

**THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS MET IN
COMMITTEE ROOM 1, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, ON THURSDAY
15 MAY 2003.**

PRISONS INFRASTRUCTURE REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, STAGE C

**MR PETER HOULT, MR PETER WOOD, MR JIM OVENS, MS KATE FENNELL,
JOANNE KEIL AND MR JOHN SKINNER WERE CALLED, MADE THE
STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.**

CHAIR (Mr Harriss) - Just at the outset can we say on behalf of the committee members who were able to undertake the tour, thank you very much for arranging the extensive tour of the prison for us. That was certainly informative and at least allowed us to make some comparisons in our mind as to what we have in place at the moment and what we either need or desire in the future. So that was a very informative tour and we really did appreciate that, thank you. Mr Houlton, I understand that you are going to lead off on this part of the presentation, so we will hand over to you.

Mr HOULT - Firstly, may I thank the committee for the opportunity to present part 2 of the PIRP Stage C submission. I would emphasise that this is part 2 and I will talk a little more about that in a moment. Can I also apologise for the absence of the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Industrial Relations. He is in Queensland with the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Industrial Relations visiting some prisons and looking at prison operations, and he wrote to you.

CHAIR - I overlooked that. I do have his letter there, and thanks for reminding us of that.

Mr HOULT - Thank you, and he rang me this morning to remind me to reiterate the apology. The team we have available here - sitting at the table and we also have some advisers sitting behind us and if necessary we can draw on their expertise - has been responsible for the production of the documentation provided to you. May I say that the Department of Justice and Health and Human Services are very pleased with the progress and the fact that we have managed to keep to some challenging deadlines, and we have another series of challenging deadlines to come, as you have seen by the program which is in the document itself. We are not leaving ourselves with a great amount of time to do this, but I am delighted with the work done to date and the quality of that work, and that is largely down to both the members of the project team and the consultancy support they have.

We have provided the committee with a suggested format for today's session and, should the committee be agreeable, we will present in that manner. Item one is an introduction and overview presented by myself. Then we will move on to issues about the schematic design site plan and the design issues with Jim Ovens. Then on to the prison facilities

plan with Peter Wood and Jim Ovens. And last, but by no means least, the secure mental health unit in the prison health centre, and my colleague, Kate, will lead on that section.

We have around the room a large number of schematics and some photographic impressions, if that is the correct term, of what the final construction might look like from a number of aspects around Risdon Vale. We also have on the board one very large overview site plan and, if I may and others may, when we come to the point of discussion it is very probable members will want to have a closer look at some of these and will obviously have to draw closer to do it, and I will use that larger site plan at the end of this opening presentation. So if that is not a problem I will ask all of the team members to speak clearly when they are speaking about those things away from the table so that the *Hansard* recorder can do the job as easily as possible.

Can I refer back to part 1 submission of PIRP Stage C. We delivered that presentation to you and the first session with the committee was held in February and incorporated a site visit to Risdon although not into the prison. It was actually about the site itself. Part 1 covered the background to the project, including the Part A and B submissions to governments, and those two parts resulted in the funding of PIRP Stage C. It also covered the current provision of custodial facilities within southern Tasmania in terms of function, location and size; the urgent need to develop an appropriate facility for Tasmanians suffering from acute mental illness, illness of such severity that they are required to be detained in a secure and specialist staff dedicated environments, and throughout the documentation this is referred to as the Secure Mental Health Unit - acronym SMHU - but clearly that will not be its name when it's operational. We'll have something far more attractive and no doubt Health is already considering those matters in discussion with their minister.

We also mentioned the changes in philosophy of prisoner management and facilities designed since the current Risdon maximum prison was planned in the late 1950s. It was in fact a derivative of a southern American jail of the 1940s. We can't find out whether it was actually built in Florida or Louisiana, but it was in one of those two southern states, both states renowned for their comparative climate to southern Tasmania.

We also covered demand analysis and assumptions for both the prison system and the SMHU; the proposed accommodation model for the SMHU in the prison facilities; the Stage C project governance which has a project steering committee encompassing Department of Premier and Cabinet, Treasury, Health, Justice, independent probity auditor and project management support from within the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the DIER as well because of their knowledge of major projects work. That project steering committee has approved the documentation which has been submitted to you.

We have described the site and master planning processes undertaken to date, we described the innovative procurement methodology that has been approved by the project steering committee and the Minister for Justice and Industrial Relations and by Treasury about how we're going to acquire this prison. We indicated the project cost and the project program. We told you of the significant ongoing consultation program we have been undertaking with the assistance of a project consultant on this matter. May I say it is the most extensive community and advocacy group consultation I think I have ever

been involved with in 20 or 30 years of being involved in capital works development here and on the mainland.

We also agreed the process with this committee about how this department and Health and Human Services would provide a second submission to the committee covering the detailed design response for the project, and that is what this document is about. It is about the detailed design response down to schematics, and you have no doubt had the fascination of looking at a large number of floor plans and acronyms and small print, as we all have.

At the request of this committee, we also arranged for visits to the psychiatric intensive care unit of the Royal Hobart Hospital, the Hobart Remand Centre and, as alluded by the Chairman, Risdon maximum and Risdon hospital currently managed by the Department of Health and Human Services. Health and Human Services also provided written supplementary information on the current prison hospital and the proposed SMHU.

I would like to just say I think that members of the committee who visited the current Risdon maximum will no doubt agree with me and others in both our agencies that the facility cannot be described as in any way adequate to meet the security, health and rehabilitation needs of a prison population of this century; it is arguable whether it did so for a prison population of the last century. It provides a very difficult working environment for custodial health and program staff; it is not designed to be a work-friendly place. It is arguably the worst prison structure in Australia with the last significant capital improvement being the prison hospital which was constructed almost a quarter of a century ago.

The Part 2 submission which has been provided to the committee we believe comprehensively describes the design response foreshadowed in Part 1 of our submission. That response is fully in line with the operational and demand issues described within Part 1 and within the government funding envelope provided for the delivery of PIRP Stage C. The procurement method chosen will ensure that value for money is obtained at all stages of the project.

Before I pass over to the experts who actually know a lot about what we are talking about today and talked about detailed design responses for the prison and the secure mental health facility, I would like to use the overview design plan to point out a few features of our proposal. As you know, this diagram describes the existing prison facilities in the delightful salmon colour on the map and indicates the location of the proposed new facilities, including the redeveloped women's prison, the new maximum and medium male prison and the Secure Mental Health Unit. As you would be aware, this is the Derwent Highway and over here is Risdon Vale and over above Grass Tree Hill Road is Risdon Brook Dam. What is obvious on this map is the nature of the response has been to provide a campus-style facility rather than the old-style maximum security prison wherein the walls of the prison provided the security perimeter for the prison. Those of you who went in and stood in that middle ground knew that the view was entirely of the sky and the walls. The new model prison provides a far more reasonable environment in terms of outlook and location of facilities.

I would also like to point out before we start that what we have done with the Secure Mental Health Unit has, I believe, the best balance between the capacity to share

resources within the health sector between the prison health centre and staff and the SMHU but a high degree of visual separation and separation by some current tree lines and some more we are going to do some work on to make sure that there is clear visual separation between the two. The Secure Mental Health Unit clearly has its own secure perimeters; the Secure Mental Health Unit is a hospital. It will be staffed as a hospital but will have security added which will meet the needs of the client group - that is, those people suffering a severe acute mental illness or recovering from one.

The male prison has a very secure outer perimeter, which consists of three layers - and Jim will take you through that - and also has an access road around the outside with turning points at the major intersections. What the design also does is use zonal developments and in the security we have both buffer zones and secure zones, this being the actual secure zone and beyond that buffer zones which have both clear areas of sight line and then beyond that vegetated areas as well of separation. Within the prison there are both access zones, which is the single point of access to the prison, non-prisoner areas, areas where prisoners come into contact with service providers and prisoner areas which is basically the prison accommodation plus some specialist accommodation.

As I mentioned, we are going to use single point of entry to the secure perimeters, both on the SMHU and on the prison and of course on the women's prison. Can I say that what we have also done is have a design where the prison service and the Department of Health and Human Services forensic medical health service can continue to deliver their current services in the most uninterrupted manner possible during the building. It is very difficult building on the site of a high security facility but we have designed around that to minimise the impact on alterations during the time of construction. That is a very important element of this plan.

The other thing I should point out is you will see within all of the campus areas, dotted areas, and they represent inbuilt capacity to expand should future demand require that. That of course will be a call of the Government to provide funding for any demand growth, but we have designed it so that we have that capacity within the current campus facilities.

Unless members have any particular questions for the presentation. I would like to now hand over to Jim Ovens to take us through the next phrase of the presentation.

CHAIR - Any questions to Mr Hoult first of all?

Mr BEST - Jim, are you going to take us through some of these intricate details?

Mr OVENS - Yes.

Mr BEST - Okay, I will wait.

Mr OVENS - That is the intent Peter has just spoken about the plan as an introduction.

What I was hoping to do now was to talk initially about how the overall site plan took this form and then, with the assistance of Peter Wood, talk about the individual facilities in it.

I would also like to refer briefly to the part 1 submission that we dealt with back in February to refer to the overall site structure and considerations that the designers have taken on board in coming up with this overall site plan.

Firstly, the site slopes from the south, the high point here right down to the north where it is bounded here by the Grasstree Hill Rivulet, by a small tributary of the rivulet here. It has some very steep areas here and here, so steep that they are practically buildable for corrections facilities or for the forensic mental health facility and there is also an area just here where the slope is pronounced. The slope was a big consideration in achieving the configuration on the site.

The manner of government funding for this project - that is, the decision to fund the heavy infrastructure at the site to provide all of the accommodation for maximum security, most of it for medium security for the male prisoners but to defer the decision about the provision of minimum security facilities to a later date, meant that some of the existing infrastructure had to be retained. That decision inevitably meant that the existing infrastructure, what is currently the maximum security male facility was going to be retained until a further decision was taken about Stage D, and that Stage D submission will be forwarded to the Government at a later stage.

That meant, of course, that the location of the existing principal infrastructure was to remain. It also included the retention of the administration block. The designers have also recommended and it has been accepted that some of the infrastructure here, some parts of the existing women's prison as well as the training facility here, will also be retained. This overall schematic designer site plan retains and re-uses the majority of the existing infrastructure.

This is an efficiency issue in terms of the funding and it also provides significant capacity into the medium term to allow the Government, I suppose, ample time to make the additional decisions it wants to about the overall system.

We have had expert consultancy reports on a number of site conditions including the Aboriginal cultural heritage aspects of the site, the European cultural heritage, flora and fauna of the existing site, landscape and visual issues, any site contamination coming from the use of the site for half a century near your prison service and, of course, traffic issues particularly concerning access to the overall site.

The issues that have been raised in these six separated considerations are all considered to be manageable and have been managed very well by the designers, but those issues were additional considerations in the overall site plan.

It is known, as a result of the investigations, that there are a number of remnants of Aboriginal cultural heritage around this area of the site, probably related to alluvial deposits from the rivulet coming from further up. There is a remnant of the original Gellibrand homestead here, the major feature of which is the mature stand of macrocarpa pines which are here which will form a visual buffer between the new SMHU and the new main prison.

The minor contamination issues raised by the contamination report concerned a tip site here, a rifle range and a few other minor issues again which will be dealt with in the

environmental management plan which will be taken on board by the builder and the managing contractor.

Speaking about access, the traffic engineer recommended that the existing access point from the East Derwent Highway is the preferable one from a number of options considered and so it has been retained and with it the entrance to the campus has been retained as well.

Those are, if you like, the overall site issues that have been taken on board by this site plan. The site plan then has been developed in conformity with the correctional philosophy that was outlined by Keith Hamburger when he was speaking to you at the last hearing, and that is that maximum-medium security facilities, such as the new men's maximum facility, require a certain amount of protective zoning around them for security purposes. So there will be, if you like, an inner zone - an inner security zone here - which will be cleared of vegetation and outside of that there will be an additional zone which is not cleared. This same principle applies to the new women's prison and, similarly, it applies to the SMHU. Whilst it is not a prison, it has a maximum security-rated perimeter and the security protocols around that perimeter have to respond to the same considerations.

Apart from the three new compounds and the existing prison which will be converted or reconfigured so that it can operate as a minimum, as a low security correctional facility, there is a common processing area for the prison service, so if I can just deal with that initially. A visitor to the prison service would enter through the existing road which will be upgraded, will park in the visitor parking area or go to the visitor processing centre and at that point the visitor will be recognised, will deposit any things that they are not to take into the prison and will have their visit - whether it be a visit to a prisoner, whether it be a professional visit, whether it be some other kind of supportive visit - programmed. They will then be directed over to the minimum security prison, to the men's maximum-medium prison or to the women's prison.

Visitors to the SMHU will turn right before they get to this prison service processing area and go by a separate road up to the SMHU. As I said, the existing stand of mature macrocarpas here will act as a significant visual barrier between the Prison Service and the Forensic Mental Health Services.

Peter Hoult referred to the secure perimeters. The secure perimeter for the men's facility has been designed by our security correctional consultants and is rated maximum security. That rating is calibrated to achieve three things, so I am told: deterrence, detection and delay. These are the three aspects that any secure perimeter has to achieve. The deterrence obviously for prisoners to leave or for any outsiders to enter. The detection so that if an attempt is made to penetrate or cross the perimeter then the person attempting this is detected at the outer edge of the perimeter zone. Whilst they are attempting to get over, through, around or whatever the various obstacles in their path they are delayed an adequate amount of time to allow for someone from the Prison Service to come around and meet them as they are leaving the last of their challenges. So they are both detected on the outer face, and the delay, of course, is the time it would take someone, who was very skilled at achieving this with the sort of implements that they might have at this disposal from within the prison, to achieve it. So these things are assessed and calibrated, and the design of these perimeters responds to that. This is a

standard approach which is applied to all maximum security/medium security prisons around Australia today. The expertise that we have accessed for this design is best practice in Australian cities.

I would also like to mention that, apart from the four secure campuses, there are a number of other facilities on the site which will remain. I have already mentioned the administration block. There are a number of ancillary structures here. There is a fire station, a maintenance shed and a number of other structures which support the prison service. There are also some residences, two existing residences plus a number of other residences which will be relocated from their current position along the entrance road to this same zone. These existing and relocated residences will provide supporting staff functions. There is a social club, a staff gym, prisoner training facilities and some other administration functions which will be performed there.

At this point it would be useful to go to Peter Wood. Once a visitor has been processed at this facility and, for example, is directed to the men's prison, the majority of prisoners will go through this gate-house because this has the majority capacity on site for prisoners. Peter will explain how the gatehouse works.

Mr WOOD - Hopefully you can still hear me from down this end of the room. The gatehouse has a number of functions. The primary function is the one point of access, controlling access in the secure perimeter. It provides access for vehicles through a vehicle lock, with pedestrians going through the other part of the building. It also has a function for security control around the perimeter; upstairs it has a master control where all the high-tech computers and systems are monitored 24 hours a day. It also has an emergency response facility upstairs. Pedestrians walking through come to a lobby and at that point they need to, as you do when you're going through airports, take off items of metal and other contraband and put it through an X-ray machine. You then walk through a metal detector and an officer standing there then controls that process of access. He confirms who you are and then calls through to security to provide escorts through to the centre, whether you are going through to administration or whether you're going through to visit, or whatever part of the facility you are going to.

The other part then is vehicles coming through. Vehicles could be providing service to the kitchen or to the store. Vehicles coming through would then be stopped and they would be searched in the same sort of way as visitors are searched. They also need to be identified, the people who are driving the trucks, and again they are delayed until such time as security escorts can be provided through to the appropriate places within the perimeter.

Mr OVENS - Thank you, Peter - if you could stay there. Having passed through the gatehouse, visitors would generally go to the visits centre.

Mr WOOD - A range of visitors will come to the centre and again they include visitors to prisoners but they may also include legal visit and other type visits. Generally there are contact and non-contact visits provided. Contact visits are in open areas with tables and chairs which are fixed to the ground and prisoners and visitors meet, and non-contact visit booths, complete separation for those prisoners who are perhaps causing problems with respect to wanting to pass contraband. Visitors come through a series of locks and then progress through past an officer station. Prisoners come through this way, are either

searched on the way in or searched on the way out, and they also proceed through various locks to get into the contact and non-contact areas. There is also a number of interview rooms for legal visits, and there's a conference room which could be used for videoconferencing.

Mr OVENS - Apart from the visit centre, there is a block of what we call 'in-common facilities' which are built together, are located in the prisoner-free zone here just on the other side of the gatehouse. This really is, if you like, the hub of the prison. There is an additional workshop over here to be provided in Stage C works, but this is really the core of the facilities that operates the prison and provides services to prisoners.

Mr WOOD - It might be a bit hard to see where we are now; you have the diagram in the book. This is the medical facility, this is the prisoner processing facility, this is the storage distribution area. This is the staff dining and this is the custodial, administration-type facility. So very briefly, I guess the admin operation support being basically where the custodial staff are based and where they get their support from. Staff dining provided within the facility to try to reduce the amount of contraband that may be coming in; staff are provided with their meals while they're on duty.

The stores, the bulk stores will be outside and then stores are broken down and then delivered through to the facility and then directed through this area out to each of the accommodation areas. The prisoner processing. Clearly this is where prisoners, either new prisoners are coming in and are processed and all their details are taken, medical checks are undertaken and then they are directed to whatever facility they have been allotted to. Prisoners leaving the facility also go through the prisoner processing facility to then get their clothes and their personal goods back before they leave the facility.

The medical facility has inpatients and outpatients - that is, if prisoners need beds for overnight accommodation to treat an illness then they are provided accommodation here to the same standard that they would have in a cell. They also have accommodation for providing dentistry and treatment for cuts and bruises and so on.

Mr BEST - On this map that I have is (d) the dining area?

Mr WOOD - Dining, yes.

Mr BEST - How many staff will that cater for?

Mr OVENS - Forty-five staff at one sitting.

Mr BEST - And that is your roster, is it?

Mr OVENS - Yes, that capacity has been calibrated against the staffing model and the structured day which is being developed. Obviously there would be a number of overlapping sittings which would work through the middle of the day, which is the heaviest load.

Mr BEST - I notice you have located that to an entry point between zero, which is operations. What happens with a new inmate?

Mr WOOD - The new inmates will be coming in in a vehicle through the main gatehouse and then when they come through the gatehouse, the prisoner vehicle then comes in behind the back of the prisoner processing area - there is an area there called 'vehicle lock' - the vehicle goes into the vehicle lock, the gate comes down. The prisoners are then taken out of the vehicle and taken into there. Do you want to go into a bit more detail on that?

Mr BEST - I am interested as to how that works.

Mr WOOD - The vehicle obviously has been cleared from the gatehouse to come through with whatever number of prisoners in the vehicle, then delivered into the vehicle lock. The outer door goes down and there is an access point where prisoners are then taken through and are put into holding cells. There are two holding cells; they accommodate varying numbers of prisoners. There does need to be some separation from time to time, depending on the type of prisoner. The staff within the processing area, which is down the corridor, then call through those prisoners at their leisure. The prisoners obviously have with them their own personal items, which are accounted for, handed over from police or from remand if they are coming straight from remand. Those personal items are then put into the prisoner property area. The prisoners details are taken, one at a time. They work through a process of assessment at that stage. They are also issued with prisoner clothing and other items that are provided for them during their stay. After the processing is completed they may then undertake an initial medical assessment - and that is why it is located directly adjacent to the medical facility on the left-hand side; there is an adjoining door through which they can be taken. Once that has been completed, prisoners then go into further holding cells, waiting for staff to come and take them to whichever facility they are being returned to. Usually, in this case, it is going to be the assessment unit.

Mr BEST - Your operations area is across from the dining?

Mr WOOD - Yes.

Mr BEST - And (b) is -

Mr OVENS - The breakdown store.

Mr BEST - Yes, I can see that one. Thank you.

Mr OVENS - The main maximum security accommodation facility and then these two accommodation units in the mainstream accommodation block - Peter, would you like to run through that?

Mr WOOD - One building is divided into two units, if you like. Each unit has a certain number of cells provided within them. The cells are wrapping around a central common area for dining and lounge areas. Each cell has in it its own toilet and shower, bed, desk and storage for approved goods.

The standard cells are all the same size. There are a couple of other non-standard cells, some double cells and there is a disabled cell. There is also a small kitchenette that they use to serve food to the prisoners and a small laundry is also provided.

That cell block is overlooked by one officer station which runs between the two cell blocks. The actual access to the cell block is controlled by a control station which is external to this building although during the 12 hours of shifts there is an officer on duty here and rovers going around, although the only control they have over doors is by radioing back to provide access in and out so there is not a risk then of prisoners trying to take keys off them. This whole process is based on remote operation, electronic and without keys.

There is a small exercise yard off each common room so prisoners during the daytime can access the common area.

Mr BEST - Can I just ask one question? I notice you have your chemical and flammable store and then it says, 'prisoner toilet' in there - that is just a prison toilet, prisoners would not have access to where you are storing these chemical, flammable - going back, sorry, on the previous one.

Mr OVENS - The breakdown store, is it?

Mr WOOD - The breakdown store is completely separate, prisoners do not go into that area.

Mr BEST - How do you deal with ventilation? In that storage area, I do not know what you have in there but it says 'chemicals' and 'flammable'.

Mr WOOD - If they are required to have ventilation they would have some appropriate chemical ventilation provided to them normally. I do not believe this is meant for the storage of dangerous goods though, that would be back in the main bulk store externally. This is really a processing area more so than a holding area.

Mr BEST - Right. Because I was thinking that that you have your dinning room facilities, that you would store -

Mr WOOD - It would be complete separation, that blue line would continue right through the building. There would be no contact between the two.

Mrs NAPIER - How did you decide that your processing would be up to four people?

Mr WOOD - It was based on numbers of prisoners that are apparently being used as a baseline on current operations and has been worked up in close consultation with the Prison Service at the moment.

Mr OVENS - That is right. The four separate cells there respond to small groups of prisoners of different classification types or risk profiles and it was the advice from the Prison Service that this was their need. You have to remember that this is a prisoner processing centre and you are going to be bringing prisoners in a secure vehicle, one vehicle at a time. The arrival of these vehicles is programmed and they are allowed into the sally port. The secure roller shutter comes down so it is a bit like a sally port. It forms a secure cage, the prisoners in the secure vehicle are then taken in in a controlled way into the prisoner processing area. They are located in different secure rooms so that they can be processed in a way which is efficient by the Prison Service.

Mrs NAPIER - So it should not be influenced by what the expansion capacity of the prison might be into the future?

Mr OVENS - No.

Mrs NAPIER - Is this normally the place where people would come in after they had been out for a court case or whatever they might have been out for?

Mr WOOD - That would be right. All prisoners coming into or out of the prison will go through the processing area. You then know who is inside the prison, it is fully recorded on the system.

Mr OVENS - So each of those small secure rooms has multiple person capacity, it is not as though each room is just for one prisoner.

Mrs NAPIER - If I could ask a question about your health facility here, I notice you have a two-bedroom facility in that and then in this building that we have been looking at again there is a two-bedroom facility in the accommodation as well. What is the rationale behind the two-bedroom cell?

Mr WOOD - The two beds in the medical is - I guess to start with you need to have some separation of prisoners because of the different prisoner profiles. That is why there are separate units. There are some prisoners who are quite easily able to be accommodated within one room and you can recognise who they are and they are quite safe; with other prisoners you want to have separation between two. It is providing a range of accommodation for flexibility and that is why we have one and two-bedroom units in here.

In the cell blocks we are providing double cells for reasons of possible self-harm. There's quite a valid approach to assessing prisoners who at risk of self-harm and doubling up with other prisoners so we usually provide at least one unit of two beds.

Mr HOULT - If I may, it's a recommendation of the Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

Mrs NAPIER - I wondered if that's what it was.

Mr HOULT - Yes, the buddy system there is in case there are people who we believe are capable of self-harm.

Mrs NAPIER - My next question was, how many double cells are we likely to have within the prison given that, unfortunately, there's a relatively high proportion of people of Aboriginal descent in the prison?

Mr OVENS - There are double cells in each accommodation block both at maximum security and medium security level.

Mrs NAPIER - How many does that give us?

Mr HOULT - There are four doubles in maximum.

Mr OVENS - Plus upstairs as well, so there are four doubles in the maximum security block.

Mr HOULT - There's another buddy cell in the upstairs upper plan at either end of each of the facilities.

Mr WOOD - In addition to that, the way the design is slightly different. These are designs so that at night-time when the doors are locked and prisoners are in their cells for and they can't get out. The medium security accommodation provides that the external door of the unit of six or eight prisoners is locked, but the bedroom door of the cell can be locked by the prisoner. If there's a group of Aboriginal people who want to live together they can be accommodated in one unit of, say, six and it's their decision then to either lock or not lock their door. This is one way of treating Aboriginals to allow them to live together on this floor.

Mrs NAPIER - In terms of the total bed capacity that you build into those health units, how did you come up with that figure?

Mr OVENS - That was in accordance with the advice that we received from the health service, particularly from the medical officer of the health service.

Mrs NAPIER - Was that based on a total projected potential number or was it based on current usage?

Mr OVENS - It was based on the projected number.

Ms FENNELL - It looked at current usage of the prison hospital, reflected on previous usage and calculations of what would be needed into the future.

Mrs NAPIER - So we are saying that the capacity that's built within this health facility should be able to meet the requirements should the maximum number be held.

Mr WOOD - It is also validated against benchmarking across Australia. We looked at the numbers that it would be reasonable to have in a facility of this size.

Mr HOULT - I think it's important to recognise that the in-patient beds are not acute care. We're not talking about the provision of an acute hospital facility. Of course with the building of the 35 beds in the secure mental health unit, those people currently being treated in the prison hospital who suffer from severe mental illness won't be in that facility; they will be much more appropriately housed in the secure mental health unit.

Mrs NAPIER - Do you have a similar facility in the women's prison or do the women come into that section? Does this health unit cater for the whole prison site?

Mr WOOD - Yes, it does. There is a small dispensary outreach -

Ms FENNELL - Yes, a dispensary treatment area in the women's prison for day-to-day clinic work. That will be quite separate but should they require in-patient care they would need to come into the facility where they can be provided with that appropriate level of care.

Ms KEIL - I think a part of that two bedroom apartment for women, in case there are women in the centre, will provide separation from the men in the way it's designed.

Mr OVENS - The current medical patient load in the prison population is between one and two prisoners at a time per day, so you see, based on that, the provision of six is ample.

Mr BEST - Can I just ask, just getting back to the 45, you have 45 staff in the men's division, is that right?

Mr OVENS - That is right, in the men's prison. That is at one sitting.

Mr HOULT - No, that is the dining room capacity. It is not the prison staffing.

Mr BEST - Oh, that is the dining room capacity. And is there any difference in numbers of staffing that will happen from old to new?

Mr OVENS - The staffing model is still being developed, but the staffing numbers on the projections that we have received are very similar.

Mr BEST - So obviously you are saying you are actually working on this issue of staffing. Obviously this is a huge change for the better, but also it may be somewhat more complex in some ways. What will happen there in relation to the staffing issues of bringing people up to the new arrangements or operations, maybe new techniques in how you deal with prisoners? I do not know whether that is going to happen. How do you see that coming together with the time frame and whatever you have planned in that regard?

Mr OVENS - I can answer that question in regard to the programming and the time frame. If you would like a response about how the Prison Service is preparing itself -

Mr BEST - Yes.

Mr OVENS - perhaps I could call on the Director of Prisons.

Mr BEST - Oh, well, I had better not interrupt you.

Mr OVENS - But in general terms, yes, there is a need for retraining.

Mr BEST - Right, well we can come back to that, if you like, and we will just keep going through.

Mr OVENS - Apart from the mainstream maximum prisoner accommodation, there are two specialist blocks for maximum male prisoners.

Mr WOOD - From time to time while prisoners are in prison they are not always fully agreeing with what prison officers are asking them to do, so when they get to a point where the officer says, 'No, it is not good enough, you've got to go to the detention unit', we have a detention unit. That is for prisoners who, as I said, are not conforming to the prison rules, and there are a number of cells provided there for desegregation from the rest of the prisoners. Adjacent to it, and not exactly for the same reason but for a similar

reason, prisoners have some behavioural problems and rather than just throwing them into the cell and locking them up, we provide this facility for certainly putting them in a cell, but also having then the ability to try to address the offending behaviour. So this is a similar facility adjacent to it so prisoners perhaps could move through this area.

Mr HALL - Could you just indicate on the big map the location of the detention centre?

Mr OVENS - That is it there.

Mr HALL - I see, yes, behind the maximum security one.

Mr OVENS - This whole area here is maximum security, but it is just below on this diagram the mainstream maximum. It is that one there.

Mrs NAPIER - Can I come back to this one where you have the stairs and you have the upper floor? Is it envisaged that the central floor location would be used by each of the units, and what are the security arrangements or otherwise between the floors via the stairs?

Mr WOOD - This area is one large open area with two-level cell blocks and one large space, one high space, so there is a balcony that runs around above and that provides access from the cells onto the balcony.

Mr OVENS - It is a mezzanine floor.

Mr WOOD - So if you imagine these cells above again, and you walk out the cell, around the corridor, down to where the stairs are, down the stairs and then walk into this -

Mrs NAPIER - So it is into the one area?

Mr WOOD - One area, which is a two-storey space.

Mrs NAPIER - The only reason I ask was I wondered the extent to which those stairs would reduce the living space, the interaction space down below those.

Mr WOOD - Well, I guess you can turn it the other way round. It is not actually reducing the space. We have designed this space to fit the purpose, and obviously you are required to have the space in there for the stairs, so we add the space in, sufficient space for the stairs, so it does not reduce the space. The security is that basically an officer on duty at this post can see into all parts of the common room. The stairs are positioned so that you actually can see through them, if you like. The fronts of all the cells are observable from the officer station here, and there are cameras within the cell common room to be able to view all parts of that common room.

Mrs NAPIER - And under the stairs, are they filled in or can you see through?

Mr WOOD - You can see through them; they're open stairs.

Mrs NAPIER - Okay. I just wondered, if you are looking at behaviour, is it a good idea to have 24 people in one area or 12 people in an area? That's why I wondered whether there was actually a full floor.

Mr WOOD - It's driven by a number of things, I suppose, and it's partly to do with the number of prisoners you can manage at once. Clearly it's driven by a cost provision. If you have a cell block which is 50 or 60 you can make some good savings, but it becomes a management problem. Within this complex we only have a certain number of prisoners we need to accommodate, but there's a whole range of prisoners and we need to be able to divide it up into small segments. If you divided it into too small segments, the costs start to go up because more buildings have to be provided. If you divided into too large segments, it becomes difficult with management and segregation. This is a balance between the two, I suppose.

Mrs NAPIER - What tells you that 24 is a safe and more positive ceiling? Is there an international best practice or what's the model drawing from?

Mr WOOD - The range of cell block sizes depends on the type of prisoner, but this particular maximum security is ranging from this number of 24 up to perhaps 50, but again it is to do with the prisoner type and the way the prison service runs its service. I guess we're getting into an area which is really to do with operations.

Mr HOULT - To be quite frank, it's also to do with resources. This is an acceptable model based on Australian best practice and what has been built in recent times around the country, balanced against the amount of capital resources we have to build and the amount of operational resources we have to staff. We have looked around the country, seen what has been done, and this has been arrived at as the most reasonable position.

Mrs NAPIER - Would you be able to provide the committee at some stage with what the three most recent prisons are that have been developed with maximum security and what their grouping sizes are?

Mr HOULT - I'm sure we can provide you with that information.

Mr OVENS - We certainly can. Generally these days in other jurisdictions which have much larger prisoner populations, the mainstream maximum blocks are 50, so this, if you like, is at the low end of the range. They provide smaller blocks for specialist functions such as the one that Peter was just describing, but for mainstream blocks usually they provide blocks with 50-bed units.

Mr WOOD - The size of these prisons we're comparing them to are 600 beds in a prison, whereas with the men's prison we are talking only -

Mr OVENS - We're talking about 250.

Mrs NAPIER - I asked the question because of group dynamics which would apply. If you apply psychology to it and if you want people to come out as, hopefully, better people rather than worse people having gone into the prison then I guess it's those kinds of issues that you look at. They're not going to build another one of these for a long time.

Mr WOOD - This is designed to have that built into it to a degree. If the behaviour is considered unsuitable then you move from this 24-bed unit to an 8-bed or a 6-bed unit.

Mr HOULT - I think that's why we have to look at the continuum of the accommodation. What we are trying to do is say if we have dangerous people who need to be secured, they will be secured in a maximum security facility, but we could also provide people with the opportunity by improved behaviours, participation in prison programs, and so on, the opportunity to actually step down and be rewarded by improved levels of facility in terms of personal freedom and group size, to hopefully into minimum security where they have high levels of movement and freedom within the boundary. While some people have spent a lot of their prison sentence in here, many others will move reasonably quickly through to more appropriate accommodation and more personal freedom within that accommodation.

The other point I think I'd like to make is that we intend, through the use of a structured day, to try to make sure that people aren't sitting around. They're not just going to be locked up and left to their own devices. The structure D model tries very hard to make sure that people are engaged in programs and improve their behaviour and their skills; it is not just a sort of pure containment here. That would not be a very appropriate way to deal with this prisoner group.

Mr BEST - Just on the design with the roofing, I think it's great that you're going to have that residential appeal in a way which is very important. What actually happens with the roof cavities? Is that a security issue?

Mr WOOD - From a security point of view?

Mr BEST - Yes.

Mr WOOD - Typically the ceiling of a cell is concrete, so whether you are on the lower level or the upper level it is concrete. The common area, because it is two storeys and generally out of reach, it doesn't necessarily have to be concrete but it certainly is a secure ceiling. The sort of materials you would use would be metal and metal combined with plasterboard or perforated metal, so it would be difficult for prisoners to get through, given that they would probably have to be hanging off their arms to get to it. The actual cavity inside is secured from the cell completely. Even if they could possibly get in there, they would still have to get through the roofing, so there is a double layer, if you like.

Mr BEST - Just the general layout, which I think is very good in the sense that you have this making good use of the existing land and prisoners can have a more positive outlook, in a sense, of rehabilitation, does that pose any sort of security problem with people perhaps getting on this hill and looking in? That is not really an issue, is it, in any way?

Mr WOOD - It is an issue certainly and it is an issue raised whenever we build a centre anywhere. Unless you have a completely flat site, there is always going to be a hill or something nearby on which someone could set up with a high-powered rifle and pick someone off. But in this case it is still a distance away. As you can see from the photographs, if someone was on that hill, trying to identifying someone working within that facility there are very few times in which they are going to be out and about because,

as Peter said, they are going to be doing something usually in a building somewhere. I think the risk is quite low.

Mr HOULT - To get above the trees, if you look on the horizontal views, the trees will actually shield until you get a long back and up the hill. So you are getting a very long site line before you can see into the buildings. It is a fairly manageable risk, we believe.

Ms HAY - What happens on that land?

Mr OVENS - If I could just pick up on that question and also add to what has just been said about the difficulty of identifying particular prisoners, in this area here, which is the maximum security area, maximum security prisoners do not get out and walk around the grounds. They are secured within their block and there is a small exercise yard which is secured - Peter might just indicate that - and these are steel meshed. The prisoners as a group will be in that secured exercise area when they are released to it, otherwise they are within a concrete walled and roofed building. It is really not an issue.

Mr BEST - I wouldn't have thought so.

Mr WOOD - From time to time there will be exercise out on the grassed areas, but they are very restricted times.

Mrs NAPIER - I was going to ask about the size of those exercise yards. In my old language they are about half a netball court size, aren't they?

Laughter.

Mrs NAPIER - In the old language they are about 45 by 27 feet. They are about 15 by 9 metres.

Mr WOOD - Yes, that's about right.

Mrs NAPIER - It doesn't seem to be a very big area. Presumably you will have a basketball ring or something like that. I would have thought it was a very big area, given that you have said that it is most likely that these prisoners would be restricted to this building. Why wouldn't you give them a bigger exercise yard?

Mr WOOD - Other than that I don't think it's needed, again we come back to the point that they are not there all day long. Most of them are out and about doing other things. If you go into a cell block in any prison on the mainland, you walk through and if you walk in an exercise yard you might see half a dozen prisoners out there and you might see half a dozen in here. You might see a few in their cells and a few off somewhere else. You rarely have the full 24 complement all the time in there all wanting to go to exercise at the same time. Yes, there would most likely be a basketball backboard here and people would walk up and down as they do in any other prison and so on.

The size is quite reasonable. Again, we have assessed that against a benchmark size and it would be reasonable for exercise yards, I would say.

Mrs NAPIER - It's about the size of the one at Ashley for the secure section, isn't it?

Mr HOULT - Yes, it's about that size.

Mrs NAPIER - For the number of people that are using that one there's much less than there potentially could be out here.

Mr HOULT - But I think like everything they do in their lives in maximum security, it's a managed activity. Custodial officers wouldn't allow large gatherings of groups of prisoners anywhere. They will be doing other things. They will be traversing to other core buildings within the secure spine of the facility -

Mrs NAPIER - It might be covered by that operation which I can pick up as we go along, presumably.

Mr OVENS - Peter, you might corroborate this: the sizing of both the secured exercise areas and the internal floor plan are consistent with best practice around Australia, isn't it? The same design consultants who are designing this are designing other prisons at the moment in other jurisdictions so this is, if you like, an Australian standard provision. Is that right?

Mr WOOD - Yes, that's right.

Mr OVENS - I might also mention that in Stage D, which is obviously not part of the current works that we have before you, there is a recreation gym - a multi-use recreational gym. In Stage D there is a secured multiple-use court for maximum security as well as a multiple-use court for medium security, so they are quite apart from the secured exercise areas attached to the blocks. There is a much larger court which prisoners will be programmed to use on a prison service.

Mrs NAPIER - What's our capacity on this prison again - this section?

Mr OVENS - About 250.

Mr WOOD - The other specialist block. From time to time prisoners don't get on with other prisoners or prisoners feel as though they are unsafe so we provide a separate unit for the protection of prisoners. It's a cell block with the same sort of configuration as cells, a common room and exercise yard. Adjacent to that is a cell block called a needs assessment unit. I guess simply this is where most prisoners would go when they go through prisoner processing. They are directed into this facility for the first few weeks of their sentence and then a more detailed assessment is undertaken, interaction is allowed to take place and there's a bit more ability to provide interaction by the use of the day unit and small program spaces. Adjacent to that bit again is another unit called the crisis support unit. It is a small facility. This is for prisoners who are at risk of self-harm or a very serious risk of self-harm while the double beds in the units provided, if a prisoner is at a higher level they then put these units in. It's divided into single-bed accommodation basically - and when I say 'bed' the prisoners really wouldn't be staying too long. It's really very intensive interaction with prisoners to try to keep them down off that level of self-harm.

Ms HAY - With the padded cell, can you explain what that is and the differences between the other cells?

Mr WOOD - A padded cell is really just a room with a door and it's fairly reasonably thick padded. It's for very short periods of time and something that the health people would -

Ms HAY - Is it with softened walls and everything?

Mr WOOD - Yes. There's a particular detailing of padding which is in the order of 30 to 40 millimetres of thick padding. It's very difficult to fall hard or crack or harm yourself in any way but, again, prisoners are only put in there for a very short period of time and they're observed all the time that they are inside there, too.

Ms HAY - How are they observed?

Mr WOOD - There would be an observation panel in the door and most likely a camera in there as well, and they are observed from the officer station as well. The other rooms are similar but they do not have padding. They will have a bunk bed in there perhaps. And they may have controlled access to a radio and power, but if there is considered risk then that could be disabled.

Mrs NAPIER - It is interesting, the living areas in that almost look as big as if not bigger than that one over there for 24 people.

Mr HOULT - Because those people have less opportunity to get out, having the protection the others are under treatment, so they are actually a ratio of living space to cells.

Mrs NAPIER - So for what percentage of time, if I am in maximum, am I likely to be over there in the living areas?

Mr HOULT - Could I ask that Mr Graeme Barber, Director of the Prison Service, to answer that?

Mr BARBER - In the maximum facility the structured day would be an unlock from cells at around about 7.30, at which time they take breakfast and do their personal hygiene. At 9 a.m. they would be released from the cell block to go to either industry or programs, or medical appointments or visits, whatever the structure was for the first part of the day. So the first part of the structured day goes from 9 to 12, so there is a three-hour period in the morning. From 12 to 1 p.m. it is a return back to the block for the lunch period, for which the block is then locked down. They are not locked down in individual cells but the block is locked off. And then the second part of the structured day is from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. So once again activities outside of the cell block, including visits, industry, education, programs, whatever, out of the block.

Mrs NAPIER - Okay, so what time does everyone go to sleep?

Mr BARBER - At 4 p.m. they are returned again to the maximum block, and from 5 o'clock onwards the evening meal is taken, and then they are locked individually in their cells at about 6 p.m. in the maximum block. So that is the maximum day. The medium day would extend for another two hours, and the minimum day a further hour after that.

Mrs NAPIER - Yes, I see your point about the narrow time limit.

Mr HOULT - I would like to add that the movement of maximum prisoners to the other buildings within the secure spine is through secure covered walkways, so they are actually never outside the security of the infrastructure.

Mr OVENS - Just picking up on that point, Peter, this is the secure spine here which runs along the edge of all of the common facilities. It is a walkway which is roofed and which has steel mesh sides. It is divided into segments by remote operated doors with cameras, again screen mesh doors, and it allows all prisoners from all groups to access all facilities in a controlled and programmed way.

Mrs NAPIER - Which is this building that we have just been looking at? Which one is that one?

Mr OVENS - That is that one there.

Mrs NAPIER - And presumably they are facing down the slope?

Mr OVENS - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - So they are looking west.

Mr OVENS - That is right. They are looking out over the view. We have just dealt with the maximum security zone in the men's prison.

If we move over here to the west, to the medium security zone, unlike the maximum one where each walkway is also secured so that maximum security prisoners do not get out into the space between the buildings and walkways, in the medium area they do. The regime that operates in the medium security area allows prisoners to walk in a way which is obviously under surveillance but walk between facilities to go over and access their services with a greater degree of freedom and self-determination.

Ms HAY - But not outside the maximum, they can't actually get down to the maximum security.

Mr OVENS - They can't, no. There are internal fences which separate them from maximum and also separate them from the central recreation area there. Obviously they cannot get through the secure spine which is connected here to the side fence as well. The medium area is this one, and within that area they have a degree of freedom of movement.

Mr WOODS - And in the same way, medium security prisoners while they have that degree of freedom they still have a structured day, as Graeme was saying, so they have something to do.

Mr OVENS - I wonder, Peter, if you would run through the plan of a standard accommodation block in medium.

Mr WOODS - There are four of them which are virtually identical, each of them two levels. Each level is the same, the lower level has two units. The unit on the left has six bedrooms, the unit on the right has eight bedrooms. As I said earlier, these are more bedrooms rather than cells and the distinct difference is that they do not have a toilet and shower within the bedroom, but they do have all the other facilities in the cell. They have a door to which they have their own key. They also have a key which could open the front door; those two locks actually can be a key together, but officers would always have a precedence over the prisoner key. So the prisoner can lock himself in his own room to look after his own goods.

At night-time the front door is locked so prisoners can't use their key to get out. Internally they have a common bathroom, laundry, two showers, two toilets and a laundry area and they also have a small tea servery area and their own dining and living areas. The only real difference is the numbers - two extra beds on this side.

Mrs NAPIER - Do you have individual showers and toilets for this one over here?

Mr WOOD - Yes, they do, they have their own toilet and shower.

Mrs NAPIER - So why would we not keep them there to avoid the potential for bastardisation? Is it part of the cost?

Mr WOOD - It's partly cost - a significant cost for the extra toilet and shower through the area, but it is partly to do with giving a step-up, step-down process. They say, 'When you go back to the community you do not have a separate shower necessarily, en suites and so on - it is more reflecting what you might get in the community as you go out, but certainly its costs as well.

Ms HAY - Interaction in the community.

Mr WOOD - It's interaction as well. There is a lot of evidence of this sort of accommodation being used around Australia, this more residential-style accommodation, and the prisoners really are very keen to get into this accommodation. They do tend to get together in small groups. You talked before about the size of groups, groups in this type of situation can be quite good - small units like a family-size unit and they do tend to get on. If someone plays up in a unit of that size the prisoners usually kick at him, the prisoner playing up, because they don't want him mucking up their time in their unit.

Mr HOULT - And I would add that the greatest control on people's behaviour in those medium security units is that you go back along the wall to the maximum. They understand that the medium there is a privilege and that privilege can be revoked and they can be returned to maximum security.

Mrs NAPIER - Yes, I can see that overall but I just wondered why - if you look at the way we're heading in other areas like aged care and other - increasingly the move is towards maintaining a degree of relative privacy and each person being provided with their own shower and toilet and so on. That was the reason for asking but if you argue that that's more like it would be in a family situation, I suppose you could argue that, but in most other circumstances within the community nowadays you have your own shower and toilet.

Mr OVENS - I must say for a prisoner it is hardly encouraging having your toilet near your bed, which is the case in a maximum security cell. It is definitely a privilege to move to accommodation which doesn't have that.

Mrs NAPIER - There wouldn't be a glassed interface or something like that, it would be just open.

Mr HOULT - From a security point of view -

Mrs NAPIER - I tend to agree with you.

Mr BEST - Just one question on the colours of the walls. There's some mention here about the importance of colour in the environment. I was wondering if you could explain a bit about that because it sounds quite interesting.

Mr OVENS - I must say that we haven't reached a detailed level of design whereby we're looking at colour schemes, but you're right, there is a psychology of colour which is studied in criminology and we will be applying that.

Mr WOOD - It would have to be a balance of colour and maintenance.

Mr BEST - And the other thing which is obviously fairly important is the issue of general fittings, and I guess you're not to that level either at this stage, of hanging points and so on. No doubt planning a new design you should be able to factor in those things a bit easier.

Mr WOOD - What we will be doing will be basing the detailing on details which will be worked up from a very recent correctional centre. The architects we have on board are very aware of the need to restrict the number of potential hanging points and self-harm within the cells, so that the detail is tried and true.

Mr BEST - What are some of those problems that you would have in a new design that you'd want to avoid, for example?

Mr WOOD - Typically the use of bars across windows is an obvious point of hanging, so we've tried to reduce that.

Mr BEST - How would you reduce that?

Mr WOOD - Glazing over bars in the cell blocks. Those blocks are going to be airconditioned to enable us to cover over the bars. The other problems usually are the detailing around the basins, the detailing around the built-in cupboards and beds; there's a range of things we have to address. You can never get to a point where there is no way of self harming in a cell. We are just trying to minimise the risks, that's all.

Mrs NAPIER - We're still going to use bars, are we, in most of the prison?

Mr WOOD - We're using bars for security, but in cell blocks we are glazing over the inside of the bars.

Mrs NAPIER - Okay - like you do in the police lockups. Can I ask a question about that upstairs area. You've got an open area there. What is the reason for leaving that open as another room?

Mr WOOD - This is only a single-level accommodation. There isn't a common area for prisoners to be in. When they're in this accommodation they will be in the beds. If they go out of the beds as happens here, there will be high-level control because of the sort of prisoners they are.

Mrs NAPIER - But on this plan here it shows that it's open, yet there's another layer up the top. There's a layer of accommodation up on the right and the left of the diagram as I'm looking at it, but on the bottom side of this side there's not just another series of beds at the top.

Mr WOOD - No, there isn't. This is a single-level building. Yes, the roof is higher but the ceiling in this part of the facility will be at a lower level. The ceilings of this building will be up here, the ceilings at this end will be lower.

Mr OVENS - Peter, have you finished with medium security?

Mr WOOD - I think so.

Mr OVENS - I think that probably deals with the men's maximum and medium compound, but I might just briefly, whilst we're in this area, refer to the existing facility. At the moment the gatehouse for this facility is up here. In the reconfiguration - which is a minor reconfiguration because this facility is not planned to be used into the distant future so this, if you like, is an interim arrangement - the entry point to what will become the minimum prison will be moved through to here, and this front court will provide some staff facilities like showers, lockers and that kind of thing, as well as what we call the 'hotel support services' for the prison service. That is the existing kitchen, the bakery, the stores and some of those things. This front area will become a common services area for the prison service. Beyond that we will provide some reconfiguration work to allow this facility to function as a minimum security facility into the short to medium term.

Mrs NAPIER - What does reconfiguration mean?

Mr OVENS - It means removing fencing, looking at perhaps putting some different combinations of spaces together by putting holes in walls, joining spaces together in some way. We haven't looked at this yet. This is to take place now during the design development phase because there is a very minimal amount of money allocated to do this.

Mrs NAPIER - How much money has been allocated?

Mr OVENS - Only \$700 000. You might recall, this is a very old facility with significant asset deterioration issues. Whilst we will leave it in a state where it can function in the short term, it is not envisaged to invest significant capital in a facility like this. It has been set up to allow a buffer of time for the Government then to consider what it wants to do with the balance of the prison's infrastructure.

Mr HALL - Is the intention in the future then to keep the current Hayes facility as minimum security as well as what you intend to develop on the site?

Mr OVENS - Yes, it is.

Mrs NAPIER - In terms of the standard of the facility - and I have always regarded that facility over there a bit like Alcatraz - is it envisaged that the accommodation units will be upgraded and made more habitable?

Mr OVENS - Yes. As I said, we will be doing that in the most economical way possible and without addressing, if you like, major asset issues. I think it comes back to the adage of good money going after bad.

Mr HALL - If I follow the line of what Mrs Napier is saying, given the upgrade with the medium security it might be better if the prisoner wanted to stay in medium security rather than come back to the very old facility when it is obviously going to have a fairly minimal amount of money spent on it.

Mr OVENS - That has been an issue all along and will have to be addressed through the programs and regimes which are implemented here, which would still provide an incentive for prisoners to move from medium security to minimum security.

Mr BARBER - It is about providing incentives through the operational model and about moving people through. If you recall, when we took the Ron Barwick Medium Security Prison back from Ashley it was in a fairly sad state and we didn't spend very much capital money there at all but spent a lot of prisoner hours and prison time in redeveloping that site. That is now a very good operational model. We have done a similar thing down in division 1 in Risdon. Even though it is attached to the other divisions, it operates totally differently. It is all about behaviour and reward-based behaviour. It allows people to move through and get more freedoms, visiting rights, access to industry and those types of things.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it envisaged that you are going to keep the workshops and so on that are there, and still be using those?

Mr OVENS - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - My other question is: what is the interface between the new prison and the old prison? Do prisoners still help in the cooking and various jobs associated with the running of the central facilities?

Mr OVENS - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - By your indication they are. What is the security interface between the two?

Mr OVENS - This facility in the future will be programmed to cater for about 100 prisoners. Obviously it has a capacity to cater for many more than that but within the accommodation model - I think it goes up to a maximum of about 120. Those minimum

and low-end medium prisoners who will be accommodated there will operate the kitchen, the bakery and some of those workshops. They will also assist with the stores.

Mrs NAPIER - So it will be an enclosed unit?

Mr OVENS - That's right.

Mr BARBER - It will be a separate facility; it will be a Risdon minimum prison facility, as compared to medium, as compared to maximum. As far as the prison service is concerned, at the end of PIRP Stage C there will be three separate facilities: the new maximum/minimum is one, the redeveloped women's prison is the second and the old Risdon environment, as we know it now, will be the minimum prison as the third prison facility on that site. They will be staffed separately and operated as separate facilities. So in fact there will be no movement of inmates, on a daily basis for work purposes, from one facility to the other; they are all self-catered.

Mrs NAPIER - So you'll have three processing centres and three separate staff dining facilities?

Mr OVENS - Yes. The visitor processing centre is central and visitor parking is central. Staff parking and staff facilities will be central to them but, yes, the protocols to enter each one of these secure facilities will be separate.

I would like then to move onto the women's prison. An opportunity was taken by the designers to get additional value out of the existing facilities in the women's prison and the staff training facility there. The campus here is dealt with differently than it is in the men's maximum-medium. The main reason for that is that the majority of female prisoners are minimum security and do not present a significant operational challenge - risk position, if you like - for staff compared with the sort of risk issues that the prison service has to deal with with men's maximum and medium. So the type of perimeter which is provided here is a different kind of perimeter. However, there is a new maximum security facility also being provided with very secure multiple-purpose facilities attached to it. The existing cell accommodation here will be completely redeveloped for medium and minimum security prisoners. The existing staff training facility will be completely redeveloped as a mother/child facility - six beds - and there is consideration at the moment for an additional one or two beds on the western end for some other specialist groups.

As has been mentioned earlier, there has been capacity built into this site plan for significant accommodation expansion at every level. The women's is no exception. This has been designed and built for 45 female prisoners. There's an additional space here for another 15-bed accommodation block, taking that up to 60 in the future. In the same way there are additional sites in the men's prison for expansion of at least 30 per cent capacity. This part of the existing female prison will again be redeveloped for administration, health functions and prisoner processing.

In this new building, the main building being provided in the women's prison, there is a maximum security end but it's divided into two. It has a six cell, what we call, hard end, and a nine-cell soft end. The hard end really is for the genuinely risky and difficult female prisoners within the female prisoner population to be accommodated. The

nine-cell soft end is for other female prisoners who are not ready to go into medium security. They will include some remandee prisoners, so they are separated completely from the hard ones. Effectively, this will operate as two units in one. The designers have come up with a design which quite efficiently allows for these groups to be accommodated and overseen by the one officer post. There is also the ability here, because they are effectively two units, to have separate secured exercise yards. There is non-contact visiting allocated here as well as contact visiting in the multipurpose area. And then adjacent to that there is the main pedestrian entry into the prison so that both visitors to prisoners and professional visitors come in here, are processed and go through a security screen. Then they can go to their secure interview room, another room with a video link in it. The manager of the unit will be accommodated here, and this is adjacent - you cannot see it here, but there is then a vehicle entry right beside it and there will be a vehicle lock here so that female prisoners who are processed here and need to go to the maximum security accommodation will go through a secure link and straight into this building here. Those that do not, and there are significant numbers who will not, will then proceed this way into the redeveloped medium and minimum security accommodation. You might also note on the plan there that the space being planned for female prisoners is quite generous, certainly compared with the very small amount of area that they have at the moment. They also have a multiple purpose courtyard, and with the majority of female prisoners being minimum and relatively low security prisoners there is adequate allowance there for them to have, if you like, more casual and free visiting arrangements. There will be a barbecue area developed. So a lot of their contact, if you like, with family and other groups will not be in closely controlled arrangements, but will take place in this space here.

Mr HOULT - Thank you, Jim. Would you like now to move on to the secure mental health unit.

Mr OVENS - This is now Kate's turn to say something.

Mrs NAPIER - Just before we move to that, could I ask a little bit about access to facilities associated with programs of various kinds, educational programs, rehabilitative programs and so on?

Mr OVENS - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Where does that fit in each of those three facilities and when will they be built?

Mr OVENS - Sure. The education and programs, the first stage of the education programs area, the offender development complex, will be provided in Stage C. The balance of it is there -

Mrs NAPIER - So what will actually be in that building E?

Mr OVENS - There will be a multiple-purpose classroom, computer room, I think a library storage room, and there is a wet area craft room as well for pottery and that kind of thing. And then there will be the offender development staff accommodation as well. There are 16 open plan areas plus four offices.

Mrs NAPIER - Which plan is this one?

Mr OVENS - It is not in there, I am afraid. We have not been able to receive that plan in time to include it, but we will be receiving it early next week and we can forward it to members when we receive that.

Mrs NAPIER - And that will be built as part of Stage C?

Mr OVENS - That is right.

Mrs NAPIER - And this envisaged area, is that perhaps to build some appropriate workshops or related facilities?

Mr OVENS - That is additional classes and other specialist workshop spaces. Well, not workshop spaces but additional offender development spaces. So you can see from this that something like 40 per cent of the total future provision is being built in Stage C.

Ms HAY - When will that be built?

Mr OVENS - The planning at the moment is for that to be part of a Stage D submission.

Mr HOULT - We have yet to propose to the Government Stage D. The Government's indication to us was that we should do that probably within the next 18 months, and that will be the remainder of the prison system, issues around Hayes, issues around Launceston Remand Centre. All of those have to be taken into account, and as yet the Government has not made its consideration of what it can do about those and what resources they can provide.

Ms HAY - Graeme, you have an overall big space at the moment and you don't have it in the proposed one until perhaps (d) where the future oval is. Is that a problem at all? There is a future oval for, say, 18 months' time, which I would say was there because you need it and you won't have it for 18 months. Is that going to be a problem?

Mr BARBER - It may well be an issue but what we believe that we can achieve is a higher participation rate of inmates in education, industry and programs because of the structured day. What would happen is that group A would go to one part of the structured day in the morning and a different structure in the afternoon and vice versa, another group would then get the opportunity to take part in that specific structure, whether it be industry participation, so we virtually roll people through the same job at different parts of the day.

Mr OVENS - In answer to other parts of your question, Mrs Napier, apart from the education offenders services facilities here, there is a programs room in each of the accommodation blocks in maximum. There is the workshop space also being provided in Stage C for prisoners. There will be a workshop provided there with an industry-type activity in it.

In the women's prison there will be program spaces developed - a large space and two small ones - for the female prisoners. In the minimum security prison there will be ample opportunity to provide program space for the 100 or so prisoners in that area.

Mrs NAPIER - But you are going to build building E in this phase?

Mr OVENS - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Your list of budget allocations on pages 64 and 65 don't refer to it, nor to the workshop. I just wondered what your budget allocation was for that. I might have missed it, of course.

Mr OVENS - It should be there.

Mrs NAPIER - The workshop is there - half a million. I just couldn't find building E.

Mr OVENS - It's called 'offender development facility' rather than 'education'.

Mrs NAPIER - Right.

Mr HOULT - We will move on to the Secure Mental Health Unit.

Ms FENNELL - I will start by referring members to diagram 25, to save people digging through to find the appropriate diagram for the Secure Mental Health Unit. As members have been advised before, I understand from the last meeting follow-up information was provided to members. What I propose to do is a very quick overview and then I will ask Joanne to step through each part of the unit for members and then we can answer any questions that you may have.

As you are aware, the Secure Mental Health Unit is a 35-bed unit. It is specifically designed for mental health clients. Services are provided in a therapeutic setting that supports the independence and the dignity of the clients within that setting, whilst also maintaining the high level of security that is required. Services are based on individually tailored programs for the clients, dependent upon what their needs are, the idea being to maximise their functioning and to minimise any long-term effects from their illness. The services are also aimed at promoting involvement back into the community and to encourage clients to maintain their linkages with their friends, families and other services that may be required.

The clients that will be within this unit I guess fall into four broad categories of clients. We are talking about persons within the prison community with a mental illness who are in need of specialist mental health care, persons who have appeared in or been remanded from the magistrates or supreme courts on an order, persons found not guilty for reasons of insanity and there will also be persons who are living in the broader community. We are talking about adults who have a severe and or prolonged mental illness who pose a significant risk to themselves and or to others who cannot be managed in a less restrictive environment.

The clients that are within this facility are likely to have a number of characteristics and I think if I just run through a few of those it might give you an idea as to why the facility is designed the way it is. Clients will have a diagnosis of a major mental illness such as schizophrenia; clients are likely to have both a severe and a prolonged mental illness, chronically unstable mental state and or unremitting symptoms; clients are likely to have concurrent medical problems, particularly substance abuse, personality disorder and or

intellectual disability; clients will quite often have had a poor treatment response and or compliance to treatment previously. These clients quite often have symptoms of mental illness that lead to high levels of assaultive behaviours, unpredictable behaviour and socially unacceptable behaviours. Most of these clients will have had a history of prolonged and or numerous hospitalisations and these clients will require extended treatment and care in this facility and will require the specialist care that we can provide within the facility. It just gives you an overview of the types of clients that we will be housing in this facility.

If I could now ask Joanne if she would walk you through the facility so that you get an idea of when someone enters the facility, the process and the way they will move through the facility and then we could answer any of your questions.

Ms KEIL - Forget about the prison, the operations themselves and everything else and what it looks like; this is a health facility so everything is going to be different. It will look different, it will operate completely differently to the prison. So if you can just imagine a perimeter around that, fortunately we do have already some screenings so there are going to be trees between the prison and the secure mental health, which is good and cheap as well.

There will be a gatehouse and car parking. As you come through the centre you enter through the gatehouse. There will be a secure zone so the area where you walk into will be a non-patient zone and this area here patients will have access to depending on how well they are going. There is a semi-independent living unit and they will have access around that. So if you come through the gatehouse, to enter, if you are a visitor, you come via a footpath into the admin block. There's a waiting area and reception there so you can come into that. You don't have to enter any patient zones whatsoever.

Once you enter past the reception area, we have a breakdown of units. We have a high dependency unit and we have an extended care unit. HDU is somewhat more for high-risk behaviour and the ECU will be for those who are doing quite well and don't need such a restrictive environment. Basically, it will look very similar, look residential. We don't have cells, we have bedrooms. They are all single rooms so everything will look like a mental health unit.

If you wish to enter the unit further you can enter down a passage way there. The units are divided off into two so they are completely separate. Staff stations are on either side. You can enter the staff station and interact with staff and you still do not have to enter the patient areas. You can go from one end to the building to the other without entering a patient area.

If you are a patient coming in through the gatehouse you come in around the driveway which is dedicated for that. We have admissions down the bottom. So if you are a patient coming in you don't have to share an entry area with deliveries or anyone else; you have your own area. Coming into admission you are processed there and interviewed. From there it is a short distance into high dependency, a small seclusion area or the extended care unit. The access to there is very easy.

Semi independent, as I said, is up the top. Clients can come and go. There will not be nursing staff based in that area but it will be monitored. Staff will be working with

clients very closely. Clients will have the opportunity to do that separately but still receive the same treatment work with the staff as required and access staff for 24 hours a day if they require.

There are various courtyards dotted around for each area as well as a recreation facility and tennis court down at the bottom. The grounds will be landscaped with meandering pathways; clients will be able to walk around and feel that they can be relaxed and can have some sort of movement and feel that they are able to get away from others if they need to.

Access around here will mainly be for the semi-independent living unit. If you are in the ECU you can access that if you have been assessed by staff. If they feel that it is appropriate then you can do that, otherwise they have a larger recreation courtyard that they can come out to and access the recreation facilities.

The HDU is a bit different because it is a non-patient zone. The courtyards are quite secure. They will not be leaving the courtyard to wander around. If they were to leave the unit it would only be through the internal passageway. If they were to go outside into the grounds well then really they should not be an HDU client.

We have deliveries, so everyone has their own pathway into the unit; nobody has to cross over. For visitors and families there are visiting rooms. ECU visitors will probably be able to access the courtyard depending on how the client is going. There will be a courtyard in the HDU so families can spend a bit of time outside in the sunshine and do a few things, have some time with children; that will not be a problem.

In HDU and the ECU we have the capability to separate off a couple of beds for women because they would be able to access the unit but they won't share with men. They will have their own lounge, dining area, a couple of bedrooms and they will have a courtyard that they can access as well, and that will happen in both areas.

We have another one up here - lounge, dining. So we have a whole unit there that can be segregated off for women so they can have their privacy; they don't have to feel threatened whatsoever and again they can go outside as well providing it is appropriate at the time.

Open areas, dining, there will be activities in there. There will be an activity area and the ECU will be big on programs to keep clients occupied and rehabilitation. They will be progressing from the ECU through the semi-independent living unit and from the semi-independent to home for those who are able to do so.

Patients coming through the enclosed sally port will be brought in by vehicle and will leave that way as well. Each of the units, HDU, have toilet and showers separate and there are some shared in the ECU. There is a unit of 12 there and there is a unit of 10 in this wing.

Ms HAY - Are the courtyards enclosed?

Ms KEIL - They will not be entirely enclosed but there will be sailcloth or some sort of thing so they can stand outside and not get wet.

Ms HAY - And there is enough space for interaction and leisure, considering if it is too cold they could not use the accessible areas.?

Ms KEIL - Yes. There are a number of areas. Again the swing units here, there are a couple of lounges attached there. There will not always be women in there, so there are a few areas that they can also access and separate off in their own rooms. They are all single and would be very private, so they can do that as well. There would be an activities area for them. There are the visits rooms as well which can be utilised. There are a number of areas, and again if it is wet they have the enclosed recreation area up there that they will be able to run around in and do things.

Ms HAY - Are the doors ever locked on the rooms?

Ms KEIL - No, they should be open. The only area that will really be locked is where there are the three seclusion beds for the high-risk behaviours. That is just really short term and they are the only areas that should be locked.

Ms HAY - Individuals rooms are not locked at any stage?

Ms KEIL - No. Clients will have the capability, if they want to lock themselves in, to do that, but we will not be going round locking. They will have access in and out 24 hours a day as they want to.

Mr BEST - The issue of monitoring, which has been a big one, how will that be undertaken in this new facility? There are a few different things that they are going to use. There will be some cameras, but a lot of these areas are glassed, so if you are in the nurses station you will be able to see into a lot of areas and see what is going on. Observation is a priority in the unit and being able to see down the hallways as well into the dining room, you will be able to see through the dining room into the visits room and into the courtyards. Some areas like the swing units that will be closed off, there will be cameras in there just to help with that. Seclusion will be a high observation area and they will have a nurse in there. If there is anyone in there, there has to be a nurse 24 hours a day with them, sort of one to one.

Mr BEST - So how do you manage then the patients or prisoners -

Ms KEIL - Clients - no prisoners.

Mr BEST - How do you manage, then, someone's safety in the sense of their privacy or their dignity? It is difficult.

Ms KEIL - It is difficult. If they need a really level of observation we can separate them off into the seclusion area where it is very private. Obviously they might be stripping off and be semi or fully naked and whatnot, so you can take them in there and they can be very private and others will not see into that area whatsoever.

Ms FENNELL - There are very high staffing levels in these units as well. If clients are in the seclusion area it is a one to one. If clients are in the high dependency unit we work

one staff member to every two clients and in the extended care unit it is one staff member to every four clients.

Ms HAY - How do you staff it then? Is there usually a certain number that is quite balanced? What if there are lots more -

Ms FENNELL - You have always got to maintain the option of being able to call additional staff in if you need to.

Ms HAY - And that is a given that would definitely happen?

Ms FENNELL - That tends to happen in health facilities because you cannot fully predict people's behaviours.

Ms HAY - So they will be called in from where?

Ms FENNELL - We will have staff who are available to do additional shifts, similar to now.

Ms KEIL - We have a casual pool who are on call.

Ms FENNELL - We have a casual pool of staff who are available to come and do additional shifts when required but, obviously, client safety has to be paramount for this client group.

Mrs NAPIER - I am interested in those little courtyards. Why didn't you just line them up to the walls? Why are the courtyards configured as they are? Why wouldn't they just be an area to each of the rooms?

Ms KEIL - They may well do. We're meeting with the landscape architect to look at all of that.

Mrs NAPIER - Okay.

Ms FENNELL - The idea is to have lots of different courtyards so people can go out into different courtyards and they are not all in the same area as well. It allows for separation.

Mrs NAPIER - Is it both the semi-independent and the Extended Care Unit that would have access to that small recreation zone you've got down there?

Ms HAY - With a tennis court.

Ms KEIL - Yes, it's pretty much of it. If clients in the HDU were ready for that area they should really be transferred across.

Mrs NAPIER - Transferred into the next zone?

Ms KEIL - Yes.

Mrs NAPIER - Okay.

Ms FENNELL - We'd only be maintaining people in the High Dependency Unit as long as they needed to be there from a therapeutic viewpoint. The idea is not to hold people in there unless you have to and to move people into the Extended Care Unit.

Ms KEIL - The HDU and the ECU will function somewhat independently of each other. They'll have their own staff and they'll have their own facilities and that passageway being the divider will keep them separate, so those in the HDU can be managed with their high-risk behaviour a bit better and they won't cross that passageway unless they're really ready to go into the ECU, so they're sort of secured within that area, within the HDU area, themselves.

Mrs NAPIER - A question I haven't asked myself right across all these other areas, but if you have a fire in this kind of facility with the secure requirements that are involved, if you had fire particularly, say, in one of the accommodation units or even in that central location, what would be the egress? Where would people get out?

Mr OVENS - Excuse me, could I answer that. We have a specialist fire engineer who is modelling all of these facilities. You are quite right, this has got to be modelled for every single facility because none of them comply prima facie with what is called 'the deemed to comply regulations of the Building Code of Australia' so each one of them has to have a specifically tailored fire response. I can't answer that question but if you do have any specific questions I can get him to provide a report.

Mrs NAPIER - But you would have a specialist in the area who would look over the plan and require it to be in writing an indication of how you intend to deal with fire wherever it may arise.

Mr OVENS - That's right, and this sort of thing is negotiated with the Tas Fire Service separately.

Mr WOOD - Simply there are two responses: one response is the safety of the people in the buildings and the other is the safety and the security in the actual building itself. So you have a plan of how you move people out and you have a plan of how you address the fire, and it could be that either sprinklers come on, it could be the fire hose reels that are used. It could be a range of things. It's quite a detailed plan that they have drawn up that fully integrates the building and the operation.

Mrs NAPIER - Coming back to this issue, the numbers that are built into that are based on projected demand, would you agree?

Ms KEIL - Yes. We're looking at both nationally and internationally what the figures are doing and where we're heading.

Mr HOULT - And you will recall that it was originally a 20-bed unit and because of the taking into account what expert advice said it became 35.

Mrs NAPIER - I had a question that probably isn't so much of yourself but in relation to your overall plan. Why have you taken the road up quite so close to the main prison? We talked before about trying to see it as a separate health facility and I'm happy with

what has been said about the trees providing some visual separation, and so on, and it is a separate site. So why would we not take that road from a point further to the south, is it?

Mr OVENS - It would be the west.

Mrs NAPIER - Okay, right. Why wouldn't we do that?

Mr OVENS - There's quite a slope, quite an incline in this part of the road, so the traffic engineer has advised that from about here back they couldn't take it off safely. There are a number of choices, I suppose, but the civil engineer has suggested this as a trajectory. That could change significantly during the design and development phase when they start looking at things more in detail. The sweep of this is simply suggested by the topography of the hillside here. There's a water main which Hobart Water has an easement over which the road shouldn't cross. There's an area here of existing vegetation which has a level of protection under the Regional Forest Agreement, so it really shouldn't enter that area as well. So within the constraints that we have, there is probably a range of -

Mrs NAPIER - Don't worry about the health of the country; don't worry about waiting lists.

Mr OVENS - Yes, this probably will move slightly, but it will move still with this line of mature macrocarpas here in mind.

Mrs NAPIER - I don't have a problem with where the road's coming in relative to the trees, but what I'm suggesting is, if at all possible, that the road be swung further away from the main prison so you minimise the visual impact and put some trees up, or whatever. I just think that first part of the entry part of the road should be moved down away towards the road.

Ms KEIL - Maybe you could put some trees in or something.

Mrs NAPIER - You could definitely put trees in.

Mr OVENS - Yes, sure. It could move a little bit further that way, that's all. It could be moved down to about here.

Ms KEIL - It's a fairly long driveway as it is, and anywhere along that road is quite long. We looked at the disability access and the actual incline getting up there and ramping, and what would be involved. It's pretty incredible even if you didn't have a disability; that the walk in itself would be quite difficult. So we are looking at the easiest sort of access and the ability to walk along there. If you're getting off at the bus stop, what is the best way to access that site? If you took it further down or a lot closer, the climb up the hill is quite significant. So they took all that into consideration as well.

Mr OVENS - All that said, there is a range of choice. We simply can't go beyond about that point.

Mrs NAPIER - I like that point; that's about right. Last year you were talking about there being an emergency exit road of some kind that would have minimal use, on this other side.

Mr OVENS - That is an option which we have. We're in discussion with the church and they are amenable to an emergency vehicular way being allowed. It would just be gravel over an area which had the minimum incline. It is something which is in their interest as well from the fire fighting point of view. They would be interested, for example, if their own access were blocked through fire or some other emergency, to be able to get a fire vehicle in this way.

Mrs NAPIER - So that's still envisaged?

Mr OVENS - Yes.

CHAIR - The formal presentation is concluded and members may have questions.

Mr BEST - I just want to hear about the staffing matter that I raised about training, and so on. I don't care whether you do that now or later.

Mr HALL - I have some questions of a general nature, however I would like to break for lunch.

The committee suspended from 1.15 p.m. to 1.51 p.m.

CHAIR - Members, over for questions.

Mr HALL - I have a couple of a general nature, Mr Chairman. If I look on page 3 of the document that talks about the number of beds which are going to be available in the new facility, 91 for maximum security and 112 for medium, does that roughly correlate to current existing levels?

Mr BARBER - No.

Mr HALL - No, I didn't think it did. From the visit we had I thought that there were a lot more - a much higher percentage in maximum security.

Mr BARBER - Mr Chairman, the current numbers are probably not reasonably accurate simply because of the facility. People who require and do live in Risdon for a number of reasons, whether it be family visits or whatever, are probably rated either maximum or medium because of the nature of the facility; it's a maximum security prison. We did a quick number crunch slightly over a month ago and we found that about 42 per cent of our population was maximum-rated. When you compare that to other States, Victoria was the lowest on about 7 per cent but I don't think their figures were accurate. New South Wales was round about 17 to 19, as was Queensland. Obviously, our previous classification documents are such that they are written around Risdon, so we're doing some work at the moment to rectify that and we're confident that that number of beds will be adequate for maximum in the future environment.

Mr HALL - What are the numbers at the moment just in maximum security, just as a matter of interest?

Mr BARBER - I think have actually yesterday's numbers.

Mr HALL - And medium?

Mr HOULT - In essence, the whole prison is a maximum security facility because there's no variation of accommodation type.

Mr BARBER - The medium prison facility has only 33 beds, so yesterday there were 33 people in medium security; in fact there were 31. At Hayes Prison Farm there were 60 yesterday - 68 is there capability. In Risdon, of 430 inmates yesterday 230 were in the Risdon environment. That doesn't include the prison hospital that had another 25 or the women's prison on that site. So in the men's maximum yesterday there were 230 inmates.

CHAIR - Just on that matter, when we had a look at the remand centre, is it a fair assessment to suggest that some of the accommodation in the remand centres, both north and south, are being used as a form of minimum-security retention? Is that a fair assessment purely because of the deficiency which you have for minimum-security prisoners?

Mr BARBER - Not specifically minimum. There would be some trustee wardsmen's inmates in both facilities, Launceston and Hobart remands, who would be minimum, but they would be a very small percentage.

In Hobart Remand we have a six-bed high protection unit made up of inmates who have given evidence against fellow inmates. There is an ex-police officer there. Very high profile people. So we are taking up six beds in the Hobart Remand Centre with that high profile unit.

The other people would generally be remand people. Currently our standing order says that we must classify all remands as maximum when in fact there is no need for that. So, that is where we intend to reduce a lot of the maximum numbers as well by classifying remands as medium or maximum, which we currently don't do.

Mr HALL - Just on the basic design of the prison, is it modelled on a particular interstate prison or a combination of overseas experience?

Mr OVENS - I think the model draws from a number of facilities. One of the recent ones is Maryborough which was a strong model -

Mr HALL - In Queensland or Victoria?

Mr OVENS - Yes. It's a prison that has just been finished but there are a number of other facilities around Australia that were used as examples but really we don't have a copy of any prison, mainly I think because of the nature of this prison. This is a prison that has to accommodate all classifications - male and female, protection all those sorts of things; they're in one site, which is an unusual situation.

Mr HALL - We may have talked about this on the first visit when we just did a site visit without going inside the prison but it is quite a difficult site in terms of slope and

everything else. Did you consider a greenfield site to try to cut back perhaps on building costs?

Mr OVENS - Yes, this was touched on in the part loan submission but I might pass that on to Peter.

Mr HOULT - I think there was some consideration but the difficulties of greenfield sites, given the issues around planning and community perception, this has been a prison site for a long time - 1960 - and approval for the prison was 1957 and it was felt that the site had the capacity to provide it and therefore it was not necessary to go to another site.

The other thing we had a fear of was that any other available site would be further out from the urban area which leads to a great deal of difficulties with things like attracting a labour force, visiting becomes more difficult for families and legal professionals and then our interaction with other facilities like health facilities, like the hospital and ambulance services, and the courts themselves, of course, where we shuffle a lot of people on a daily basis. So there seemed no good reason to look at a greenfield site.

Mr HALL - Just a further question, Mr Chairman. On page 3 it talked about phase 2 and the timetable between November this year and June 2008 and then over the page it talks about contractor financing et cetera. It talks about completion of stage C in 2006, is that right?

Mr OVENS - Can I refer you to page 66, section 7. That revised timetable there responds to government decision of March which approved the contractor finance. You will see there the time line they're talking about so we are in the throes of a two-stage tender for the managing contractor. We're looking for resolution of that by the end of July.

We're also seeking a construction start. Effectively that means commencement of the managing contractor by the beginning of December, as it says here. So that contractor financing decision by government has effectively cut at least 18 months from the construction timetable with significant benefits to Prison Service and the taxpayer.

Mr HALL - You talked about the visual barrier between the new secure mental health unit and the other prison. We talked about the line of mature macrocarpas. I have had experience with those. They have a finite life. Is there a replanting program envisaged to look after those in case they fall down or -

Mr OVENS - We have a landscape architect who has provided an initial review of all the flora on site. The advice is that that stand of pines has enough life to make it a part, if you like, of the overall site plan. But there has also been a planting program which was started along Grasstree Hill Rivulet here. This calendar year it will proceed down this boundary and turn the corner, and it is envisaged that this will be a program which will be run for a number of years. It involves minimum security prisoners as well as community groups. That is the sort of thing that it could be applied to.

Mr HALL - Just a final question I have, Mr Chairman. When we went to the prison we noticed the prison staff with heaps of keys and everything else. We have talked about a new electronic surveillance system. How foolproof are those sorts of systems compared to an old, manual system? Are there any back-up systems?

Mr WOOD - You are talking about the access control and remotely unlocking doors?

Mr HALL - Yes.

Mr WOOD - Clearly they have to be based on sound, proven technology, and these systems that would be going in would be systems which are being used before. They do rely upon an uninterruptable power supply, yes, and they also rely upon stand-by generators, so the security systems obviously would be on UPS and generator, and many other of the systems would be on just generator. So when the power goes down the doors do not fling open, they stay closed and power stays to them. If there is an issue, if the power does go down, they stay closed and locked. There is a fall-back to manual keys if absolutely necessary.

Mr BEST - I was going to ask about the question I raised earlier about additional training of staff, and obviously there is some way to go, I would imagine, as we are talking conceptual - well, it is almost there now, but there are some other things that you are obviously working through. Could you just explain briefly the process that you are working through with training and bringing people up to a certain level that obviously might be different to what is currently in operation.

Mr BARBER - You are quite correct. The role of a custodial officer will change dramatically, as Mr Hall referred to previously, from the turn-key issues to one of more interactive case management of the inmates, and obviously you cannot move to that model overnight. So we have developed an organisational development strategy. We have just recently made some changes to staff development and training which was previously sitting under corporate services. We have now moved that area across to organisational development, and appointed a new acting manager for organisational development who has an extensive background history in human resource management, and in conjunction with the PIRP in our transitional operational plan we are certainly developing the training regimes to be able to move staff to the next level.

Mr BEST - Because it will be very different, will it not, and the approaches will be different, in a way, because it is no longer an institutional -

Mr BARBER - It will be different for staff at Risdon, but staff in the smaller facilities are already doing those duties now, because it is smaller, it is more personal, there is more interaction, there are less barriers, and I am talking about the women's prison and the medium security prison and Hayes prison farm and also at the remand centres. Obviously on your tour at the remand centres you saw that the staff members do go and intermingle with the inmates in the actual wings, and that builds up a better rapport. It is a better way of managing contemporary management issues. So, yes, there is a long way for us to go, but we have been doing that work for the last 12 months and we are very confident that, come 2006 when we take over the operation of the new environment, we will be well positioned to carry out the new duties. We are obviously working closely with the main union representative body, the TCOA, on site and we have included those executive members in lots and lots of our workshops on design, so they have already had a good input into the design.

Mr HOULT - The other benefit, of course, of building the prison separately is that we will have the new facility available for operational training prior to the decanting of the prison population into it, so it actually gives people a chance to become familiar with it before they have to operate in that environment with prisoners there. That will occur, of course, both in the Secure Mental Health Unit and in the -

Mr BEST - I imagine there would be a fairly positive feeling, wouldn't there, amongst the work force about these changes, because it would be a better working environment?

Mr HOULT - Yes, very positive, and I think it will become more so when they see the first shovel dug in the ground sometime around December. They will start to believe it is going to happen.

Ms HAY - Just with the vehicle lock area for one vehicle at a time, is that one prisoner per vehicle, or can they come together?

Mr BARBER - Our large van has a capacity of about 14 inmates in separate sections within the vehicle, so it will be one vehicle at a time, but anything from a sedan to our larger escort vehicle. It will also have the capability of the ambulance accessing that for the health service as well.

Mr HOULT - I guess the police vehicle too.

Mr BARBER - Yes.

Ms HAY - Is it possible that you could have 14 new prisoners coming in at the one time then?

Mr BARBER - Specifically not new, but 14 arrivals at the one time, yes. They may have been out to court. A percentage of those would be new inmates, but not the lot of them. It would be very unusual for us to bring in 14 new inmates.

Ms HAY - I was wondering about the capacity to process all of the new ones. It would take longer, I presume.

Mr BARBER - Yes.

Mr OVENS - Hence the multiple cells there to be able to divide them up into groups.

Mr BARBER - There would also be a scheduled arrival. The courts finish sitting at 4 p.m. so they are generally at Risdon by 4.30. There are scheduled departure and arrival times.

Ms HAY - Just for my interest, really, lockaway in the cells for maximum security is at 6 p.m., so dinner is between 5 and 6 and then lock-down is at about 6 p.m.

Mr BARBER - Round about six o'clock, yes.

Ms HAY - And medium is eight o'clock?

Mr BARBER - Yes.

Ms HAY - And minimum, 9 p.m.

Mr BARBER - Yes.

CHAIR - I do not have any questions, so thank you very much for your very detailed presentation.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.