

ASHLEY, YOUTH JUSTICE AND DETENTION COMMITTEE - LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MET IN PARLIAMENT HOUSE, MELBOURNE ON THURSDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2007.

DISCUSSION WITH Mr MURRAY WILSON, TEAM LEADER, EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, AND Mr GLENN BROOME, JUVENILE JUSTICE MENTORING CO-ORDINATOR, WHITELION.

CHAIR (Mr Hall) - Good morning and welcome, gentlemen.

Mr BROOME - I am Glen Broome, coordinator of Whitelion custodial program.

Mr WILSON - I am Murray Wilson, team leader of the employment program at Whitelion.

CHAIR - We took some evidence from Whitelion in Tasmania in Launceston last week, so we have a reasonable understanding of the organisation. I will invite you to give some evidence and tell us what you do and the way you see things, particularly in relation to our terms of reference.

Mr WILSON - I suppose you know a little about Whitelion at the moment so I might hand over to Glen to start with to give you an idea of the custodial setting in Victoria and some of the major categories.

Mr BROOME - We deal with the two major centres in Melbourne: the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre and the Parkville Youth Residential Centre. You may be aware of the ages and -

CHAIR - Yes, we just had a briefing on that and we are going out there tomorrow morning for a look.

Mr BROOME - What we primarily do is link young people with community mentors and provide activity nights to facilitate that. That is on two nights a week. Predominantly what we are looking at is engaging young people who are disconnected in their communities or relocating to a new area with local people in the community to enhance the relationships and build some rapport and relationship around their new community. So if we have a particular young person who is interested in a particular sport such as basketball, then we will attempt to find someone who has strong links in that area. There is a range of opportunities around social and sporting interests and just that general connection around relationships and the things that make two people connect to one another. We don't play cupid. I think all of us experience people coming in and out of our lives as we reflect on our own childhoods and school years, uni and job careers. By the same token, we try to promote some stability and long-term relationships. Some of our matches have been together for four and five years and we think, 'There's a bit of enabling going on there'. What we do is promote the relationship from a mentoring relationship to a friendship. That enables that natural evolving of a relationship that has moved a mentor relationship to a personal friendship. They continue to have access to

the program based on their needs but most of them have matured enough and moved on with their lives.

Mr WILKINSON - In other words, say, Jim Wilkinson has an interest in cricket and you then go to the Australian Cricket Board and say, 'Who do you have available?', or alternatively do you go to that person, say Ricky Ponting?

Mr BROOME - That is another sphere of our program. We have what we call 'role models' and they go into the centres - football stars, cricket stars. That is a different program to ours. Ours is the average Joe Blow -

Mr WILKINSON - But you had Glen Manton with yours, didn't you?

Mr BROOME - We did. He is the President of Whitelion. Ours is more localised. We do have the sporting role models and they do a range of things. They go into the schools as part of our preventative early intervention programs. We have a lot of indigenous young people and we try to continue recruiting indigenous footballers and sports people to go into the centres and work with their young people. My program is more community based. If you as a local cricketer are prepared to look after Johnny who has an interest in cricket, you can link him into your local club and do mentoring around that localised level. If we use the classic example of the Cathy Freemans of this world, it is okay to have Cathy as a role model but 90 per cent of the indigenous kids in the city would never even get a look in to meet her. At the end of day, we almost have to go back to biblical times of relationship, and that is where the rubber meets the road - it is about building a relationship. So we look at that grass roots level of relationship building that promotes community. It is about pitching that old African proverb, 'It takes a village to raise a child.' That is the philosophy that we put forward.

Mrs JAMIESON - So have you any figures on the effectiveness of the project?

Mr BROOME - Yes, but I did not bring them today.

Mr CHAIR - That is not a problem; you can connect with the committee secretary if you would not mind.

Mr BROOME - Fine, no worries.

Mr WILKINSON - Have you taken statistics on whether you believe it is working? Obviously it would seem to be working from the feedback that we can read about. But you would obviously know more intimately than we would. How well is it working?

Mr BROOME - I guess one of the things when we look at it is the stages of childhood development. I do not know if you have had the opportunity to be exposed to Malmsbury, which caters for an older age group, 18-21.

Mrs JAMIESON - We have been told about it.

Mr BROOME - So that is probably the step between youth detention and prison. That is the in between. So it is under the dual track system that we operate in Victoria you can be tipped in to either one, depending on your behaviour and so forth. If you were to

compare Malmsbury young people to Juvenile Justice Melbourne, the success is at the bigger end because there may be some real life choices and decisions around their life.

So they are at a point where they are making decisions around having babies, and a lot of them do, whether they want their relationship to be serious, do I want to go prison, they are at a crossroad. For younger ones there are basically two examples: one is the experiential young person who quite likes doing what he is doing, likes the high-risk activities. That is where they are at that point of their life. They are going through a huge experimental phase. Then we have another group on the same place who have said, 'I am sick of my life the way that it is; I have spent to last 10, 12, 14 years in the Child Protection system so I am actually a product of the system. I now have Child Protection saying they are not interested in me at the moment because I am a JJ client, and while I am a JJ client they do not have to spend so much money on me so they will let me be JJs problem.' So Juvenile Justice is then in a quandary about how to deal with this young person and they are the ones that we have the most impact on those that are given an opportunity. One of the biggest issues for us with young people in custody is around the leave program because accessing young people on leave is very important. They are very opportunistic, so it is about creating opportunities and being able to respond to that immediacy. So the situation is twofold: there are some younger people who quite enjoy what they are doing and exposing them to different opportunities and environments can bring about change; but the larger proportion of younger people want to do something different.

Mr MARTIN - So you enter a kid's life once he is in the juvenile justice system? Are there any programs before they get to that point where a young person is identified at risk?

Mr BROOME - Not so much by us. We have some capacity, but there are funding constraints and all the rest of it, and the geography around that. We have child protection program that is working with young people who are involved in child protection. Outside that, there are other organisations such as Big Brother Big Sister. At the risk of them hitting me in the head, they are what we would describe as the lightweight programs - it is young Johnny who does not have a dad, does not have a lot of positive role models around him, but who wants to go fishing, whatever. When you talk about the high risk there is not a lot out there.

Mr MARTIN - There is not?

Mr BROOME - No.

Mr MARTIN - That is a shame.

Mr BROOME - Part of our school program is around that early intervention. But again we deal with it in a workshop as an accredited course as opposed to a one-to-one relationship.

Mr WILSON - And that can be as young as primary school grade 5 or 6, so it is a really early cutting age.

Mr MARTIN - And your funding is Juvenile Justice?

Mr BROOME - We are pretty fortunate - or unfortunate, I don't know which way to look at it - in that our organisation is 60 per cent non-government funding, so we have a large corporate arm involved in our marketing and fund raising. So, as far as the custodial service is concerned, it is not JJ-funded. We are actually funded through philanthropic means.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do you actually organise group activities for kids? You have your mentoring which is usually one-to-one type of stuff, but do you have group activities like camps?

Mr BROOME - Yes. We just got back from one camp last weekend.

Mrs JAMIESON - Is that what happened to the hair?

Mr BROOME - Yes, it was only grey before that.

Laughter.

Mrs JAMIESON - What sort of activities and how long did the camp go?

Mr BROOME - At centre base we have group activities so we have one for the girls in Parkville and we have one for the boys in the JJC. They run one night a week and that is about connecting, so it means engaging in activities. We look for self selection so if a young person and a mentor hit it off, 'Will you be my mentor, you seem cool?' then we will involve, support and nurture that relationship. There are also community days which are an opportunity to bring the young people together better in the community. There might be canoeing or a group activity, a barbecue, where we bring the young people together and try to normalise their relationships - 'I'm just not the only freak with a mentor'. It is an opportunity for the young people to talk about how their match is going. Usually they are sizing up things like 'What did you mentor buy you?' or something like that. Outside of that we do camps and a lot of that is again about facilitating and supporting matches.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do you mix boys and girls in those camps?

Mr BROOME - On the camps we do. We have the right ratio of males to females, separate accommodation and we try to discourage long-term marriages!

Mrs JAMIESON - If you have a kid with a health problem - for example, a diabetic or epileptic or something like that - do you have somebody health trained?

Mr BROOME - Yes. We cross our t's and dot our i's because a lot of it is again about that duty of care and 99 per cent of our kids are department kids, so Child Protection and JJ have expectations of the program.

Mr MARTIN - What sort of ages are your mentors - their age, parent age or grandparent?

Mr BROOME - It is interesting. Again it is about that recruitment process and a large proportion of those you draw from a university culture - 'I have lots of theory but I have

no practice'. That is okay because I have a philosophical belief that everybody in the community has a contribution to make and a classic example of that is that I had one of the biggest, burliest Kiwi boys in Melbourne who loved football - and I am talking about a kid who had a neck the size of my shoulders and as rough as guts - and I am there thinking to myself, 'Who am I going to match this kid with? All my mentors are scrawny little guys'. I ended up matching him with a 67-year-old lady. It is a long story how that came about but what this kid wanted was someone to dote on him - someone to make him sandwiches and have a hot chocolate at a footy match, wear a scarf and yell, 'Go Freddy, go Freddy' and pick the lint off his jumper. That is the type of thing that he needed. So it is really important then that we do not stereotype types of mentors and the relationships that are out there. That relationship has been going for three years.

We had quite a difficult camp and I was sharing thoughts about the importance of catalysts for change - I have been involved in mentoring for 15 years in a whole range of places - and I had two young people that I matched simply because I had a young person and I had a mentor. It was no rocket science, I just brought them together, but they didn't get on very well. They struggled; a lot of chemistry just did not happen. Unfortunately, on the Pacific Highway at a place called Wooli there was a horrific car accident and these guys were returning from Grafton, a couple kilometres up the road and we were the first people on the scene. They jumped out of the car and rendered assistance and experienced some pretty horrific stuff. Their relationship has never been the same since. The catalyst for change was something horrific like that and they have been matched now for seven or eight years. So there is always a bit of chemistry involved in everything. You can spend all day sitting around speed dating table and still never find the right guy, but forget all about the person who let you through the door. So it is a bit like that; it is a bit serendipitous.

I do have a tendency to waffle and I have probably forgotten the key question.

Mrs JAMIESON - No, that will do fine. Part of the question is, do you have a constant supply of mentors available to you and I presume you have a training program of some sort for them?

Mr BROOME - We do. We recruit twice a year. Part of your question was also around the age of mentors. So we have very young to older people.

Mr WILKINSON - To very old?

Mr BROOME - Yes and a lot of it depends on their availability. We prioritise probably the mentor first, in the sense that we are very clear on their availability. So if you are only available for two hours a week, please do not say you are available every day. We can utilise you for those two hours. That way we will not match you with a high needs kid who needs a lot more support. So if people are honest with us, we are able to fit them in a lot better.

The other part of your question was?

Mrs JAMIESON - With respect to training programs and the duty of care and those things.

Mr BROOME - We train twice a year and again we get them from all over the place, all walks of life. We recently did a 'bring a bloke' night, which was a huge success. We invited every existing mentor and anybody who knew anybody to bring a bloke along. We had it at a pub and we shouted beer. Obviously we limited it, saying that we did not want anybody to go out and kill themselves, we wanted them as a mentor! So it was important that they were around. We did a presentation and from that we were able to get 28 new mentors. A lot more attended. I think there were about 40 people. So we were able to get half of those on board as mentors. Our training, which is twice a year, is not accredited training. I suppose one of the reasons we do not accredit it is the way that government policy is going - who knows what will happen in a couple of years - but for the here and now it is about, we do not want any more youth or social workers, we want our mentors to be as natural as the day they come. But it is more around those risk factors and the risk and protective factors and the duty of care - the fact that you are engaging high-risk people young people. It is concerned with identifying things associated with self-harm and suicide. It is concerned with duty of care - if you have a 12 year old who is acting up in the car, do you just dump him out in the middle of nowhere?

Mrs JAMIESON - What about insurance cover?

Mr BROOME - Volunteer insurance, yes we have all that.

Mrs JAMIESON - My last question would be about debriefing the kids if their mentor, for whatever reason, drops out or dies. Do you have a debriefing process?

Mr BROOME - Yes, and we do quarterly reviews which are usually formal, involving lots of paperwork. We have a new evaluation system that I hate because it is very cumbersome, but the data that is going to come out of that is really beneficial. But for the young people, we attach each young person and a mentor to a coordinator. We have one for each program: we have Leaving Care North-West, Juvenile Justice Community - for kids with community-based orders living in the community - and a number of leaving-care programs as well. Each of those is assigned a number of young people and a mentor. A mentor went to Sydney yesterday for a job opportunity so I am filling the gap for that young person until we have an opportunity to rematch them.

Mr MARTIN - Have you got any views about the youth justice system and the way it works in Victoria generally? Do you think the three detention centres and splitting of the ages works well?

Mr BROOME - I suppose one general line that resulted in the development of Whitelion is to actually get something that continues when the young person leaves the system. As you can tell from the mentoring program, a lot of the Whitelion programs actually start the contact inside the juvenile justice system and then continue after that meeting time and continue for a number of years in many cases. That's what young people need. I find that has been a major gap and that's probably why we are here.

Mr MARTIN - It's a big gap in Tasmania.

Mr BROOME - It's a huge gap. I am 44 years old and when I say I have been in the sector for probably 40 years, that's because I was born into it. I grew up through all the

orphanages and boy's homes in Melbourne so I am a 'been there, done that' kid. Then I thought that since I spent my first 18 years as part of the system, is it going to be wasted or what do I do with it. So I went and got educated, got a degree and did all the clever things that you have got to do. You ask if it works; well 20 years ago it was a lot better. Conditions were very different. Transitional programs and boarding houses and hostels, a whole range of different things that I thought were very good concepts, were just very poorly managed. One of the biggest criticisms I have is around the leave program and reintegrating young people back into the community. It is comparing apples with pears or whatever. Silverwater is probably the leader in this country - and we are talking about an adult prison - in transitional programs. We go from one extreme to the other. Government has an issue with balance; we can't seem to get it right in the middle. We have got to do something really clever at one end or the other. With the transitional house, we had a high-risk young offender about 18 months ago who caused a bit of grief and it got closed down. It hasn't been opened since because some decisions that were made about one particular young person. That program has impacted on an entire - if we talk about sentences - generation of kids going through the centre who haven't been able to access this house. What is this house? This is a house that is one step before going into the community. I think we sometimes make it a bit too lax. With the exit program - the transition program - at Silverwater, it is still a secure building; you cannot go in and out when you like. You are limited, so you are either going out to work or you are coming back from work. You don't go out to go to the pub or have a smoke or something. I think we need to look at our transitional programs in being one step up from containment.

Our programs do not allow for such things as employment, housing, a whole range of different issues. We tend to do it within two to three weeks before they are released. The case workers, youth workers or whatever you call them in the centres say that a prisoner has to get his arse into gear, so we want a mentoring plan for re-employment and we want it all fixed before his exit, which is incredibly unrealistic. I spend a lot of time helping them develop their own exit plans so that they can come before whatever committees they have and have some evidence to say, 'A part of my getting leave was to get educated, to do this short hospitality course. If I did this I could then I could go onto that'. They need to show them some steps. They need some goals. We call it an award system but it is for their own growth, rather than being locked up today and released tomorrow.

Mr MARTIN - The whole system is supposed to be based on rehabilitation. Do you think the detention centres do that well enough?

Mr BROOME - No, because I don't think they believe that. I think they operate from the philosophy of risk aversion; everything is risk aversion. There has to be a place for that, so let's be real. If I was in charge of Juvenile Justice tomorrow, if I want to keep my seat then I'd better keep you on side. So there is an element of that, but it has to come back to an element of trust and that needs to be earned. I don't think there is enough opportunity to earn that. I don't believe it is about rehabilitation; I think it is about risk aversion.

Mr MARTIN - That is in all three centres?

Mr BROOME - Probably less with Malmsbury. Again, I think a lot of that is to do with the stages of development. Those kids are older and have a lot more to lose. In many cases they are a lot more negotiable.

Mr MARTIN - I think you mentioned before that most of your kids are department kids. We noticed that most of the young people who entered the juvenile justice system come from the child protection system. We have been told that there is a lot of cooperation and good case management between the two divisions. Do you agree with that?

Mr BROOME - Yes.

Mr MARTIN - The flow of information between the two is good?

Mr BROOME - Yes. I think one of the differences for our kids is in planning. Lack of resources in Juvenile Justice suggests that if I've got Johnny out on a community-based order or supervision order for three or more months and the wheels fall off and he gets locked up for three or six months, then I can have a rest and focus on the other 300 caseloads I have. Then Johnny is getting out soon, so there are some mandated requirements that a JJ worker has to fulfil during their custody. I think there is room for a bit more intensive planning, a bit more involvement. There is a lot of stuff left up to the centre. Then just before they are released, about six to eight weeks, there is the introduction to the community JJ worker, again in a more controlled environment.

As far as the two departments go, there has never been a communication issue in our involvement with them.

Mr MARTIN - Do you have a problem in Victoria with young people being in the centres on remand? Is there a high percentage on remand and are they there for too long a period?

Mr BROOME - I don't know whether I am the best one to ask. If you had asked me if there were too many Aboriginal young people on remand, I would say yes. The other main issue I have is that I had a young person who had high mental health issues, and I accept that, but he was denied parole because he had no safe place to live. He went from being incarcerated for whatever crime he committed to being incarcerated because he had no place of abode. I had an issue with that.

Mr DEAN - You say there are too many on remand; what do you see as the option to the Aboriginal inmates who are on remand? Where should they go?

Mr BROOME - Before coming to Melbourne I was part of an organisation in New South Wales running community programs on the north coast. They started with a bail house. They were getting young JJ kids locked up for pinching a Mars bar. The reality is that he was not getting locked up for pinching the Mars bar, however the environment in the JJ centre was deemed safer than returning the kid home. So there are a lot of easy angles where the kids are transient. We operate from a very white culture, you know, but a lot of the kids live with distant aunts and uncles and all the rest of it and for whatever reason they may be a bit dodgy or whatever, but someone is deeming that it is more appropriate that they be locked up. The community program set up a house in the bush, like hundreds of other community programs on the north coast of New South Wales, and they began to case-manage these kids and give a magistrate a reason not to lock them up.

We started to link them into other services like employment services and work experience. In New South Wales there are a lot of Aboriginal co-ops and land councils that run things like that, and they have even negotiated the age around the program. So they are able to create opportunities, otherwise the magistrate is left with no option. Every young person, I believe, that goes before a magistrate's court is potentially going to be locked up.

Mr DEAN - As I understand the system here in Victoria, before a magistrate does lock a youth up they are given a full case history of the background. With an Aboriginal youth, Aboriginal officers are involved in that process as well and they will give direction to the magistrate as to where these people should go. Do you think that is working?

Mr BROOME - Yes, there is a lot of evidence. One of our workers works very closely with the Broadmeadow court, and that has an Aboriginal court - the Koori court. My conversations with her show that the program is working quite well. I feel that Victoria is starting to get away from what a lot of other States do, and that is token resourcing.

Mr DEAN - I think that you are pretty right there.

Mr BROOME - National Parks and Wildlife was a classic - let us employ one Aboriginal to represent the entire nation and they are the voice of the indigenous community. It is about being fair dinkum; if it needs 20 workers then recruit 20 workers. The indigenous community is so complex and not one person can represent all the nations. I think that Victoria is starting to think about additional resourcing.

Mr WILKINSON - Glenn, you were three or four when you started in the system, and the statistics are high for people like yourself to follow for some time down the path of crime. What the major difference between yourself and other people? Who was your mentor? Why did you decide that this is the way to go?

Mr BROOME - I was a young dad. I am now a father of four, a grandfather of six. What changed for me was that at 17 and half I met my wife. I was ADD, and probably undiagnosed, but as young fellow I was up walls and all the rest of it. I actually found someone that took an interest in me.

Mr WILKINSON - Is that the same as Whitelion, someone taking an interest in you?

Mr BROOME - That's right.

Mr WILKINSON - And the earlier you can do that the better it is, especially if they are a good role model?

Mr BROOME - That is right, and they are deemed our most successful. I think the three key words are 'connect' - connecting with people - 'encourage' and 'inspire'. I think they are the three main words that really make a difference in a person's life. Meeting my wife was about connecting with her, and we produced babies and so on. The next thing was that she encouraged me to think I was worth more than what the department and everyone else told me I was worth. That inspired me to do other things because one of the biggest shifts that I find in a lot of young people is that when they move from being a victim to a victor, that is the change. From the time that they are a part of the department

they have youth workers, social workers, clinicians, everybody saying 'poor Johnny'. Johnny starts believing that, and rightfully so, but then it becomes his identify.

Mr WILKINSON - They use it as a crutch, don't they?

Mr BROOME - Then I go into the JJ system and I have my solicitor, who is a very well paid well-to-do guy, and he's telling me I am a poor victim. I constantly have this victim status, and until the day I say, 'I don't want to be a victim' - because out of my mouth is going to come all the 'poor me' stuff - I will never be victorious over it.

Mr WILKINSON - A former judge in Tasmania was saying that children are often taken from their parents because they are badly treated. There is no question about that, but there are some where the parents are still going to be the ones to give them affection and care and who know them better than anybody else, even though child protection, with the evidence they have, believe otherwise. Should there be a way to get in at that early age to help the parents to stop the whole process starting?

Mr BROOME - As part of my long journey I have also facilitated family relationship courses and I think they are really important. I have worked a lot with single dads, or dads going through crisis, or with adolescents and a whole range of things. There are number of organisations, and one in particular that I will plug is Relationships Australia. Babies aren't born with a set of instructions stamped on their bum. It is not until we go to tertiary education or become involved in some sort of institution that we discover such things as stages of childhood development - so it's okay for your baby to cry. It almost needs to come from our education system.

Mr WILKINSON - Are you saying that something like Relationships Australia, or another organisation similar to that, should be working hand-in-hand at the outset with child protection and saying, 'Look, these people shouldn't go into child protection. The families here need Relationships Australia to assist them if they can'.?

Mr BROOME - That's right, and I don't know why we have to wait until they are three.

Mr WILKINSON - I agree.

Mr BROOME - There is so much around diversion and early intervention that needs to be encouraged and supported, diverting them from child protection. Why bring them to notice if they don't need to be? Another one that is really important is the Family First initiative, which is a mentoring program for mums coming out of hospital. It is voluntary and it is available to them.

I live in Melbourne and my daughter lives in Newcastle. She had a difficult second pregnancy and was quite stressed. My wife went up a couple of times, but we couldn't do that regularly, so we linked her up with Family First and what happened is that -

Mr WILKINSON - Is that a group like Whitelion?

Mr BROOME - Family First is a State or Federal government initiative. It is a bucket of money that is part of strengthening families. What they do basically is operate a mentoring program and link you up with a young mum and you go into the house and

support them once or twice a week, give them a break, let them have a shower. It is an early intervention to see if there are any child protection issues: that the baby doesn't have unusual bruising. It could be something less deviant as that; it might just be malnutrition because they are feeding them the wrong thing or the baby has colic. I think there is a lot more early intervention stuff.

Mr WILKINSON - Do you have any information on that that you could give us.

Mr BROOME - Sure. If you give me a contact e-mail I will send it to you.

Mr DEAN - You were going to go down that one quick road of how you connect them to employment, and that is one of the major roles.

Mrs JAMIESON - I was going to ask one quick question. We have Clarke Island for Aboriginal offenders. Have you any comment to make on a project like that, where the kids are taken off to Clarke Island and taught the cultural ways and admonished culturally?

Mr BROOME - I have spent quite a number of years with indigenous communities in northern New South Wales and it is about integrating back into the mainstream. A lot of the young people are saying, 'What the hell do I do with these skills?' Everything I have to say or do is about relationships. The best places I have worked are those I have had the best relationship with; the times I enjoyed at school were those when I had the best relationships. Everything we do is about connecting us. If you just go in there for the sake of 'this is a good program' rather than being connected and finding further enrichment and development it isn't going to work. I think we have a lot of young kids who are sick to death of the word 'program'. We slot them into this program, put them into that program.

Mr WILKINSON - Murray, sorry that it has to be a whistlestop tour, but as the team leader of the employment program, you would realise that if people are working they obviously have a far better chance of not offending or reoffending. Can you briefly set out what you do and how it works?

Mr WILSON - As Glenn mentioned before, there is often a catalyst point in a person's life. We have a team of four, but backing us up are 45 corporate sponsors. The main areas are retail, hospitality, construction and trades, and finance and admin. You can walk through the city now and there are probably 15 or 20 kids doing work experience who came through our system. It employs about 40-50 kids per year.

The overall system itself starts off often in the JJ centres where we will meet the young person for the first time. We will do a vocational assessment. We have volunteers from human resources companies. All of the 45 companies have massive learning development and HR teams as well. They will come and work with kids, get a bit of a blueprint for where they want to go. Often it is an unrealistic perception of where they can be. If you ask a young person to select a job they will say, 'Executive director of principal marketing, South-East Asia'. They see the status side of it but they haven't seen anyone around them chip away at it, study and so on. They haven't quite got the pathway in their head so we will develop a vocational pathway. These HR teams and our teams will get in there and train them up. They will do things such as conflict resolution,

etiquette in the workplace, safety on a construction site - all those kinds of things. It gives them the basis.

Then we will do a work experience program, sometimes as part of their leave and sometimes early after they have left the system. Often it will be their first time inside that. I have a young person starting at the head office of the ANZ in Queen Street in the next week or so. That is a pretty big fallout if you have never been into a place like that before. So we organised a bit of a tour around, a site visit and a lunch with some of the key staff with whom she will be working to get her familiar with the environment. Before that we would have taken her down to a place called 'Fitted for Work' where we get a couple of corporate outfits to ensure she is starting to belong more to that sort of place. So there is the work experience and then we will get them into what we call a short-term placement. This will be three months for two or three days per week. That will be the first experience of work and in many cases it is often the first experience of anyone in their family, going back three or four generations. So it is really a significant thing: even turning up for that first day is the first break in that cycle over decades.

Once that has worked it is often a huge growth phase where you see the young person get 10 feet tall and bulletproof quite quickly. The skill enhancement will be massive and the confidence in just the way they carry themselves will be huge. Once that takes place we will look at a more significant placement that will either be with that same company or with another company, knowing that that young person has cut their teeth on what working life is all about and they can go on. So for each of our young people it is a pretty intensive service. We have 15 to 20 young people managed by each employment worker so that employment worker that we have manages that whole process right from vocational assistance through to an ongoing program so basically it is a 'suck and see' project. As the young person is ready to go, we will take them to that next step. As the employer is ready to take them on, we will then manage that process to take them on to a more significant part of it and hopefully get them into ongoing employment using some of those 45 companies or so.

Mr MARTIN - These are purely kids from the juvenile justice system?

Mr WILSON - It is a mixture - 80 per cent of our kids come from the juvenile justice system and we have placed about 260 kids in the last four years or so and about 20 per cent come from State care.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Any last question because I do not want to run over time?

Mrs JAMIESON - I was just going to ask one question about your perceived adequacy of the education within the detention centres, for example. Any comment to make there?

Mr WILSON - There are TAFE systems actually set up in the centres that we work in. What we try to do is encourage them to use that time from their TAFE. We have developed a vocational plan and in those classes we will say, 'If you really want to do this, you might consider small business certificate 1, 2 and 3 while you are here. You have six months, let's go'. We try to use that as another catalyst to try to bring those young people on.

Mr MARTIN - Just very quickly, where on earth do you get the 45 corporate sponsors from?

Mr WILSON - It has taken a long time to do it. There are champions within the companies concerned - people with a direct experience of Whitelion. If you look at the ANZ as an example, Shane Freeman is their national HR manager. He came down and did a vocational assessment with one of our kids - he came down to the centre and spent two hours with her. They see the potential in those kids. This particular young person came from an historical background of crime in her family but he could see the potential in her and came out and said, 'I'm going to give that kid a job'. He did and now she is still in work, not with the ANZ but she has taken that skill on to another workplace. So almost across all of those 45 a person of significance has come along and they have championed it with their own organisation after seeing it for themselves.

DEPUTY CHAIR - Thank you Murray and Glenn for coming along. I am sorry as we could have kept talking but obviously we have your cards so if there are questions that we need we can get back to you. That was terrific.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.