

**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE ON ASHLEY YOUTH
DETENTION CENTRE MET AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, 180 MOLESWORTH
STREET, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND ON WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2007.**

DISCUSSION WITH **SUPERINTENDENT BILL HARRISON**, NATIONAL MANAGER
FOR YOUTH SERVICES, NEW ZEALAND POLICE.

(There are four other witnesses. Although they identify themselves at the beginning, we have found it impossible to distinguish between the three female witnesses throughout this discussion. That is why many of the answers are simply attributed to 'Witness'. Also, we could not catch Brian's surname, so he is referred to as 'Brian')

Mr HARRISON - I have gathered a small team so I will let them introduce themselves and you can make the connections from there. The program I thought for today, subject to your approval, is to give you a quick rundown of how police fits into the Youth Justice system, the sorts of activities, initiatives and programs that we have running. From there, perhaps we can answer questions, if that is okay?

CHAIR – It sounds good, Bill.

Mr HARRISON - To my left is Sandra Lowe.

Ms LOWE - I am brand new to the Police. This is my second week. I am working in the youth policy area, so obviously I have a real connection with youth services and have been involved in the last week and a half in the update of the act. I have been going around with one of the people in the service and having workshops around the country, collating some of that material. It has been a sharp jump into Youth Services for me. My background is in Corrections. I was on the front line for about five years in Wellington, mostly in Home Detention. It is quite a jump from the Correctional front line into policy, so I am just finding my feet at the moment but really looking forward to having input into making the operation and policy side of things better because I think there is a real need for that.

BRIAN - I am Brian (?) (Sounds like Esur), the officer in charge of Wellington Youth Services. We are responsible for Wellington City and the outer suburbs as opposed to further out. I have six staff and normally three youth education staff. I have been doing Youth Aid for about seven years now and find it very rewarding. I am also responsible for the Wellington Youth Court. We had a relatively short list this morning. It should be all over by 11.30, I would say. Normally it can go all day in our Youth Court but it is a short list today.

Ms WITTERSON - I am Rose Witterson. I work at Upper Hutt Police Youth Aid. I have been there for three years and I have another person alongside me. We attend Youth Court as well and we liaise with all the community agencies on initiatives, with Blue Light as well, to get these kids on track. It is a holistic approach.

Ms ATKINSON - I am Melanie Atkinson and I am the national coordinator for district development. As we will explain, police in New Zealand have three parts: youth aid, youth development and youth education. Youth development is programs or

interventions to work more proactively with young offenders. They are police-run projects but they also employ social workers or youth workers. I oversee about 30 of those that are police-run and about 10 that we contract out to community providers.

Mr HARRISON - That is the team. The one who is not here at this table is Owen Sanders, who is my manager for youth education. When I looked at the terms of reference I wondered how that might help the crew that I was pulling together anyway, but if there is information from a police perspective that you want on youth education I am more than happy to bring Owen to this table or have him provide material for you.

I took the liberty of getting the newsletter off the web for the Ashley centre, which was about term 3 of last year. It certainly would appear to have a number of linkages to youth education. I would think that bringing Owen to the table might be a good idea, depending on your questions. He is just around the corner so I will go and grab him if we need him.

I too am somewhat new to the role. The national manager's role was created only five or so years ago. I have now been in the role for about two-and-a-half months or so. That is after something like 27 years of policing. It is a new role, a fresh and exciting role. There is a huge amount of opportunity for police to make a difference. I noticed that 'Making a Difference Together We Make a Difference' was one of the vision statements out of Ashley. I think when you look at the New Zealand police vision statement of Safer Communities Together the two have some synergies and it is great to see.

As Melanie was saying, there are three streams to New Zealand Police's youth services. The Youth Justice end is looked after by a national coordinator in my office, who is currently swanning over in Vienna as an expert adviser to a panel on international law dealing with child and youth witnesses, in particular around matters of giving evidence and the like. That is Inspector Chris Raverson. He is, I think, identified by our Youth Justice colleagues, our Child, Youth and Family colleagues, our Ministry of Social Development colleagues and our district staff as being the youth justice expert in the country. He is a huge resource for me and I miss him heaps when he is not here.

The Youth Justice end is Youth Aid, and it covers off two parts. One of the issues that we deal with in New Zealand is about 80 per cent of our young folk who offend are not dealt with by Youth Justice. They are dealt with by alternative action and we lead the alternative action by police; it is led by us. When you look at and compare figures, for example, around the world those who are appearing before our Youth Court appear to be somewhat different and our success rates in Youth Court appear to be somewhat different. That is because we are dealing with the 20 per cent who are in fact the hard nuts and they propose a bigger challenge, where other jurisdictions are dealing with the entire pool of offenders. Clearly regarding our success rate, if we combined our Youth Court and our alternative action, I think you would see a markedly different picture - a much more positive picture. That is not to say that the picture is negative but it would be a much more positive picture. We have about 80 per cent of those who come through on our alternative action who don't offend again.

Mr WILKINSON - What types of offences are the ones that don't go to the courts?

Mr HARRISON - That is why I brought these folk in today, to give you some practical examples of how they make some decisions around whether or not a matter should go to court. The seriousness of the offence is clearly a driver for whether a matter should go before the courts. We do have requirements if they are committing purely indictable offences to put those before the court. There are a number of others: murder, manslaughter and those types of offences. The significance of the offending in the sense of the amount of the offending could also see them going before the court. Because of joint decisions that are taken when a person is apprehended for offending, we can be in a conference with our Youth Justice colleagues and a decision may well be taken that the best and most appropriate action is to in fact charge the person and put them before the court. These are options. There are a whole series of processes that could see a young person appear before a court.

We did have a period when the act came in in 1989 where we dropped from having something like 20 000 young people going before the court to 3 500 to 4 000. Over time that has started to pick up again and we have seen an increasing number. Some of that is population driven because the youth bulge has hit us and we started to experience in 2005-06 the introduction of quite a large population growth that started in about 1988-89. There was a huge increase in birth rates and we have just started to experience that bulge coming into the Youth Justice system. That accounts for some of it but not all of it. There is practice and procedures. The way that the frontline police are dealing with youth issues has changed and that is something for me to look at over the next year, to figure out why.

BRIAN - There are no hard and fast rules in terms of whether we decide to put a young person into court but, clearly, one issue would be is there a public interest in having this matter before the court. There are a number of others, but a big factor would be is there a public interest in taking this young person to the Youth Court. There are no hard and fast rules as such but there are some guiding principles in the act which we need to meet. We can't just throw any young person into the Youth Court. With a first-time offender as such we would seriously consider alternative action before putting that young person before the Youth Court. The act clearly states that, that we must consider alternative action to prosecution.

If there is a good possibility that the young person won't take the opportunity through alternative action to be held accountable then clearly this department would come into play and we would put that young person before the court, simply because they haven't take the opportunity given to them. Then, if you like, we start getting a little bit tough, I suppose.

Mr WILKINSON - Do you get a letter from a solicitor letting you know the circumstances of the case before that happens?

BRIAN - No. We call them youth advocates here. They don't come into play until the young person is actually charged and before the court. Prior to that process - that is, alternative action - police are the only ones involved.

(Tape change - question missing)

Mr HARRISON - We need to make an effort to address those issues.

WITNESS - But you don't need to use the court to hear those matters.

Mr HARRISON - It even states in the act that you are not allowed to use the youth justice act to address solely the care and protection issues that have been identified. So we will not take the young person to court just because there is a breakdown within the family home; that is not what youth justice is designed for.

WITNESS - So the decision around court is supposedly more about the incident. There has been discussion whether there are certain groups of young people that are more likely to appear in court for the same offence than another type of young person.

Mr HARRISON - It is because it is not black and white. So I cannot say in a case like this you must always charge the young person because you have to take into account a number of factors. Each case will be judged on its own merits.

Mr MARTIN - Would it be better if it was black and white?

Mr HARRISON - No; in many ways it is person-centred as opposed to a State-centred process. The victims have a large part to play in it. The family has a large part to play in it and then the State says, 'Primarily we want you to know that you need to be held accountable for attending'. But being held accountable can include a whole series of different things. What we are focused on is providing the opportunity or support for you to become a contributing member to society, to achieve your full potential, if you like. So it is centred on the offender and the outcomes that we can achieve from the offender.

One area that we also have, that is perhaps slightly to the side, is care and protection. Within the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act there are two parts really. For our interest, anyway, there are two parts. One is care and protection and that looks at young people who are basically under 10 - or really under 14. Within your Youth Justice Act you talk about 10 to under 18. We look at 14 to 17. So at 16 years and 364 days you will be probably appear in the Youth Court. Beyond 17 you are in adult jurisdiction. That presents us with some issues because we are a signatory to the United Nations convention on the rights of children, which has another age. But we are working our way through that at the moment.

Care and protection talks about those young people who, by virtue of the behaviours that they are exhibiting and the offending that they are engaging in and a whole series of other things that we could take into account, come across our desks, primarily from youth aid staff, for the purposes of engaging with the Child, Youth and Family service for care and protection issues. So you have a care and protection family group conference. They might have offended but they are too young to be put before any court, but we still want to hold them to account. We still need to provide support to the family and that mechanism is quite demanding and quite complex. But we still engage in it as a police service. So you can say, and I say this almost provocatively, that we have a social agenda when it comes to young people under the age of criminal responsibility.

Mr MARTIN - What is the culture outside this group within the police force? Do you have a cultural issue?

Mr HARRISON - There is a cultural issue. There is a view from statistics that would give us a particular direction to head in and then there is the view from the front line. I think there will always be commentary that there is a view at the national office and within policy ministries when we are looking at statistics and data as to where the rubber meets the road and what happens at the front line. Quite often the challenge is connecting the two. Yes, there is a cultural issue. In terms of drawing parallels to the Aboriginal community, for example, we have and share a number of features, such as Maori being disproportionately represented in any set of justice indices that you care to look at - imprisonment rates, prosecution rates, conviction rates, the types of sentencing and health rates. You can go across the entire social, health and justice sectors and find disproportionate representation by Maori.

Mrs JAMIESON - So that would include literacy and numeracy as well, all those educational issues too?

Mr HARRISON - Yes, all education

WITNESS - For Maori, I think it is four times the general rate, but for the Aboriginal people it is about 12 times. Is that correct?

CHAIR - Yes.

WITNESS - So there is a disproportion but it is not to the same extent that you are working with.

Mr HARRISON - Maori make up about 14.5 per cent to 15 per cent, give or take. If you are taking census figures, and we finished a census last year, the stats would suggest 14.5 per cent to 15 per cent of our population. The prison population is 50 per cent to 60 per cent Maori. In our Youth Court in 1989 when the act came in we were prosecuting something akin to 46 per cent who were Maori. That is now 49 per cent, yet for a significant number of years we have been applying the principles of the act, looking at trying to ensure that we hold young people accountable to prevent reoffending. Really that is the focus of the act, to make them into profitable, contributing members of society, yet we still seem to have this heavy reliance on prosecuting Maori, but the statistics seem to have shifted in regard to the others. That is an issue, and we really have just started to get a very good set of statistics on it. Having been able to get that data we now need to explore why and how we are going to change that. That is a big challenge for New Zealand. It is a huge challenge for us.

Mr WILKINSON - What would happen with a person whom you consider should not go to court. In Tasmania it would depend upon the seriousness of the crime and it would depend upon whether a person had prior convictions and it would depend upon the circumstances surrounding the actual incident. They would be the three major contributors to decide whether to proceed or not. If they do not proceed, all they get is a warning, and you can have that. That was a policy that has dropped out a bit now in recent times. Other than that you have to proceed. So that interests me because, to me, the normal sentencing program is not working. There have to be better ways, I think.

Mr HARRISON - So they don't have alternatives?

Mr WILKINSON - No. You have the warning but you also have a conference where you can go together with a solicitor if need be. But normally the parent and the child go together to the conference. Conferences are very tame. They might say, 'Chop the wood for the next week', or something.

WITNESS - The act is an amazing act to work with. It gives the impression that you are working with families that care all the time, that have the resources to be able to care and that their kids are safe - 'Yes I know, I understand and I want to change'. What we are dealing with is kids, especially the 14 to 17-year olds, who are going through their poisonous adolescence. So they may be reined in and most of them are because their parents are so peeved off with them. For the ones that do not care, where the kids are already doing their thing, we get a process theme going. It looks pretty good and they go to school, do some hours or do an apology - a face to face or a written one. We help them into learning things. So it is a holistic thing. But it does cool down as they reoffend. They are with their mates. They are influenced and they are at that age. So you are having this process of trying to get them to get their plan out of the way. So you are trying to fit this in so that they are learning, they are not reoffending and their parents are trying to keep in control of them.

One of the things that keeps coming back with the harder core ones is you will have a family group conference and nothing has really changed. They have the same people involved in their lives who have not been doing it before and suddenly they start after 15 years. That is where we have a bit of frustration. Family group conferences can work really well when you have really supported kids; you find they do not reoffend.

Mr HARRISON - Which is the majority, fortunately. But that's our alternative action process.

WITNESS - They have called a section 282 which is basically as if they have not offended. But if they keep on reoffending they may be given a second chance, again, if they do a plan, because we know that kids do quite a few things. The aim is that they do not end up with a conviction. If they keep offending then they will get a 283 - admonished and discharged. There a whole pile of other orders that can be brought in with that, but effectively they realise then that it is for life. Then, once it gets really serious they can be looking at a district court hearing.

Mr WILKINSON - We have an admonish to discharge. That is on your record still. So if you come back before a court the magistrate sees that there is an admonish to discharge. Is that the same here or is it not on your record?

Mr HARRISON - Yes, a 283 is a formal warning, if you like; that is a conviction in the Youth Court. We do not call them convictions; we call them orders. So yes, that is an order and there are a number of orders that can be ordered by the court. It can be supervision orders, residential or reparation orders, community work orders. With any of those orders, once they are ordered by the Youth Court, they are equivalent to convictions in the District Court.

WITNESS - That is a quite a significant departure from the District Court. There are no convictions as such in the Youth Court. So when you talk about a record, when they hit 17 they start to develop their criminal record. Prior to 17, unless it is matters that are

purely indictable or have been sent up to the District Court for that sentence, they do not have that on their records.

Mr WILKINSON - So therefore, if you were a child, they go through that sausage machine and are spat out at the other end and some do not commit any offences. Then at 21 they want to go overseas, so they can then say, can they, that that do not have a prior conviction?

Mr HARRISON - That is right. It is an order. That is where it comes from; you abide by the rules and you are then in a better position to achieve your full potential, as opposed to convictions for a variety of offences so that international jurisdictions may in fact bar you because of convictions when you were 14 or 15.

Mr MARTIN - With the orders, I am getting slightly mixed messages over the last couple of days about the resources available to monitor.

Mr HARRISON - There are three parts to it. You have to have a good plan and it has to be a good plan. Everybody that is involved has to be there and you put together a sound plan. There is not much point getting into a plan that says you are about to write your seventeenth essay. So there has to be a good plan and you really have to ramp it up as time goes by. That is a bit of challenge for us because we are going through an upgrade for our intelligence application. That is going to enable us to look at more aspects. You have to copy and paste into a person's history all of the things that have gone on before and the resolutions through Child, Youth and Family. There exists a process that is somewhat convoluted but it does not always catch everything that we have done with this young person. Therefore, we do not know what we have tried and what has failed, although we are getting there; that is going to be a huge step in the right direction. But we also do not know about actives. So if a young person is on an active plan, at 2 a.m. when our youth aid staff are not working and this young person is found in a car and denies stealing it, you know who they are. You also know that all of the public interest aspects say not to lock them up. But if you knew that he was on active charges for stealing cars or getting into cars, you could legitimately make that decision to arrest him. So we are fixing that as well. So there is a front-line tool, or an enhancement for the front line, that should help them to make better decisions with regard to young folk.

Mr MARTIN - What happens when the order is treatment for substance abuse? Is there monitoring to make sure they do it?

WITNESS - Some of the monitoring will be more about referrals to programs and treatment. A number people can be appointed to monitor, maybe the social worker in some cases. It may be a family member. It may be somebody else. It think where it largely falls down is in the plan where people are not tagged to monitoring tasks, which is just basic good planning. The coordinator, who has overall responsibility, does not monitor the monitor, so to speak. I think to some extent it is a system breakdown as opposed to capacity.

Mr MARTIN - I am really keen on this

Mr HARRISON - The youth justice coordinators in Child, Youth and Family have the primary responsibility for monitoring those plans and making sure that they are achieved. We make sure and will continue to make sure that we are basically joined at the hip

when it comes to looking at social outcomes that are good for the kids. So that is really our objective as well. At the end of the day we want to be reducing recorded crime and reducing offending. So working with them to achieve that is critical.

When you talk about monitoring, and Child, Youth and Family and us and the team around the plan, and trying to make sure that each other meets the obligations that are set out in the plan, then that monitoring is absolutely critical. The other part to it is the timeliness of the plan because we find that if you have police officers in the front line who are apprehending the young person and then three months later putting a file in, you may as well have said goodbye. Understanding the significance of all the implications of a decision to defer submitting the file is a training issue. So there are a number of issues that go with it because timeliness, and being able to do that intervention in a timely way, is absolutely critical to the success of the plan. It has to be timely. It has to be a good plan and it has to be monitored properly. If that is all done, what you do see is that families feel more supported to be able to make better decisions and they take ownership and feel that they can take ownership and the outcomes are much better. But if it is not timely, if your front end in terms of the gatekeepers are not doing their job, if the plan is not good and the monitoring is not up to scratch, then you end up with increasing Youth Court numbers and you end up with negative social outcomes.

WITNESS - There are mechanisms within the system for that timeliness so that if certain time frames are not met, then you cannot proceed. In fact in the Youth Court this morning we were required to make some submissions in relation to a young person who was charged for two burglaries. The youth advocate, which is the defence counsel, have made an application to have the charges dismissed because the police took too long to bring the matters before the court. So that will be this morning. So there is legal requirement on us to ensure that a charge is brought to court in a timely manner.

Mr WILKINSON - Is that just filing the application in the court?

Mr HARRISON - No, that is just when we charge a young person and put them before the court. If we have been sitting on it for a lengthy period of time and we cannot explain the delay and give a reasonable explanation for the delay, youth advocates generally will question it and will invariably make submissions to have the charges dismissed, simply because there has been undue delay. Undue delay means it is unfair on the young person in terms of time.

WITNESS - One thing that brings them back before the court is the fact they have not done their community service and that is an ongoing problem. Those providing the work in the community are not necessarily professionals; they are volunteer organisations. You really have to monitor it as a youth aide officer, otherwise you will get a kid in court saying they have done this when they haven't.

Mr HARRISON - It is wasting court time bringing young people back, reminding them week after week to make sure community work, for example, is completed. It is frustrating and it takes up court time and young people should not be back before the court for this.

WITNESS - It sometimes comes back to the conference. If you have a kid who is in school or on a course and they get 200 community hours, then it is quite silly.

Mr MARTIN - Who is responsible for the community service orders?

WITNESS - It varies.

Mr MARTIN - So there is no one central -

WITNESS - No. It is not like with the adult system

Mr HARRISON - Unless it is court ordered.

Mrs JAMIESON - If it is court ordered do you need a social worker?

Mr HARRISON - Yes, a social worker. If we have decided on alternative action and then as the youth aid officer I have developed this plan with the family and the young person and the other interested parties that need to be here, then it will be my job to make sure that the plan is fulfilled. That is the alternative action. Care and detention is social workers from Child, Youth and Family from Youth Justice. It is a significant area.

Mr MARTIN - One central coordinating unit?

Mr HARRISON - It depends on the process that you have applied.

Mr MARTIN - We have a major problem. Our one detention centre has been a disaster. Our Youth Justice Act is supposed to be a restorative justice model but it is just not resourced. The lack of rehabilitation at Ashley is appalling. We looked at Palmerston North yesterday, which we were told was the worst of the detention centres. It is far bloody better than Ashley. We are looking at Christchurch tomorrow which is supposed to be a model. So we have a lot of issues. Out of all the Australian States we have a high percentage of young people in detention from other States. We are not doing enough alternatively. We are really interested in your model but it is a labour-intensive model and a resource-intensive model and we have a problem with community service orders in Tasmania with budget cutbacks. There is just no supervision. So I think the court system is getting frustrated that there can be a community service order but the kids do not do it. They treat is like a joke.

I have received mixed messages over the last couple of days about whether there is supervision here or not. So I am really interested. You have a really good looking model.

Mr HARRISON - Child, Youth and Family have just completely quite recently a capacity review which looked at how much resource was required to achieve the performance indicators that they have set for themselves and then they reviewed those performance indicators as well. That review has seen a restructuring. There are some nuts and bolts issues, like aligning your social services provider to your police boundaries and those police boundaries to your court boundaries. So you are comparing apples with apples, if you like, in terms of comparing statistics. Where they are misaligned you have all this diffusion of responsibility. We still see some of that every now and then, especially when you move a young person from one area into a residence in another area and then they commit offences. Who, then, pays to convene the FTC? There is a whole series of

those debates. So if you have got to that level of discussion rather than still debating the philosophical stuff then I am comfortable with that. I am comfortable with being able to debate who pays for it because the big issues have been sorted.

I would endorse police's view of this because, if you look around the world, New Zealand police are quite unique in its engagement with youth. We have a youth education service which is in the schools looking at developing an antibullying program. There are drug education programs but it is not a one-off to 12 year olds; it is a sequenced delivery across a number of years, critical to their understanding of medicines and medicines cabinets, all the way through to the hard-line drugs. There is road safety because road trauma is one of the most significant contributing factors to child mortality in New Zealand. We kill more kids on our roads than other ways of dying. So we have to make sure that we intervene there and we are the safety message deliverers in terms of road safety.

WITNESS - I think our alternative action process is core to the way that we were saying system was successful. I think that the alternatives process plays a huge part in that, the focus on providing intervention early rather than a series of warnings and then to court. A piece of work that you could be interested in that we are having done at the moment is a literature review on alternative action. Over the years research has been done on the police alternative action process in New Zealand. From the literature review there will be more concrete guidelines, so that if you want to make this work then these are the key aspects of getting results for alternative action, breaking it down on a step-by-step process. In June or July that should be ready for publishing. That will provide a really succinct, nuts and bolts account of what makes alternative action work.

Mr MARTIN - Has there has been a review done of all of this at any time last year?

Mr HARRISON - We have reviewed or have evaluated the progress for youth development and have looked at those and we have combined one series of our evaluations with the Ministry of Justice. So that is a recent one.

Mr MARTIN - Are we able to look at that?

Mr HARRISON - Once it has been ticked off.

In 1996 we brought in the youth development projects. You talk about resources. Within police I have 12 districts to operate within New Zealand. So those are the local area commands, for example, or north and west within Tasmania. So we have 12 of those that operate. Those 12 district commanders retain the autonomy to deploy the resource according to their risk profiles, to whatever their priorities are. They then own, for want of a better word, the youth resource within that district. I do not. As the national manager, my role is to look at strategic direction, giving guidance, providing support, become an expert advisor on youth justice, youth development and youth education. So that is my role. However, in terms of developing all of our policy platforms and the like, I consider them to be my lot, which is about 400 or so staff. There are about 120 youth education officers. There are the 30 or so youth projects which have about 60 police people in them or associated with them. Then youth aid staff which, depending on the figures that you are reading, could be as high as 150 to 160 staff. So there are about 400 or so across the country of 4.2 million population, with

about 600 000 young folk.

WITNESS - So is that better numbers than you?

Mrs JAMIESON - Yes, but we are only a State of less than 500 000.

Mr HARRISON - You compare, then, quite favourably with Wellington region - about 400 000 people.

Mrs JAMIESON - You have the advantage of being compact whereas we are spread out over the whole of the State; that can create its own problems with resources.

Mr HARRISON - Absolutely right. When we try to draw parallels it may not be informative. You do have to resource it, though. For what we have set down as a challenge for us and youth education and youth development and youth aid, there is not sufficient resource to do the job that we seek for ourselves at the moment.

(Tape change - question missing, and a lot of inaudible stuff)

Mr HARRISON - You were talking with Judge Becroft and I am sure a number of others about multi-systemic therapy, going and looking at developing families and strengthening families to enable them to take control of these young people. The 'multi' part of it means that you do have a police voice but it is not only voice, and you do have a social worker's voice but it is not the only one. There has to be an eclectic view that wraps around these young folk. The secrets that have come out have included being consistent - the individuals that interface with that family being consistent. So over time they get the trust and confidence and they believe that there is hope. There is a consistency so that if I tell you that you are going to have to do community service, then you do it. There is none of this ability for them to just thumb their nose at the system and say, 'That is what you said last time and it did not happen, so I am going to thumb my nose again and see if it happens'. Unfortunately, on occasion it does. So you develop this youth resilience because some of early-onset offenders, some of those persistent ones, are going to go from being young people who commit offences to being adults who commit offences. The earliest opportunity seems to come when we have kids at school and the school seems to have, by virtue of the research and all of the advice that I am getting, an understanding of who is going to slip off the rails and who is not, because 90 per cent of the kids that go through our system do not slip off the rails. A small number do but schools seems to be in position to identify them.

Mrs JAMIESON - Pre-schools too.

Mr HARRISON - Yes. The question I ask my police colleagues is what do we currently do with that information. If intelligence has come into the place that says that Billy Harrison is going to slip off the rails, what do we currently do with that? At this point, and I am hoping to make a change, we do nothing. Yet there is an opportunity to go back to what we do here at Youth Justice around care and protection and look at developing a plan that says we understand what is happening. This is more to do with strengthening a family. This is a family issue because there is domestic violence or child abuse. If the young person attempts to commit suicide, why are we not asking why, as opposed to dealing with the attempted suicide as if it were just an attempt to commit

suicide. It is something that sits beneath that which drives it. We need to ask why.

Mr MARTIN - So there is work going on in relation to all this at the moment?

Mr HARRISON - Yes, I am driving it.

Mrs JAMIESON - So this might be systemic?

Mr HARRISON - Multi-systemic therapy is something that we do when we talk about the programs that operate here alongside us, as well as our own programs - Life to the Max, Big Brothers, Big Sisters; there is a whole raft of those that operate within New Zealand communities. We work with those groups as opposed to necessarily being the cotten pin, if you like, of all the things that are happening around this young person. One of the ways of dealing with them is to become the coordinator and let everybody else do the work, making sure that they are addressing the risks. There is a risk matrix that says these are the presenting behaviours, these are the attributes or the factors that are present in this young person's life, and these are the attributes of those risks. Say they belong to a gang. What kind of gang is it? Is it a peer-group gang, is it a drug gang or is it a gang that is driven by the family? What programs or intermixes do we have in place for them from a policing perspective, from a social welfare perspective or from a corrections perspective. There are a number of different social service providers that can provide an intervention. You can draw a box of rows and columns that say, yes, we have something working in there or no we have not. If you have not, should we or can we? From that column view you develop an opportunity for outcome statements. What are the positive social changes that we are trying in this young person's life? Then say, 'How do you know that we have been successful?', because with a lot of the decision-making in a social environment it is, yes, of course we are doing things for young people; just look at all the programs that we are doing. The next question we would ask is, are they getting anywhere or are they doing anything? Who is making the programs and delivering them because you could throw \$150 000 here and \$150 000 there, but does it not achieve anything.

We have been engaged with youth development for the last 10 years or so. We have a new base line. It is quite a significant spin across the country but it is a growing area because Child, Youth and Family, for example, have increased their resources. Community groups are increasing their need for support by police. So you have groups like the DARE Foundation, for example, who want to be supported by us but also need to be separate because they are looking for funding. Police, as an organisation, should not be aligned to an organisation which is out there touting for money because the sponsorship part of it creates a blurring of lines. It is an integrity issue. So we have distanced ourselves from DARE but we continue to support it. Blue Light is another one that we operate here which is very successful.

Mr MARTIN - Is that blue light discos?

Mr HARRISON - Yes, blue light discos.

WITNESS - We get nine to 12-year olds and they are identified at primary school as at risk. They will go away for a week. Their diet is shocking. They come out much better.

Mr HARRISON - However, there is a consequence when you have to put them back into the same environment that you took them out of. Some of them turn out really good. They go on to become really good kids.

One of the things you might look at is mentoring, which is taking the kids who have been successful and putting them back into the front line. One of the issues that I am grappling with at the moment is that all our police youth education and our youth aid staff are all sworn staff. So you end up with this adult community talking to the youth community. So I am trying to bring in champions, young people to come through. We have, as I am sure you do as well, a youth parliament. Through the military we have cadet forces, a huge organisation in this country. The opportunity to feed young people who have succeeded back into the front line is critical to getting the message across.

Mr MARTIN - The amount of resource you put into youth is terrific. Obviously you would be really dedicated to the youth issues. I have been conscious over the last few days that you have a bit of the law and order issue going on at the moment with gangs and a couple of serious youth crimes, and politicians with the get-tough-with-crime stance. What is the view within the police force? Is there a frustration amongst the rest of the police force that you are too soft on kids? I am pretty sure I know the answer, but how do you manage that?

Mr HARRISON - There is definitely an enforcement culture that is more about locking them up and putting them before the courts. I came from that culture. That is where I started. I was a detective. I was a front-line cop, so we grew through those attitudes. One of the things I think that is near and dear to that is that it is holding people to account. It is enforcing the law and that is what a police service tends to be about. We do not make the law. We have that passed down to us. We are just the enforcer.

Your oath of office that you sign up to in this country talks about preventing, to the best of your ability, offences against the peace. Offences against the peace are anything to do with offending and the first word is 'preventing'. So one of the issues that I grapple with is why would you wait for something to happen and then put these kids before the court when your oath says you should try to prevent it. That is the philosophical difference that I talked about before in terms of the social agenda. If you did not talk about it as a social agenda from policing, you talked about it as a preventive or proactive agenda where you are in fact developing a platform to prevent offending. The tension is that, as a district commander, I am still required to have enough troops to deal with emergencies, to deal with the victims that are being created by offences of burglary and theft and robbery and all those. They are all very demanding in terms of court time and investigation time. So I need to have sufficient resources to be able to deal with those. I am not going to compromise that emergency response by over-resourcing the proactive, preventive area because it is a softer side of policing and its soft side butts up against the hard side.

Mr MARTIN - It's the hardest work to do.

Mr HARRISON - That's exactly right. I think we talked about prevention and cure. It is better to look at prevention.

Mr MARTIN - It seems to be the softest but I think it is what we have to do if we are ever

going fix society's problems. It is the hardest work to do. It is probably more labour intensive.

WITNESS - You have to bring families on board. If you don't treat those kids with respect as well as with authority in dealing with their families, big brother or younger brother is going to come up and wreck it.

Mrs JAMIESON - Intergenerational influence is one of the big things.

Mr HARRISON - That seems to be right, that criminal agenda process with intergenerational crime. The issue that I would go back to Treasury with is that on a 12-month basis, yes, it is better to be dealing with crime, locking them up and putting them in front of the courts because you run a 12-month budget cycle. But if you want to add all that together and then compare that with the benefits of an intervention that is proactive or works with them as young people, then the cost associated at this end is three to four times less than the cost at the other end. While you maintain a focus on an annual 12-month budget cycle, you are not looking at the 15-year picture. If you look at the 15-year picture, this intervention down here is markedly better for a government. Granted we talk about three-year terms or five-year terms; that is an important cycle for us as well, but you should look at the societal longer term. The trouble is I think we talked about it a lot and we do talk about it a lot. We just do not know what the mechanism is. If the answer is 42, what is the question - as in Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. What is it for us? How do we make this effort?

Mr MARTIN - I have been on this bandwagon. This has been an area of interest for me back in my local government days. For 14 years I have been on this and nothing has really changed. You get lip service. We have done a lot of my city of Glenorchy but the rest of local government around Tasmania has done bugger all. The State is inconsistent. Richard McCreadie is very supportive of this line. You need long-term strategies.

DISCUSSION CONCLUDED.