and stuff. There would be a lot of people in the community who would have a second job just to make ends meet. Do you have any record of the number of people on your staff who do have a second role? That doesn't really concern me because I think it is their right to have a second job. It would never ever have worried me unless there is a spike in the sick leave of that person. Do you have any idea?

Mr WILLIAMS - We don't. We sort of know -

Mr GAFFNEY - Or is that an invasion of privacy?

Mr WILLIAMS - We sort of know that on the ground Joe has a lawn mowing business or whatever it is. But it is when it interferes with their work either because they are taking leave inappropriately or they have a conflict of interest -

CHAIR - It is a good point. Tony would be more up to date with that than I am where that happens within the police service or only certain areas that police officers are able to take a second position in and normally that has to be known by the senior

Mr MULDER - You have to get permission.

CHAIR - Yes, that is right. Michael's question coming from that is, is it something you believe you ought to be concerned more with, particularly where a person is

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demonstrating, say, sick leave that is over and above the average of others, and is constant year in and year out? Have you considered that?

Mr WILLIAMS - In those cases, where there is an apparent problem with sick leave taking, we would probably inquire and if we knew, we would say, 'If you're doing this and can't do your job properly, we have a problem and you need to make a choice'. Mr Gaffney's answer is right, if someone has a second job that does not take much of their time and does not interfere with their ability to come to work bright and healthy, it is their concern, so long as it is not conflicting with the role.

Mr GAFFNEY - From what I hear, the process is that if somebody is away sick you find out why they are sick, et cetera, and that would surface through that process? They could say, 'I was working late last night', and that is an issue. If it has not, there is no problem with a person having a second job. That is their call.

Mr WILLIAMS - We have had situations where people have been trying out second jobs or even second careers and we have had to put a stop to it.

Mr GAFFNEY - I know what you are talking about.

Mr WILLIAMS - We have dealt with those.

CHAIR - My next question comes about because of the emphasis on bullying in organisations. Is there any evidence of that occurring within the prisons department and impacting on your sick leave?

Mr EDWARDS - I believe there has been in the past and there always could be that occurring in any organisation such as ours. That has impacted some staff at some stage. We are working extremely hard to cut that out. I have a zero tolerance on bullying and all the staff know that. They were told on Tuesday that if I find anyone is bullying I will deal with it robustly and it will be a code of conduct matter. I will gather the evidence in order to put to the secretary for his opinion on whether it should be a code of conduct. Everyone is extremely clear, whether they are uniform or non-uniform, if bullying occurs it will be dealt with robustly and we will be looking for evidence. To be frank, I do not want those people in this job.

Ms RATTRAY - I have a serious question. I was wondering if there is a pizza night out at the prison, either Friday or Saturday night?

Mr WILLIAMS - No, there is not. There are barbecues on occasions.

Ms RATTRAY - I do not know whether a barbecue hits the mark when it comes to a pizza night. Seriously, one of those big issues was around not having a pizza.

Mr WILLIAMS - They did, and on other occasions they have asked for KFC.

Mr MULDER - And the secretary of the department went and got it for them.

Mr WILLIAMS - He did, and that was a strategic move. That was the sop to end the siege rather than under lock. We have been introducing things such as cook-ups, where we

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allow some of the people in the more restricted areas to have some sort of licence to do something with their hands. They do not have a normal daily routine, they do not cook. They do clean. Some of those things are life skills.

Mrs TAYLOR - Could you run any TasTAFE courses?

Mr EDWARDS - We are looking at putting areas into Ron Barwick where life skills can be taught so they can look after their family when they come into visit. The new manager in Ron Barwick is very proactive in that area.

Ms RATTRAY - I said it in jest but it has quite a serious connotation to it.

Mr EDWARDS - It is a good point because the units have come under a lot of public scrutiny. The staff there are working so well that in Huon and Tamar there are opportunities now where, if the prisoners clean the place correctly - they were doing a spray painting course - if they work to a certain level, the staff will help them and teach them to cook and they have a cook-up. It has come a long way.

Ms RATTRAY - So the pizza night could be on its way.

CHAIR - Thank you both very much for the manner in which you have answered questions and the issues we have brought forward. It will assist us to finalise our report, which we hope to do very shortly and hope to get it before the parliament within the next few weeks. It is all about trying to get this on track and assisting the organisation.

Mr MULDER - We have some data the gentlemen were going to supply to us, which we will need before we can do our report.

CHAIR - If you can do that, we would appreciate that extra data.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.