

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASHLEY YOUTH JUSTICE AND DETENTION CENTRE IN TASMANIA MET IN THE RECEPTION ROOM, LAUNCESTON TOWN HALL, ON THURSDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2007.

MS SUE POLTON AND MS JUDY BURGESS, WERE CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WERE EXAMINED.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, ladies, and welcome Sue and Judy. Thank you very much for agreeing to appear before the committee, I think Dawn did mention to me that you didn't want any media in here so that -

Ms BURGESS - That was Sue.

Ms POLTON - I don't mind at all but I don't want to be on TV or in the papers.

CHAIR - Okay, all right, but it will be recorded, though, at the same time.

Ms POLTON - That's fine, I don't mind that.

CHAIR - Thank you, that's fine. The committee has no problems with that. So whoever wants to lead off, I will ask you to just give your evidence and say what you feel you ought to say to the committee and then I will give the opportunity for committee members to ask some questions.

Ms BURGESS - This was sprung on me rather quickly, but it has been a bone of contention with me for a long time. I worked at Ashley from 1988 until about 1996, and in that time I found that the administration of the home was controlled by higher up. I had no faith in the administration of the home because I was a senior resi-care worker, so I was in two positions of authority. I found that I would make a decision and it would be overridden by Jim Horseman, the superintendent, without prior questioning as to why I had made the decision, which was very undermining. You would give the residents a penalty, and they would say, 'Oh, I will go and see Mr Horseman.'

CHAIR - Sorry, Judy, I missed that; were you a youth worker?

Ms BURGESS - I was a residential care worker but classed as a youth worker.

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms BURGESS - I was employed there as a residential care worker and I did case files. Basically I was there to work in relation with the other workers. You are given instructions to do and I know on one occasion I was given an instruction to do and I refused to do it because I knew it was wrong and I was told - I have this incident documented - that if I didn't do it I would be stood down. Then I was told that the problem I was having had been given verbally from, I think, Ben Maris who was then the head of what we were and it was in the mail. So as a result of that, me having a doubt in my mind, and under the threat of being stood down, I went ahead and did what I was told

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to do. No problems but I've always said it was like trying to beat city hall by working there.

Mr MARTIN - Can we ask what it was that you didn't want to do?

Ms BURGESS - Can I make reference to notes?

Mrs JAMIESON - Yes.

Ms BURGESS - On 18 December 1993 I was asked to go with four prisoners and three others to Windmill Hill pool. I refused on the grounds that there was no authority available for the prisoners who in this instance included Andrew Hawkins, who was there doing a sentence for murder. John Collier spoke to Jim Horseman who claimed that verbal permission from Ben Maris for the outing meant that the outing was to proceed. I was told if I didn't I would be stood down and an inquiry would be conducted. I acknowledged this and I agreed.

Then I requested I speak with Ben Maris. I was told by Jim Horseman I was answerable to him and he was answerable to Ben Maris.

My grounds for refusal was as follows: four prisoners three staff it should be four with the one on one. One prisoner was in category 4, which is the lowest. Three were in category 3. When Horseman told me he claimed all three prisoners had their categories changed to 4 yesterday, Friday 17 December, I was told that was a verbal thing. If all categories were 4, I didn't not have the right to refuse the instruction. I was told that the change in categories had been confirmed and had come through on 20 December 1993.

I informed John Collier that the confirmation letter had better come through on Monday. If not, I would be going to the union. I then went back to the van - this is while everybody is sitting in the van waiting to go and I am the hold up - and I went to the pool. While at the pool at 11.30 a.m. I asked Kerry Whiteley who was one of the prisoners - and he's recorded as a category 3 which controlled him going off the property - what category he was and he said he was in 3. He said Leigh Hodge told me it was senseless applying for a change when he was being released in approximately five or six days. That is one instance.

As I say I have some of this documented here if you want me to read it to you or show it to you of an instance where Andrew Hawkins was taken off the property by Marilyn Taylor who still works there, and left at his girlfriend's flat in Deloraine. She came back to Ashley and two hours later returned and picked him up. This is what was going on, and to me, that is serious because if you become too blase at doing all this, you are not -

Mr WILKINSON - Is that happening now?

Ms BURGESS - I don't know. I was there at old Ashley - this is old Ashley.

Mr WILKINSON - Yes, right.

Ms BURGESS - And I would tend to think that the possibility of doing this then was a lot easier than doing it now.

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Mr WILKINSON - Yes.

Ms BURGESS - It is a different set-up altogether. I have been inside the new Ashley so I have seen the difference. I gave a girl a 5530 one night because she spat all over me. I got to work the next day and I was told by Mr Horseman, 'Oh, you were a little bit harsh. I've taken them off her, she doesn't have to do them.' And I was spat on.

Mrs JAMIESON - Yes, so you get that inconsistency in authority.

Ms BURGESS - I wasn't consulted, and this is where I had no faith whatsoever. I ended up doing night shift. I liked the job and the only reason I left Ashley was that the administration got to me. It wasn't the job.

Mr WILKINSON - What about now? What is happening now?

Ms POLTON - It has changed. You don't go off the property now without all the signatures and that sort of thing but -

Mr WILKINSON - You are working there now , aren't you?

Ms POLTON - Yes.

Mr WILKINSON - How long have you been there?

Ms POLTON - It will soon be 25 years.

Mr WILKINSON - So you have seen the old and the new.

Ms POLTON - Both, yes.

Mr WILKINSON - So what is it like now? Should there be any improvements? If so, what?

Ms POLTON - For a start, the program is an absolute disgrace. The kids are bored. At least we had programs before that they were interested in, such as boat building and things like that. There were good people there working, such as Barry Pitcher who was a brilliant builder. He was so dedicated to his job and his group of children. But then with the incompetent staff that we have at the present time - there is this man - and this should never have happened to him - there was this boy who jumped up and down because he wanted to go to his group and so the staff member took him down, which he shouldn't have done, and that should never have happened to him. But all our good staff - excellent staff - who are dedicated, are treated like dirt. I have been there for a long time and I know there are two others also - we are old now, we have been there for years - but you get the younger ones coming on, they get straight to the top, they are running it and you are just treated like dirt. Even if you are away - now I never have sick days off, never; but when I was really ill and away no one even bothered to ask why I was away. When I came back they just said, 'Where have you been?'

CHAIR - So, Sue, when you say 'treated like dirt' is that from within, could I call it - it has been referred to - 'the bunker'?

Ms POLTON - Yes, exactly.

CHAIR - Out of the administration. So you have a lot of layers of administration in there.

Ms POLTON - And you have too many husbands and wives working in the one unit. It is not on. We never used to have this problem before but you work in a unit with, say, a husband and wife, who have the say all the time, and that man's wife - it doesn't matter if you are fully trained - gets first preference of everything.

CHAIR - Yes, could I put it to you there is a cultural cronyism which has come into Ashley?

Ms POLTON - Yes.

CHAIR - You would agree with that?

Ms POLTON - Yes.

Mr MARTIN - Sue, when did this all change?

Ms POLTON - We were in the Justice system and then it went Health. When it went to Health it wasn't the same. The place was not run the same way. It doesn't matter now how the kids speak to you if you spoke to them as they speak to you it would be a different thing. But I, myself, have no problem with the kids. I respect them, they respect me, I treat them how I am supposed to. I am trained to do my job and I do it, spot-on, that is how I feel. But for those who are doing their job, it is so hard because there are so many rules that are broken by the others. There is no -

Mr DEAN - Consistency?

Ms POLTON - No consistency. It is so sad because -

Mrs JAMIESON - And you haven't got any backing.

Ms POLTON - And you have no backing; you never have any backing. Years ago I could go away off the property and all that. There are rules such as one staff member is only to have five out at a pool. The other night I had seven, and I said to the guy, 'I can't have seven up at the pool, I'm not even a swimmer'. He said, 'Get going with them, girl; that's it. It doesn't matter, don't worry about it', and they speak worse to you than -

Mrs JAMIESON - Sue, what is your actual basic training and position?

Ms POLTON - I started there as the matron. Then I have gone right through and done all the training and have a certificate for it, and I am still training. This is what I was saying to Judy the other day, that we had to go to training. I have done 24 years, five years of training. We went to the training the other day and this man - this is the government job - said, 'I'm not going to that because I can get \$50 an hour down the coast. I'm doing security down there'. And here am I: I have done it all but I am still sitting there and he's

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down there. But nothing is said to him. They seem to do what they like, and there's no boss.

Mrs JAMIESON - Sue, wouldn't you say it's the younger academically trained staff who have come on board that are moving up the ladder and ignoring the old school?

Ms POLTON - Yes, exactly, but apparently they must have the qualifications. One is a lawyer - Jane's a lawyer - but her husband had to get the job because otherwise it would make it bad for someone else. This sort of thing goes on all the time.

Mrs JAMIESON - We are certainly hearing that.

Mr DEAN - Is that a recent promotion you're talking about?

Ms POLTON - Yes. This guy got it because he'd applied about three times for it, I was told by the team leader, so it's not a lie or anything. I was told, 'He'll have to get it because otherwise his wife can make it hard for that one', and so on. It just goes on.

CHAIR - We've had other evidence to support what you're saying.

Mr MARTIN - Just one thing. You mentioned there was no leader. Can you expand on that a bit?

Ms POLTON - Once upon a time at least we had a boss, and that boss would even go to his leader on the shift if somebody did something wrong. I can remember we were frightened to do a single thing wrong, but now you don't see that boss up here, you never see him. I asked him not long ago at a meeting, 'Why don't you go around to the units, why don't you come and spend some time with the kids and see what's happening, or with your staff, especially of a night when you're on?' He said, 'Oh, I've got my team to do that'. Well yes, he does have his team to do that, but isn't the boss supposed to see what his team is doing? To be quite honest, I feel that is where it is all coming from, the top. It's top-heavy.

Mrs JAMIESON - Gone are the days when the manager knew every kid on the block.

Ms POLTON - That's right, and that's how it used to be, and it has changed.

Mr MARTIN - I just want to clarify something I might have misheard. Did you say before that you were in charge of seven -

Ms POLTON - Seven residents at the swimming pool.

Mr MARTIN - At the swimming pool by yourself.

Ms POLTON - Yes, that has often happened. If the leader of your shift sends you out, well - but because I am older I will object and say no, but I really shouldn't. But it does happen that the younger ones coming in will take them. It is just so inconsistent.

Mr MARTIN - You are expected to control seven residents in a swimming-pool environment.

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Ms POLTON - Exactly, that is true - three nights ago up at the pool. You are supposed to have your certificate, to be trained or someone at least on your shift. That occurred for about a month -

Mrs JAMIESON - And you don't swim?

Ms POLTON - No. I am too old now to get a swimming certificate - you have to have your medal and I haven't got my medal.

Mr MARTIN - Would there not be policies and procedures -

Ms POLTON - There are policies and procedures.

Mr MARTIN - Does that allow one person to have seven-

Ms POLTON - No, but there are policies and procedures as to how many residents and that you are not to go out if you are not a swimmer, but that doesn't matter. If that guy sends you out you go. You do what you are told because that is how you were brought up. You do what you are asked, but I know it is wrong.

Mrs JAMIESON - So even with the backing of the procedural manuals and things like that you felt compelled to obey the order that was given to you.

Ms POLTON - That is right because he has given me an order 'You will do this'.

Mr DEAN - You said that you can't even swim. Surely your policy must say -

Ms POLTON - I can do the dog paddle.

Mr DEAN - that there must be a lifesaver on duty at the pool?

Ms POLTON - Exactly.

Mr DEAN - It says that?

Ms POLTON - In our new SOPs, you have to have a swimmer who has done the course on the premises at the time. Even if he is meant to be somewhere else he has to be there, but that doesn't always happen. And it doesn't matter because if they are going swimming they are going swimming. I said to them, 'What if they drown?' I am not a swimmer and I can't save people, but that doesn't matter.

CHAIR - In your view then, Sue, do you think there is now less adherence to SOPs - standard operating procedures - than in past years, having been there 24 years? Do you think there is less adherence to those sorts of things?

Ms POLTON - I do.

CHAIR - If I can just go back to the programs. We have heard a lot of evidence that there need to be good programs that help with rehabilitation of residents and everything else,

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and obviously being there for 24 years you would have seen some good programs come and go -

Ms POLTON - I used to take driver training and all that. I did my certificate for -

CHAIR - And they had the school farm and all those sorts of things.

Ms POLTON - Yes, and that was fantastic.

CHAIR - Now from what we are hearing there is very little or none of that.

Ms POLTON - Raking leaves for five days in a row with five boys.

CHAIR - That is what we used to do in the army.

Mr MARTIN - Why do you think it has changed? Is it cost or attitude?

Ms POLTON - It is mainly the structure of the whole place. Since it has all been changed - because the school gets the money mostly for all these programs and things that is where it is. We went to a meeting the other day and I said to the boss - because he said they were going to get two more buildings at the school - 'Wouldn't it be far better if we could get something like boat building or mechanics or something and get them interested in something for when they go out' and he said, 'No, we'll just see what happens with the money that is coming through but I think it is going to be something else in the school'.

CHAIR - So you have seen the development of the school, Sue, over your time there and there has been quite a lot of money spent on infrastructure. In your view, is the school fully utilised and used to its capacity or not?

Ms POLTON - How can I say -

CHAIR - Can I suggest to you that it certainly has not been?

Mr WILKINSON - Eight hours a week as opposed to 30 hours a week.

Ms POLTON - There are just too many teachers there for the kids - we will go into the school - they are wonderful teachers, don't get me wrong, they are good teachers - and there might be five kids. You sometimes have three staff in that room but we have to be there in case anything happens -

CHAIR - Three education staff there?

Ms POLTON - Yes, and so they will have 10 minutes to 15 minutes and they will do maths, writing, et cetera, and then it is free time - you can have your computer. I am in a Liffey unit and I have taught the three kids in there to write and to read. But this should be all going on down there. We had a school before with two teachers who came out of there and they were skilled. They do have good teachers but they are not teaching them a basic -

CHAIR - Perhaps they are not directed.

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Ms POLTON - Exactly, the basics - they can't write their name. I have been told, 'This is the school' - well fair enough but they put the sheet in front of a child, he is looking at, he doesn't understand what the numbers are because he can't read and he comes back. I can remember teaching this little boy to write his name 'Craig' and he wrote it everywhere - he was 15. The school is good but it has too many teachers and they are not bringing the stuff out how it should be. That is my feeling.

CHAIR - In terms of total staff numbers: I would assume that the average number of residents might be about 30 at any one time, but yet it would seem that the staff numbers, particularly in administration, have increased significantly and with security contractors as well. Can you give me figures of when you were there? I might be testing you a bit now.

Ms BURGESS - When I was there in the old Ashley - and I was looking through some notes that I had - we would probably average around 12 all up.

CHAIR - All up?

Mr BURGESS - Twelve residents, which included prisoners - girls, boys.

CHAIR - Residents we are talking about now?

Mr BURGESS - I am talking about whatever we call these people in Ashley.

Ms POLTON - But we are talking staff.

Mr BURGESS - With staff - probably four to a shift, a couple of shifts would be off and that would be 12 - yes, probably about 12 all told to cover the three shifts and then there would be somebody on holidays.

Ms POLTON - Now we have 15 on one shift.

Mr BURGESS - We would have about four and they would be in charge of probably about 12 residents. Out of that you would draw as to who took who where and what it was all about.

Ms POLTON - You have ops coordinators and all that now, haven't you?

Ms BURGESS - Yes. When I first went there we had the manager, two assistant managers and then we had about two or three senior residential officers who were in charge of each shift and then -

CHAIR - Yes, but there was always access from yourself as a residential care worker, as you called yourself then, to the manager. Was much simpler in those days than it is now?

Ms POLTON - Yes.

CHAIR - So there wasn't such a huge chain of command.

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Ms BURGESS - From what I have heard of the new Ashley, I am glad I am not there. I don't know how Sue has put up with it, I honestly don't, but I glad I am not there now. The Ashley of then was a good place. I still have friends that came out of that place who were called prisoners and it is good when a kid on the street can say, 'Hey, Mrs B' and there is a young fellow standing there with a woman and two or three kids in tow. It is good that they come up and acknowledge you. As Sue was saying, you respect these kids and that is what I always tried to do - to respect them and hope that they would respect me back.

Mr WILKINSON - Can I just try and summarise what we have been through and the first thing is to get the program support - as I understand it that is probably one of the major problems at the moment. The program supports are not being set to rehabilitate or teach the residents - is that right?

Ms POLTON - Exactly.

Mr WILKINSON - The staff in control of shifts aren't abiding by the SOPs?

Ms POLTON - Exactly.

Mr DEAN - Can you tell us why they aren't being complied with? Why aren't these people ensuring they are complied with?

Ms POLTON - Because the leaders of the shifts do their own thing; half the time they are not worrying what the rules are. The last fortnight has been definitely that - they just do this or do that, whether or not it complies with the rules and all the SOPs that are put into place that we have to do every so often. Since this inquiry, I might add, we have had -

CHAIR - And that obviously has an effect on staff morale.

Mr WILKINSON - Inconsistency, not abiding by SOPs.

Ms POLTON - Exactly.

Mr WILKINSON - And probably what encompasses that as well is an inconsistency with management and leadership.

Ms POLTON - Yes. Our boss should be looking into the people making these mistakes.

Mr WILKINSON - And that causes frustration and confusion not only of the staff but also with the residents.

Ms POLTON - Yes, they pick it up.

Mr WILKINSON - The other one I have down here is 'management not supporting staff'.

Ms POLTON - Exactly.

CHAIR - And the communications lines and gaps.

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Mr BURGESS - Programs were put in place for these people but I find that they turn around and say, 'I'm not going to do that'. So how do you make someone do it? A program has to be given to them for them to participate to know what society is all about. At this stage why are they in there? Because they don't conform with society and until they learn to conform, which to a degree should be a program of how to approach society and what it's all about. So you give them these programs, whatever they might be, whatever headings they are under, and when they are finally discharged or released they don't know the first thing about what they are supposed to do out in society so they go back to their old ways.

Mr WILKINSON - Some come from rural areas and it seems to me the farm was excellent and now it's not being used.

Ms POLTON - The farm was excellent. We used to have chooks and things like that and they used to get the eggs. There was also gardening. Some of the boys would be in charge of a certain part of the garden. You get five kids at an art lesson and two are interested and the other three are not. What are they going to do? They're going to upset those others. Once they used to say, 'What are you interested in, boys, when you get out?', and then they would try to fit them into a program that suited them. But now it is something to do with the school, I think, everything has to suit. I think they have a problem there trying to get it sorted.

Mr WILKINSON - Is there any reason why the farm can't be used, that you know of?

Ms POLTON - Not that I know of.

Mr WILKINSON - Anything to do with the gates and not being able to go outside the fence.

Ms POLTON - That would be a lot to do with it, but even before that fence went in they weren't using the farm.

Mr WILKINSON - But the farm is still Ashley property, isn't it?

Ms POLTON - Yes, but I think somebody leases it now. I think the man who does the security leases it.

Mrs JAMIESON - Was he leasing it before the fence went up?

Ms POLTON - Yes, I think he was.

Mr DEAN - That is an employee of Ashley who is leasing it?

Ms POLTON - Yes, I think so because he has his cattle on it.

Mr MARTIN - Sue, you are probably the longest-serving employee we have had appear before us. There have been submissions made to us, both in writing and verbally, that the nature of the young people in Ashley has changed over the years because there is now a hard-core group that cause 90 per cent of the problems we read about in the media. Do you agree with that, that there is a hard-core group that is worse than the kids that were there 20 years ago?

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Ms POLTON - Yes, I do, but years ago we had really hard criminals and because of the structure and how it was run it was a lot better. We had a secure unit that they had to go into. If they misbehaved, they always knew that there was something there and they didn't want to go into that secure unit. When they did get in there they had to work their way out, whereas now it is just the same. A kid goes out, they come back in after a couple of months, what happens? They are straight out, they go swimming on the first day back, whereas once they used to have to be assessed - and I think that should still happen - for about a week, at least, before they got out with their other mates. They just plan their next venture. We had the harder criminals back then but it was structured better.

Mr MARTIN - Sue, can you explain in a bit more detail why you think it was structured better?

Ms POLTON - Because of the programs they had years ago - you had woodwork that was structured properly, art that was done properly, motor mechanics with a man there all the time to be with them, and boat building. They had lots of stuff that boys do all the time.

Mr MARTIN - That stimulated them.

Ms POLTON - Yes. Now they just go down to the school and come back. They are not interested; nothing is structured.

Mrs JAMIESON - Was it mandatory that they attend those classes?

Ms POLTON - Yes, and now it's not. It used to be, 'You go or you go back in your unit'. But now, 'If you don't want to go, you can come back and play with the playstation'. So who is going to go? By rights they are not supposed to have the playstation if they come back in, but it all depends who is on the shift, 'Oh, it doesn't matter, it will keep him quiet'. If everyone was consistent and stuck to the rules, it would be a different place.

Mr MARTIN - The one thing that has been consistent in the last three days is that everyone has said it has been inconsistent.

Ms POLTON - That is the whole problem and it is so frustrating. You know it is all wrong but you have to go along with it.

Mr BURGESS - Further to your question about how things were before, we had hard-core criminals there but the programs they were in and which took them off the property meant that we never had trouble with them. They didn't escape, they didn't abscond. The ones that did were the ratty ones and you expected it of them. The real serious offenders -

Mr MARTIN - Why do you think they didn't escape?

Mr BURGESS - Because they knew they were on a good wicket where they were. They were being treated with fairness, probably better than they ever were at home. They didn't want to kick the horse that was looking after them.

Mr MARTIN - And you don't think that is the case now, that they are treated fairly?

Mr BURGESS - I don't know. Only Sue can answer that because I was there then and she is there now. When I was at Ashley it was a good place; it was like a big home, which basically it was. You worked with the kids, you did things with them, you got their respect and cooperation and they knew where they stood with you. Therefore they returned it in kind. As I say, there were always the problems but they were not very big.

CHAIR - Sue, you talked about the secure unit. In your view, was Ashley a better environment without the fence and just the secure unit - I understand there is a secure unit there now -

Ms POLTON - Yes, it was better back then.

CHAIR - So it was better back then without the fence and with the secure unit as the deterrent.

Ms POLTON - Yes. The secure unit is wonderful, and I worked in that for a lot of years. Even when they were in there, they had structured programs and it had to be done.

CHAIR - We understand totally what you are saying about the programs.

Mr DEAN - You mentioned before that the upper area of Ashley is top-heavy.

Ms POLTON - Too many bosses.

Mr DEAN - You are saying that it is not a better organisation because of that, in your view?

Ms POLTON - No, it was better when you only had the main boss and probably two others.

Mr DEAN - How often would you see your very senior people around the units, say the director and assistant directors? How often now would you see them walking around and talking to people?

Ms POLTON - If you want me to be honest, I never see them. My shift or something like that might be the reason, but I still don't. I have said to our boss, 'Why don't you come around?'. If you are on shift on a Monday -

Mr DEAN - I think you did say that you have asked some of your bosses to get down onto the floor and really have a look at the shopfront, as it were.

Ms POLTON - Has it worked?

Mr DEAN - Has that ever had any impact on them? Have they taken you up on that?

Ms POLTON - No, they don't want to know about it. We are just workers.

Mr DEAN - As to the complaints mechanism, have you ever made any complaints or had cause to make any official complaints about any situation? You probably had cause, but have you ever made any formal complaints?

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Ms POLTON - Yes, I have. About a staff member?

Mr DEAN - About anything. My next question is going to be: are complaints followed up?
Do you get feedback on complaints?

Ms POLTON - No, you don't get feedback.

Mr BURGESS - I think they go into one office and that's where they stay. That's the impression I got when I was there. You'd make a complaint in writing, hand it to the manager and you knew that it didn't get back out of that office when it was supposed to go on.

Mr MARTIN - Which office?

Mr BURGESS - The manager's office. I am talking about Jim Horseman because he was the only boss I had there. I knew if I gave Jim a complaint, which I vaguely remember doing once, I knew it wouldn't go any further.

Mrs JAMIESON - Sue, has the temperature of Ashley gone up since this inquiry started, do you think? Is there any extra tension around the place?

Ms POLTON - That is why I don't want to be known to be here. From the day the article was in the paper we have had training and training. I have brought some papers and I can leave them for you, if you would like.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Mr MARTIN - There has been evidence given about supervision of the girls' units. Sometimes two men are left in charge of them, and on one occasion one man was left in charge. Was that a regular thing?

Ms POLTON - It is not supposed to happen but it happens.

Mr MARTIN - Frequently?

Ms POLTON - At present there are not many girls there. How can I put this?

Mr MARTIN - Honestly.

Ms POLTON - Men have been left in the girls' unit and I have spoken to people about it, but I haven't written anything. I have spoken to one of the higher-up ones at work that it's not on. To be quite honest, there should always be a woman there but it doesn't always happen. Also, the girls should never be with the boys. It is the worst thing they ever did, putting the girls with the boys.

CHAIR - Thank you very much for coming in and giving evidence. We really appreciate what you have done.

Ms BURGESS - I have been chasing this about for the last 15 years, wanting this to happen.

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASHLEY, YOUTH JUSTICE
AND DETENTION IN TASMANIA, LAUNCESTON 15/2/07 (POLTON/BURGESS)**

CHAIR - Thank you very much, we appreciate your time.

Ms POLTON - Good luck with all your work.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.