

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
ADMINISTRATION B MET AT RISDON PRISON, HOBART ON MONDAY  
29 OCTOBER 2012.**

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**INQUIRY INTO OVERTIME COSTS IN THE PRISON SERVICE**

**Mr ROBERT WILLIAMS**, DEPUTY SECRETARY; AND **Mr BRIAN EDWARDS**, DIRECTOR OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT, RISDON PRISON, WERE RECALLED, AND **Mr BARRY GREENBERRY**, DIRECTOR OF PRISONS, RISDON PRISON, WAS CALLED AND EXAMINED.

**CHAIR** (Mr Dean) - We will continue with this meeting as from the previous one when we spoke with Robert, Brian and Greg Partridge about a number of issues here at the jail. You gave us evidence which suggested you were going to do a lot of things between then and the short period thereafter; KPIs was one of those very important areas. Because time is relatively restricted, we want to get to the nitty-gritty of those issues

**Mr MULDER** - I think the chairman forgot the first point of order of this meeting, to thank you guys for the very informative tour. It helps us appreciate the environment in which prison officers have to work. Last time we were talking about the fact it was the short-notice absences, where people were ringing a day or two before and changing their shift, that were causing a fair amount of the overrun in overtime. Just picking up on the KPIs, since our meeting on 16 April has there been any change in that pattern of short-term absences?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I will ask Barry to answer in some detail about that. Our latest sense of how the overtime is made up is that approximately 26 per cent of it is made up of workers compensation claims - people who are not at work because of workplace injury and are then replaced on double time. Approximately 30 per cent is related to sick leave, and the rest is related to a number of different things which may be structural, including not having enough staff on the books to fill in the gaps for things such as recreation leave. If I put it in the context of that, those three areas - sick leave, workers compensation and structural issues around not having enough staff - have been the areas of our focus since we talked. When we talked last, we didn't have a set of KPIs. We were just starting that process - Brian had just arrived and Barry hadn't arrived at that stage - and putting our heads together. We put into our business plan a series of KPIs for this year. We don't have all the data sorted because it's taking some time to source it. One of the jobs that Brian and Barry have had is getting hold of all the finances in the prison and all the HR issues. We've been focused on preparing our KPIs and we have now come up with the definitions of the KPIs we're going to look at in the next 12-18 months that focus on those important issues.

I will hand to you some copies out of our business plan of the performance indicators we're working on. We don't have all the data for all of them, but these are the first set of KPIs the prison system has ever had. They focus on some of the very basic things such as no deaths in custody, no escapes. They focus on things such as days lost due to sick leave, days lost due to injury. These are the causes of overtime, but I suppose it goes

more to having a safe workplace. Although overtime is one of the outcomes of that, the real concern is that our staff have had high levels of sickness and injury and we have to be concerned about that as an employer and a community that these people who do a job that is sometimes thankless should not have to come to work and get that level of injury.

I won't go through all the KPIs - I am sure you will read them at your leisure - but the ones that most relate to the overtime are the first two: workers compensation absences and carers' leave. The second one is assaults on inmates. A lot of these long-term workers compensation claims, which make up 26 per cent, are the tail-end of a series of very horrible incidents we've had over the last few years. They have deep psychological wounds, as well as physical injuries. People have had broken faces, plates in their face, post-traumatic stress disorder. People have been off work for years in some cases. All these KPIs are aimed at dealing with our most important things, and one of our most important things is having a safe and healthy workplace, which is about sick leave.

We've put in place a new management structure in the prison which specifically takes into account giving it responsibility for things such as return to work and management of sick leave to individual positions in a way that wasn't there before. Beyond that, Barry and Brian have been busy making sure we have put in place the managers at the front line, because one of the things that has been evident is that over the years we haven't had a management structure and culture where the managers at the front line have actively managed the return to work of some of these staff. It has been done remotely by an HR section, instead of taking the responsibility we should have at the front line. That is a very important step as well.

**Mr MULDER** - We're getting an update on the KPIs, and I was chasing that 25 per cent one, which we will no doubt get to shortly. The only issue I have with the KPIs is you have measures and formulas but do you have the baseline data?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - For some areas, yes.

**Mr GREENBERRY**- Are you talking about the level of absence?

**Mr MULDER** - Yes, in particular. This line of questioning is focusing on that 30 per cent, which is short-notice sick leave and carers' leave.

**Mr GREENBERRY**- At the beginning of the financial year with you we were looking at an average of eight people off per day - this is correctional staff, uniform staff - and that has now fallen to approximately 7.5.

**Mr MULDER** - So that was eight people a day reporting in on short-term sick leave and that is now down to 7.5.

**Mr GREENBERRY**- Yes. Annualised across the whole year that is 13 days off for every member of staff. So far that is trending downwards to nearer 10, and that's where we are at the minute. The information system we've got about absence has significantly improved.

**CHAIR** - That trending down has been as the result of closer management?

**Mr GREENBERRY**- A number of things. Absence within any organisation as complex as this isn't just down to one or two things. The reality is that in most organisations people take sick if they don't think managers are going to take any action, if they don't believe managers care, if they don't think they work for an organisation that cares, or there is an incentive to take absence - a combination of that. Managers are now being given ownership down to supervisor level. Some of you may have seen the film *Groundhog Day*. When you look at the organisation from the outside in, it had ownership down to senior manager and manager level, but supervisors were running a very important role which was making sure the day was working, but at the end of the day they didn't have ownership of any staff or any area of work, so they were running *Groundhog Day*. That means your management grip on managing whatever you put in at the top is weaker and therefore things such as absence aren't necessarily delivered. Through the management structure it has been very visible and clear about ownership, going through a process that Brian has led fantastically in terms of trying objectively to select supervisors to take up permanent posts. This was exacerbated by the fact that we had temporary people in posts so there was no ownership.

Allocating those supervisors with named officers - which will be the next stage - will improve that sense of ownership. Managers have been required to demonstrate their care for staff by being in personal contact - and both Brian and I have done that ourselves to set some form of leadership - and we're looking at the rosters and overtime system which can, for a few people, be an incentive for taking off sick rather than coming to work. The evidence we have is that the vast majority of staff are playing the game, but there are a few individuals whom we are tackling who have had high absence and high overtime. That is unacceptable, unacceptable to the vast majority of staff, and the information we now have enables us to target those people. This is a well-known strategy.

**Mr MULDER** - Last time you said two officers had been identified through that process - and this was back in April - so are you saying since that time you've identified more officers and spoken to more of them or you've had some management intervention in more cases than those two?

**Mr GREENBERRY**- We have a list of approximately 10 people.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - The important thing with that is we keep moving through. If you're putting the wrong emphasis on absence management, you get the wrong people. If you're sick, you shouldn't come to work because you endanger your colleagues and make them sick. We have to be very careful about how we approach absence management because you can't drive a culture of persecuting those people who are sick. If they have sick leave, they shouldn't come to work. It's about making sure you have a sensible conversation. This is what Barry is talking about in getting the supervisors in place so that someone rings them and asks, 'How are you going?'. You need to have a conversation that's sensitive, because it could be workplace bullying that's causing it and not illness, or it could be a spouse with cancer. You have to approach it in a very sensitive manner. For those people who still have no reason why they have every Monday off or whatever the pattern is, you have to slowly move them forward in a constructive conversation about their performance until you get to the stage of saying, 'You can't do overtime', in line with our policies we've put in place to back this up. There have been policies worked through, shown to the unions, locked into place and are now being used to move this forward. This culture change is not about tackling one or

two high-end users. You have to shift the whole bell curve back a bit to get the real value because those one or two people represent a very small part of the sick leave. It's the area under the bell curve that we have to shift. That's a cultural shift because most people want to do the right thing, but if they see a few individuals getting away with it they tend to be laissez faire. As Barry said, the trend down is a result of a number of things we've done. Going back to the original statement I made about what it consists of, as Brian and Barry have got into unpicking the finances of the prison - who's where and how much we are paying - and 50 per cent is potentially structural, in that we didn't have enough staff on the books to cover the leave. There is always a level of sick leave you expect.

**Mr MULDER** - In your award, are there still penalty rates and shift allowances et cetera to pay your officers for the weekends?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes.

**Mr MULDER** - We've had some discussions with other prison services and I think it was New South Wales that said they dealt with their problems, with some union resistance apparently, to first of all roll the penalty rates and shift allowances into the salary bands, so there was no penalty for not turning up on a Saturday or Sunday. The other thing they did was employ a fairly sizeable pool of casual staff that they would call in instead of using overtime. We are all about incentives, but sometimes disincentives are required too. There needs to be a disincentive for behaviour as well as an incentive.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We're approaching this in two phases. One is to get control of what we have, which is to unpack the finances, try to bring the sick leave down, and try to deal with the structural problem - which is not enough staff - by recruiting. Then we have a piece of work going on to try to imagine where we may go in the future, in negotiation with unions. I can't put forward what the government's policy is for wages into the future because I would get into a lot of trouble, but we would be looking at those sorts of ideas of talking to the unions about different ways of managing the workforce engagement - which may be about thinking about signing off overtime in some way through a once-off deal or whatever.

**CHAIR** - The police service did it 15 years ago.

**Mr MULDER** - You may have difficulty making comment about what government should be taking to the wages agreement, but we don't.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I appreciate that. Your comment is well made in terms of understanding the sorts of issues we face. As we go forward into future negotiations with the union, clearly on our minds is how we deal with the structural issues that are beyond just sick leave and culture but are built into enterprise agreements. They may not be things that advantage staff at all when you get to sit down and work with them.

**Mr EDWARDS** - On the example you gave about New South Wales, my experience on that is it's their business, however they have a very big pool on the mainland to draft to. In the prisons they've asked me to have a look at on their behalf we have found the rural prisons don't have the infrastructure that cities have. They have problems with casual

staff. When you relate that to Tasmania, I think there is a break-even point on whether you could use casual staff or not.

**Mr FINCH** - I know Mr Greenberry has come here as Director of Prison Services. I'm wondering whether you can make some comparisons through your previous experience as to what's happening here in Tasmania. You are bringing that experience to the table here and you can see a way forward, as has been suggested by Robert. Can you explain some comparisons you might be able to make from previous experience?

**Mr GREENBERRY** - With pleasure; and so can Brian because we both had similar experiences from the UK over many years in prisons. In truth, the strategy that Robert has outlined is actually the sum of the experiences we've had in other places. You need management grip, you need clarity of organisational structure, you need key targets and outcomes that determine your structure, and you need a sense of being part of a positive service where you actually encourage staff to feel that they are doing some good for the community. You add to that values of proportionality and legitimacy, both of which contribute to a prison being felt as being safe and that safety itself reduces stresses and strains, both on prisoners but more importantly on staff. That ends up creating an environment where staff are less stressed, less absent and it becomes a virtual circle. If you add to that the missing link, which is the lack of activity, and you complete the building of this prison in the way it was initially designed by parliament, then you end up with an environment where people will be busier, there will be less inherent absence and therefore that will drive down in great effect a part of the overtime.

The last point is this thing about structural deficiency. It is very clear that the prison service has been understaffed. Therefore, just to keep the place running, that has in itself created overtime. That has created the situation where staff have been working longer than they should have done. That, in the complexity of the environment that you experienced this afternoon, calm though it felt - very much like a swan with its legs under the water - does create stresses. We need staff to be on the top of their game all the time in order to prevent incidents occurring and developing. When they are not on top of the game, that in itself creates some of the environment. All of that experience, in a nutshell, was described by the strategy that Robert's outlined already.

**CHAIR** - The issue that we're looking at - penalty rates, overtime and so on - has gone on in this organisation for something like 20 or 30 years, probably longer; there has really been no control over overtime and so on. Are you confident, with the changes that you're making and things that you're doing, that you will get on top of this position in relation to what is seen as exorbitant amounts of overtime.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We have two very senior and experienced people from the UK to give us the advice that we couldn't source from within Tasmania. In fact we couldn't get the level of expertise anywhere in Australia. There are probably two phases. I think Mr Mulder hit on it. There is getting control of what we have got now, making sure we have got enough staff on the books so that we are employing people at single time rather than double time; trying to drive down the sick leave through having a sensitive management approach but still having policies which take people forward to either an understanding that they are genuinely sick or there are other reasons. Then there is the next phase, which is sitting down with unions and looking at the overall structure to make sure that the industrial agreements we've got meet the needs of the organisation, which are to keep

people safe and reduce recidivism, and the needs of staff to have a safe working environment and enough time to be with their family. That is the second phase. I cannot predict the outcomes of that because some of it will be government wages policy, some will be how willing we and the unions are to move forward from what we have now. If Barry and Brian are right in saying that we are seeing a trend down in sick leave, that is the first time we have had accurate measuring of it. I'm not going to put my hand on my heart and say it is going to last forever, but it's a sign we've done some things and there's a sign that some of those things are working. That is in an environment where we've put some of our new staff on. Typically when you put a whole batch of new staff on, the sick leave might go up but in fact it hasn't. Something is changing in the dynamic of the place.

**CHAIR** - In relation to sick leave, New South Wales have put in a number of new strategies over a period of time. What New South Wales did in relation to their sick leave, and they say it had a big impact, was that where a person had a certain set period of sick leave in any one year, that person was then no longer entitled to receive any additional penalty rates as a part of that. They were able to get through that in a number of ways. Some saw it as discriminating against them, but they were able to sell it to them along the lines of, 'You are obviously suffering from stress, therefore we don't want to add to it and therefore we are not going to allow you to work any additional days in the service' and get double time and all of those things. Do you have that?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We have a policy, carefully constructed, that after we've looked at a person's history and had a conversation with them, if it appears that their sick leave is excessive without any particular reason we now have a policy which actually restricts access to overtime. We operate off the State Service award for our sick leave and it is beyond any of us three here today to talk about what options might be available for reforming or changing that. You've had a look at the report that KPMG did for us and that had some ideas in it. We come off the State Service so it is beyond the Prison Service to adjust that. I do not know whether Brian might be able to give you further comment on the change-management process, because this is decades of culture. If we're seeing a trend already within this first year of Brian and Barry being in place, that is a pretty remarkable shift from my perspective and I hope we see a sustained change. It is also a remarkable shift from the staff to work with us after all these years of it being less than functional.

**Mr EDWARDS** - We have put into place what I think is a fairly robust management structure. We have deliberately named it 'attendance', rather than 'absence', so we actually have attendance policies and we have overtime policies. Those two are linked. They're linked because if the manager has the return to work interview and he feels that it is unsafe for a member of staff to go straight onto overtime, they're not allowed to. They have to put in whatever number of shifts the manager states. It starts with a minimum of one shift and after that it could go on. If they've been off for a long time they would go onto the return-to-work strategy and when they're onto the return-to-work strategy they cannot work any overtime, so that's the way that we are starting to get this cultural change into this place. The evidence of that is 13 days. As you would have found out in New South Wales, the international benchmark is around about 10 days for custodial environs.

The complexity of Tasmania is that you have high security down to minimum security in one complex. If you look around the world you will find high security has a higher level than 10 days as their benchmark. We initially started setting our key benchmarks at around 10, but they're not there yet. When you introduce indicators you have to introduce indicators so that people start owning it and you have to ensure that the benchmarks are correct for the organisation rather than just put an indicator in and say that the benchmark is x. We are doing all that back study now so that we end up getting appropriate benchmarks and that in itself will challenge staff. It will challenge staff and it will challenge management to actually deal with matters as they should be dealt with. Our 13 days are dropping to what looks like a forecast-to-date of 9.8 - a great step forward.

Take that on everything that Robert and Murray have been saying about the whole structure. The one thing missing so far is that we have to get a positive workforce, a positive frame of mind. You can see by your walk around today that it would be very easy to get stuck with 25 people within a unit to get into a negative frame of mind. It is that area that is the great push for change. The success of change, in plain English, will be whether the change sticks. If it sticks, we are successful. If you tick a box and then it doesn't stick, you are unsuccessful. All of our management structures have to support a cultural change rather than 13 and 9.8, so rather than just figures we have to get into the culture.

**CHAIR** - We have spoken to David Huskins, who is the director of Human Resources Services; to Lynn Thorsby, who is the manager of the Operations Scheduling Unit; and David Farrell, the chief secretary of Operations Scheduling Unit. Three of those people have had a big responsibility for a number of changes that have been met in the New South Wales correctional services. I had a briefing with Huskins and Thorsby and they are saying they have broken the culture that existed within corrective services with correctional officers. That is what they say was done over a period of time and with the implementation of a number of changes. Have you talked to those people in relation to what they have done in New South Wales?

**Mr EDWARDS** - I have just returned from Sydney. Maybe it is unfair to talk about another organisation, but I think those people have had great success but not total success because the establishments that I went into are working more overtime and using more casual staff than we are.

**CHAIR** - They say, obviously from across the board, that they have a number of correctional services throughout the state -

**Ms RATTRAY** - Twenty-nine, wasn't it?

**CHAIR** - Yes, that's right. They say that around the state they have had tremendous success. They mentioned \$15 million or \$16 million or something that they had saved from the top of their overtime budgets and so on over a period of time across the state. You might have gone to one correctional service who is experiencing more problems. But we were talking to a central body, to these central people who are responsible for correctional services activities throughout the state. That is where we are getting our information from.

**Mr FINCH** - They had the same challenges as the system here.

**Mr MULDER** - One of the things that we got out of New South Wales was that it wasn't just getting down the short-term absences. It is the cost of those because there is a level there. We are all going to get the flu and some of us are smart enough not to come to work with it. How do we get the cost down? - which I think New South Wales did successfully. If you are to be believed the costs have come down but the amount of it may have actually increased at least in some of the prisons. I would just like to get your view on the fact that some of these mechanisms are not about culture at all; they are just about finances because there is a limit to how far you can drive this sort of absenteeism down.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Once again it depends on what sort of structure you are working with because some of it is enshrined in legislation and some of it is state wages policy. In that sense it really is beyond us to enter into policy discussions about whether you could change the triennium system and things like that. That really is for the Public Sector Management Office and the Premier.

**Mr MULDER** - But there's nothing wrong with us putting a suggestion to you: have you thought about it and would that work here? You can decline to comment if you like.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I still think that is something that really belongs to the Premier, as employer, rather than us. That part of it is set. It doesn't mean that we won't have conversations in the future ranging across how we can alter things for us and make advice to the Public Service Board, but it really is a government policy strategy around whether you would change the structure of leave. That is beyond us and it would be bad form for me to stray into that area.

**CHAIR** - I take it then you haven't spoken to those gentlemen I referred to?

**Mr EDWARDS** - I've spoken to their commissioner.

**CHAIR** - But you haven't spoken to those people who are responsible for making the changes within the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services?

**Mr EDWARDS** - Only when we sent them our attendance and sick leave policies.

**CHAIR** - My question is: have you spoken to David Huskins, Lynn Thorsby and Dave Farrell, who have had a hands-on responsibility for the changes that occurred within the New South Wales corrective System?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - No. We did an international search to find Brian and Barry to bring the experience they have from the British system. They have both been involved in the major cultural reform that took place in the British prison systems, which took a number of years and radically changed sick leave, absence, attendance, injury and workplace. I don't know any of those people myself.

**CHAIR** - Perhaps you ought, with the greatest respect, to talk to some of those people.



**Mr EDWARDS** - I have just come back from lecturing in New South Wales to quite a big audience, which they might have been a part of, so that's why I couldn't answer your question.

**Mr GREENBERRY** - I think that's a very helpful suggestion. Our experience has taught us that these are complex issues, multifaceted and not everyone has all the answers.

**CHAIR** - Annualised salaries is one of the things they put in place. They have put into place new management plans, casual staff, changed a lot of their policies, a centralised rostering system which they say has had a significant impact because it was people outside within the office [inaudible] those officers setting the rosters that people would not work.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The reforms took 10 years.

**CHAIR** - That's right; some of it has taken a long period of time.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - I think a lot of the things that you're saying are things that we absolutely embrace, like centralised rostering and things like that. In fact Brian went to Victoria to get from them their KPI framework, so we picked up that. We picked up centralised rostering from there and we have conversations going on, so while I don't know any of those names we have been engaging with other jurisdictions. As a small state we cannot build a rostering system; we need to take it from somewhere else and bring it in. What you are suggesting are absolutely the sorts of things that we need to keep doing.

**Ms RATTRAY** - I have a question in relation to those additional staff numbers that are obviously required by the organisation to assist with the change management structures. Have there been any training programs running and do you have some increased numbers at all?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We do have. We just had a group of 12 start. We expect to have around 23 in January. Brian is probably best to talk about some of the training because you've been involved in it.

**Mr EDWARDS** - We have trained all the units that you saw - Derwent, Tamar and Huon. We have handpicked all of those staff, took them out and given them excessive training, plus self-defence. We built training into our roster, which wasn't the case before the change program, so we've now got three days. As soon as they come back from annual leave they go onto three days training on a rotating basis. I haven't got the figures on me, but currently the figures are well in excess of 1 000 hours already. We introduced that on my arrival. Compared to last year that's treble what we were doing, so we are training staff. For every member of staff who joins the service we give them phase one and phase two induction. That is currently at 581 hours. Every member of staff that joins here is now getting training. So, yes, we are doing a lot of that. Also all our staff are currently going through our anti-manipulation stuff for conditioning of staff and up-skilling of staff, which will all affect the sick leave.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - One of the really important points that Brian mentioned was tacking three days of training onto people's return from annual leave. Mick Palmer recommended a huge amount of training, but if we were to cost it out there is just no money. However,

we have had to take him seriously and try to find ways when we are already over budget. We can't move forward in this culture change program unless we invest in our staff, so we are trying to find ways that do not cost us too much. We have been abysmal with training in the past because everyone's felt this budget pressure - there's no money, so what do we cut? We've cut the training. With the sorts of training that Brian is talking about, our staff lacked confidence because we hadn't trained them in de-escalation techniques and self-defence for years. So the moment anything happened, we had to call the technical response group. They came in at great expense, very professional and always successful, but we have never trained our staff in how to do that themselves in the right circumstances. Finding the time to do that when you've got a shrinking budget is what Brian and Barry have been trying to fit into the program. The people are good people; they need good leadership and good training. We haven't given them much of the training in the past.

**Ms RATTRAY** - Then the confidence will build.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Absolutely.

**CHAIR** - If somebody rings in sick, what is the first action taken? I ask this question again because of the New South Wales strategy. If I ring in sick today and say, 'Sorry, I can't come in', what happens?

**Mr GREENBERRY** - What should happen is that the manager contacts the individual within 24 hours to find out that they are okay and make sure they've got support. I will preface this with what I think is actually the root of this issue. The way the organisation is established, bearing in mind the conversation we had about *Groundhog Day*, is that ownership of delivering the policies we've got at the moment hasn't been in place. The first thing we need to do is develop our infrastructure so that the strategies and procedures we've got to manage absence are actually used. First and foremost, we need to test whether using the procedures we've got and the DSOs we've got to manage absence, when applied, actually work. The alternative, if it doesn't work, is that we need to look at more radical things and, as Robert says, that's outside our gift. At the end of the day, if you don't want overtime, you don't have an overtime system.

**CHAIR** - New South Wales have a system whereby if someone rings in sick, the supervisor first of all makes an assessment of the situation as to whether or not that position needs to be replaced. They'll look at it; a certain amount of risk is attached to all of that. First of all it goes through an assessment process. Does it need to be replaced or are there sufficient staff currently operating or working that can take on that responsibility as well, so is there a need to replace it? They have a drop-down position and then they come down to casuals; then at the end they come to an overtime position for other members and so on. They have that drop-down thing on each occasion. It's not an automatic thing of picking the phone up and ringing somebody who has just gone home to ask them to come back to work overtime. Do you have a system like that?

**Mr EDWARDS** - Yes. We have a minimum staffing level and we also have 'post not filled' where the operational supervisor of the day will not fill a vacancy because we do the risk assessment and look at what else we can do before we call into that.

**CHAIR** - Are these changes being made?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Yes, it's happened since Brian and Barry.

**Mr EDWARDS** - The first thing we have to do is stop making a person feel one of 300 and start making them feel one of six, so everything is broken down into teams. The supervisor team will decide whether they want someone in or not, as well as the central operating supervisor, but the lead for that team of the day will make contract and ask, 'Is everything alright? Anything we can do for the family?', and then there is a set process within the strategies, going all the way to the director. Our aim, which is an international benchmark, is that anyone ill over 50 days has a job to return to work. Our aim for long-term injuries or long-term sick is to start dealing with things fairly short hand and have close contact with everyone who is off work. We do that all the way through to the director, so at a certain time after everyone has done it, the director will contact the person and say, 'We notice you've been off'.

**CHAIR** - In New South Wales say that has made a difference as well.

**Mr EDWARDS** - It's made a difference here, especially with our workers compensation. We have 62 per cent now who return to work. Last month it was only 49 per cent, so we have gradual improvement.

**CHAIR** - Another change New South Wales has implemented which has had an impact is that all supervisors and senior people within the organisation have an input into the budget. In other words, every time a shift goes on, all supervisors and senior management are spoken to about sick leave, overtime, where the budget is et cetera. So they are given an update on the budget almost daily on each shift as to where they are, what's going on et cetera.

**Mr WILLIAMS** - We're not there yet but Barry's early work has been to start to get the information together so we can move to that sort of accountability for your own team. Mostly our managers in this prison system would never have seen the budget - ever.

**Mr GREENBERRY** - It is one part of a general process of delegation and empowerment. At the moment the budget is delegated to senior managers, from a central finance manager delegating it to senior managers. That will progress down as far as we can as quickly as we can. There are already daily briefings, therefore we have the infrastructure where we can add that information to it. Managers are being given the authority to make more decisions and sometimes when you make decisions nearer the coalface you end up with better decisions, and that will include money. I entirely followed the chairman's advice on that.

Going back to a previous point you raised, what we are starting to see is more flexible use of staff, rather than saying, 'Here's what the roster says'. It's about confidence and trust and working in an environment where you are not constantly fearful of security issues and threat from prisoners. We've had days where the managers have come and rewritten and reallocated staff to make the best use of them. We have been clear about the priorities. When you are in a senior management position you need to be very clear about what is important and get your staff to understand that and then empower them to deliver it. Keeping prisoners open and make the best use of staff are two very clear messages we have now seen put into action. The magic has been that the staff have not

gone to the gate. There has not been massive union angst about it because part of the changed process that Brian, Robert and I are managing is to involve those people in seeing this is the right thing to end up with family-friendly shifts that can make use of the current procedures without bringing flashy new ideas too early.

**CHAIR** - Barry, that is heartening.

**Mr FINCH** - Probably the reason for this investigation is that Ivan and I have been on the budget estimates committee where we have highlighted this issue intensively over the last three or four years. Rather than see it de-escalate we have seen the situation, we think, get out of control; it has been on the build every year. When we get to budget estimates in the middle of the year, through strategies that are in place can we expect a diminution in the overtime rate at Risdon Prison?

**Mr WILLIAMS** - Our early indications are that we will expect to see a trend down in the overtime rate. We are tackling the structural thing. Those people coming in January will have a significant impact on that 50 per cent that is structural. In terms of sick leave, we look like we are trending down, whether it stays at nine, but looks like 13 to 10. We have brought in international expertise from a prison system that is much larger than ours where they have done much more. I have huge faith in what Brian and Barry bring to the table. Both have been recognised as leaders in their industry in England, so I think we are going to see that. That is our aim; our whole strategy is to do that.

This change will take years to bed down properly. Last year we had a pretty disastrous industrial relations exercise in February where we stood some staff down. It was the end of a very difficult period and the beginning of a new one. I would have to say that industrial relations with unions and the staff are at the best they have been for a long time. That means we are starting to get things done that last year, and years gone by, we would not have got simple things through that made sense. We are starting to get some of that stuff through in negotiation, not in the Industrial Commission, which is how we used to deal with it. That is a huge step forward.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much.

#### **THE WITNESSES WITHDREW**