

ASHLEY, YOUTH JUSTICE AND DETENTION COMMITTEE - LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MET AT PARKVILLE AND MELBOURNE JUVENILE DETENTION CENTRES ON FRIDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2007.

DISCUSSION WITH KAREN MYERS, DIRECTOR, ALEX KAMENEV, JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND ANDREW REAPER, CEO OF THE PARKVILLE CENTRE.

CHAIR (Mr Hall) - We appreciate your time and the cooperation you have shown and, as you know, members of the committee here today - three of the elected members but there are two others who had to go home yesterday afternoon. As you know, this is a select committee of the upper House in Tasmania and you have seen our terms of reference. We have only the one youth detention centre in Tasmania which coincidentally is located in my electorate, in my home town. It is called Ashley Youth Detention Centre and there have been several issues there over the past few years, hence the need for the inquiry.

We have taken quite a lot of evidence in Tasmania already. We have 60 submissions and we still have about four days of evidence to take, so it has raised a lot of interest. We have been to South Australia for a couple of days. We looked at the two secure care centres, as they are called, in Adelaide and also took quite a bit of evidence as well from interested people - the departments and everybody else. Basically that is where we are at. We thank you for the opportunity to come here today and the opportunity to take transcripts.

Ms MYERS - We have not prepared a presentation for you because my understanding was that you would have some particular areas of interest, you would ask questions and that would generate some discussion.

CHAIR - Yes, that is right, I think that is the best way to do it. But if someone would not mind just giving us an overview of the two sites here, the numbers of people and all those sorts of things. We had the policy part yesterday and now it is the operational part that we are interested in getting some information on.

Ms MYERS - You understand the roles of the people here. Andrew is the CEO of this centre. On this site there are two centres and they each have a separate CEO. So Andrew is the CEO for the Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre. Alex is the Service Development Manager, so he works in town with me, and I am the Director of Custodial Services. You will have met Jan yesterday when she spoke to you - she is the Director of the Policy of Juvenile Justice and Youth Services. Within Custodial Services we have three centres across Victoria and we have Parkville Youth Residential Centre. We are just about to change our names and drop Juvenile Justice and become Youth Justice. So we are moving towards that in the next few months.

Parkville has the younger males - the 10-14 years age group - both remand and sentenced, as well as all of the young females that we have in the system. That is young females between the ages of 10-20, both remand and sentenced. So they are all in that

over there and generally there are very small numbers of the very young boys. Usually there are about six young males. Jan would have spoken to you about the strength of the diversion in Victoria; we would be hoping that 10-, 11- and 12-year-old young males are being diverted appropriately from a custodial sentence through the very strong work being undertaken by both Juvenile Justice in the regions and also community agencies.

With the young females we generally have around 12-15 at any particular time. That, as I said, is a completely separately run centre with its own facilities.

CHAIR - So therefore there is always separation between the boys and girls.

Ms MYERS - Yes. The two separate units so that the young men are in one unit and the young women in another.

Mr REAPER - However, there is no physical separation at that centre, there is no fence that divides them. It is a campus-style set up with a boys unit and a girls unit. They access the program facilities at the same time but not together. On occasions they do run events where they will all be together. So there is no actual physical separation.

Ms MYERS - So for example, with Reconciliation Week, for example, it might be that there is a shared event where we have got young females and males attending the event together.

CHAIR - Karen, can I ask what the numbers are in both centres at the moment?

Mr REAPER - I have not got them for Parkville but I think this morning it was 59 at Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre.

Ms MYERS - Parkville is 16 for today. It does change from day to day.

Mr MARTIN - Sixteen for both, girls and boys.

Ms MYERS - Yes, across the two. Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre is a bigger centre, and it not only has the units that are here on this site but it also has a property outside Melbourne that is a bush camp or property. We also have a transition house that is in the community. Parkville also has a transition house out in the community. The transition houses are for those young people who are nearing the end of their custodial sentence and moving toward parole and reintegration into the community. They could end up being placed in the community house for transition.

CHAIR - Could I ask you about the numbers at Malmsbury?

Ms MYERS - Malmsbury is the third centre and that accommodates 90 young people but it is running at 68 at the moment.

CHAIR - They are about average numbers?

Mr REAPER - Ours have been from the low 50s to the high 50s for some months now. They are quite stable around that sort of mark.

Mr KAMENEV - The Melbourne centre tends to fluctuate more because it has a large remand population; those numbers can fluctuate quite rapidly. Malmsbury is much more stable.

CHAIR - There are not any other detention centres out in the country at all?

Ms MYERS - These are the only three Juvenile Justice detention centres.

Mr MARTIN - What is the age cohort for Melbourne?

Ms MYERS - For Melbourne it is 15 to 17. There are older young people here but generally speaking this is the older age range that comes out of the Children's Court and then Malmsbury is generally the dual track and they are young people who are in 18 to 20 age group - only sentenced, not remand.

Mrs JAMIESON - So the chronologically older ones stay on because of their intellectual capacity or -

Ms MYERS - Well it could be that they started their sentence here within the age group of people who are held here and then rather than necessarily moving them to another centre it may be that they are settled here and the centre meets their needs. It may be that their behaviour or presentation, their immaturity may mean that they are better suited here.

Mrs JAMIESON - What is the longest period of time you could have somebody in detention in that respect?

Mr KAMENEV - If they are sentenced by the Children's Court it is up to three years for the 15-year-olds plus, but we get young people sentenced by adult courts. Did Jan talk to you about the dual track?

CHAIR - Yes. Sorry, Karyn, I cut you off earlier. We were going to talk about transition centres, I think.

Ms MYERS - We can go on to those later, it is just so you know that as part of this facility we actually have two houses that are in the community which you will not see today of course.

Mr REAPER - Just on the sentence length, we can have young people in our age group who are sentenced by a higher court, such as a supreme court for a serious matter such as murder/manslaughter. Their sentence is not unlimited - it is governed by legislation - but they can get 14, 15, 16 or whatever years for that crime, of which they will spend whatever proportion here before they may or may not be transferred to the adult system at whatever age. I know that is really unclear but in recent cases we have had someone with a 14-year sentence for example. Of course he will not spend that entire time with us, but once they are in the Supreme Court for serious matters their sentence is not restricted by the three-year YTC limit.

Ms MYERS - So what can and does happen is that the court says that they would like consideration to be given to the young person serving part of their sentence in the juvenile system so the Adult Parole Board and the Youth Parole Board go into dialogue

and the young person is or can be transferred, based on suitability, over to our system. But as to the point at which, say, a 17-year-old gets a 14-year sentence and they turn 20 or 21, the Youth Parole Board has said that, as young people reach the age limit, they would like to consider the best placement for them and whether it would be better to transfer them back into the adult system at that point. So that is a parole board decision although they would take advice of course from the centre about that young person.

Mr REAPER - Probably the only other quick thing on sentencing is that if it is YTC sentence, unlike a predominant amount of our adult sentences in Victoria, there is no minimum time set at sentencing so that is completely for the jurisdiction of the Youth Parole Board. The court cannot say, 'You have a three-year sentence with a minimum time to be served of two years'. They can only set the sentence and then it is up to the Youth Parole Board as the independent body to say how much of that they serve on parole in the community.

Mr MARTIN - Is there a pecking order mentality where - could one of your boys, say he is 16 years old, behave especially badly to try and go up to Parkville?

Ms MYERS - It doesn't work that way. Firstly, one of the things that I should mention is that Malmsbury is an open site. These two centres are totally secure, so they have a big fence around them and the units themselves are secure as well, whereas Malmsbury is an open site and it doesn't have a fence around it. You drive into Malmsbury and it is a number of units that are all faced in a circle. Of those, two units are secure. There is an admission unit where all young people who start their time at Malmsbury and then there is a secure unit where young people can be placed if there is some level of vulnerability. It can be some difficulty around their behaviour, it may be that they have outstanding court matters, so they are not really ready to be on an open site. The majority of the young men who are at Malmsbury are on an open site. There are very good security systems in place in terms of dynamic security, but every single day those young men get up and make a decision that they are going to stay at Malmsbury and be part of the program at Malmsbury. You wouldn't necessarily send a difficult young person from here onto an open site because it is not necessarily appropriate for them to be on an open site. The classification system that works at each centre really is about making some decisions about what is the best placement for any person within our system. We have some flexibility to move young people between the centres but generally speaking we maintain separation between the age cohorts and level of maturity and sophistication.

CHAIR - So when you talk about dynamic security, what do you mean by that?

Ms MYERS - Radios. Young people are radioed across. Staff know where young people are at any point in time, and there are rules around where young people can move on site.

Mrs JAMIESON - You don't have electronic tagging or anything like that.

Ms MYERS - No.

CHAIR - In a given year, what is an average number of people who might abscond?

Ms MYERS - It is zero from Malmsbury.

CHAIR - Is that right?

Ms MYERS - Yes. When you leave from the centre, we call that escape; we differentiate between 'escape' and 'abscond' because we have a leave program so when people take off from leave that is an abscond.

CHAIR - We will talk about escapes then.

Ms MYERS - Escapes - none, and we haven't had any escapes at Malmsbury in the time I have been here - two-and-a-half years. Work is done at Malmsbury around engaging young people. It is also a more mature population. It is an age 18-20 population. There is engagement within the units between staff and young people, as well as the monitoring of young people. As you would understand, a young person getting a phone call from a girlfriend - 'I'm breaking up with you' - can be enough to set them off and they are out of here. So we try to understand what is happening for them at any point in time, monitoring their response so we can make a decision to move a young person from the open site into one of the secure units.

Mr MARTIN - Do you monitor the phone call?

Ms MYERS - No; when a young person gets off the phone usually not much is hidden. The young people have an agreed telephone list and we have the Arunta telephone system.

Mr KAMENEV - Due to nature of the open site, staff have become very sophisticated in looking for unsettled behaviour in young people. So as soon as they notice some behaviour which they might think is unsettled, the health team will become involved and there will be an assessment process of how to manage the young person and what is appropriate for them. It is managed very quickly.

Mrs JAMIESON - What is the staff range?

Ms MYERS - What do you mean 'range'?

Mrs JAMIESON - The range of different people involved?

Ms MYERS - All of our centres are united-based, so within a unit there is a unit manager, the coordinators - people who lead the case-management process - supervisors and then the JJWIs, the floor staff. For every unit there is that structure. There are also health staff, other staff who run programs with young people, and the CEO who sits on top of all of that.

CHAIR - With security, we had evidence in Tasmania where a past manager of the centre said to us, 'Really, Ashley would be better off without the security fence'. Have you a view on that? I know you have Malmsbury as a case in point where there is no security fence, but here you have one. You couldn't run this centre without a security fence, I wouldn't have thought.

Mr REAPER - Definitely not. I think the decision about not having a fence is very much dependent on location. The fact that we are eight minutes from the middle of the city and the vast majority of young people in our custody are from the metropolitan region

makes it less probable that you could ever operate a facility without a fence. Having said that, having a fence does create a different dynamic than at Malmsbury. It is a challenge, so when you try to contain young people they try to break out. Karen has already touched on the point that at Malmsbury a proportion of the containment of the young people is their own decision. That works for the older age group. We have a younger population as well who generally by their age and nature are more impulsive in their decision-making, although some of those young people are still at Malmsbury. I think the first thing is location. It is rural-based; for a lot of the young men at Malmsbury, when they get there the first thing they think is, 'Where the hell am I? I have no idea where I am. I have never been here'.

CHAIR - How far out of town is it?

Mr REAPER - It is about an hour. It is part of a very small town; you can't quickly identify rail stations or anything like that, so it is nicely isolated, but not isolated, if you know what I mean.

Ms MYERS - As far as I am concerned we would never be in a situation where every young person we have would be suited to an open site. At Malmsbury or at any centre there will always be young people whose circumstances and/or their presentation will mean that they are not able to be on an open site. Those things can include things as simple as having outstanding court appearances or having charges that are very serious. It can be that they are low functioning, have some serious mental health issues - a whole lot of factors come into play. There are young people here who have been in the secure facility and who move to Malmsbury and do very well. They go on to the open site at Malmsbury and are well suited to that, just as there are young people who move from here to the community transition program or to Acheron, the low-security bush program, and do very well. So there will always be a mix of young people, but certainly there would always be people who need the security of a secure facility.

Mr MARTIN - Do you have any escapes from this facility?

Ms MYERS - We had a series of escapes from this precinct last year during the Commonwealth Games; you may have seen us in the paper. We had a group of young men from Parkville who escaped through the fence and ran into the Commonwealth Games Village, and within about 30 seconds were picked up by the police. That happened early last year. The year before, when our new remand building was built, the fence was faulty. There was a faulty weld and a young person pulled up the weld and was able to get out. A couple of months after that we had another escape at Melbourne as well.

Mrs JAMIESON - How did they do it?

Ms MYERS - The other escape from Melbourne was over the wall.

Mr KAMENEV - The four during the Commonwealth Games were through the fence.

Ms MYERS - Other than the four leaving through the fence, which increased our numbers significantly, we have had a significant decrease in escapes and absconds over a number of years.

Mr MARTIN - What are the statistics?

Ms MYERS - Generally speaking, we have some data that is in the public domain already. If you are asking for things that are not already public, then I would have to seek permission to release it to you.

Mr KAMENEV - Five to 10 years ago there were regularly 80 to 100 escapes per year. The main work that has gone into addressing that is around improved security, improved assessment processes for young people, and improvements in management processes.

Mr MARTIN - That would have been before the Juvenile Justice Act?

Mr REAPER - Children and Young Persons Act?

Mr MARTIN - Yes.

Mr REAPER - No, it was after that. One of the other things that has changed is the closure of a part of the Melbourne facility known as Senior YTC. It was an older part of our centre that closed in 2002 and was not fully secure. The building part was very secure but it then had a yard that allowed young people to scale out just 200 metres off the road here. So that is our last experience of a not completely secure physical centre smack bang in the middle of Melbourne. We had quite a number of escapes.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do you have full camera surveillance of the fences?

Mr REAPER - No.

Mrs JAMIESON - Any at all?

Mr REAPER - The only CCTV surveillance that we have is on our entry points - all external to the centre. So we have no CCTV within the centre itself.

Mrs JAMIESON - Is there a reason for that? Is it cost?

Ms MYERS - No, it is not to do with the cost. It is more about the philosophy, I suppose. In having this discussion about the detail of the security, I would just like to reiterate that information about where our security cameras are and those things that it is confidential.

CHAIR - No, don't want that fine detail.

Ms MYERS - We have already told you some of it, which is fine. It is just that other people might like to know the fine detail because it would make it easier for them to avoid detection. Andrew can take you through some of the security that we have on this site. There has been a security review recently and certainly our previous minister has mentioned publicly that there was a security review of this precinct. That was in response to some escapes that we had from the centre and the fact that some of the security in place in the centre has been there since 1998, so now it is a few years old. It had been some time since we had a security review of the site whereas we more recently had a security review at Malmsbury. As part of that piece of work we have been thinking

about the balance between dynamic and static security, the balance between what the security infrastructure provides you with and what the operational management provides you with. We want to make sure we have that balance right because we are certainly not a prison and we are not high security, so we are not aiming to build a fence like a prison fence. Having said that, we want to know that our infrastructure provides us with an appropriate barrier, which means then we can operationally manage young people in the way that is conducive to their rehabilitation inside.

CHAIR - If this centre was out in the country somewhere like Malmsbury, and you had a greenfield site and you wanted to put something there for the same category of people that you have in here now, would you perhaps build that without a fence and just have a secure unit in there? Might that be another option?

Ms MYERS - I do not know. It is not going to happen.

CHAIR - The only reason I ask is that we have been having that debate.

Ms MYERS - I would say exactly the same thing to you as I said before. We will always have young people who are most appropriately managed within a secure environment. There are some young people for whom the structure of a secure environment presents a real opportunity to work with them quite constructively. They are contained and compliant because of the nature of the facility. It is a good opportunity for them to be taking advantage of health, education or vocational programs. I do not know what we would do if we were able to start again.

Mr REAPER - The only other open site of course is our bush camp, which is more available to the younger people on a Children's Court order. We have had two, and one was closed down 10-plus years ago. They are predominantly it not almost exclusively for our young people who are on adult court orders and who go through a rigorous process. The centres work very closely alongside our region and courts to meet the criteria of the Children and Young Persons Act. They have to be seen as vulnerable in the adult system or as a good prospect for rehabilitation. So it is a small cohort of that age group who come to Juvenile Justice and they are very aware it is their last opportunity. They very easily could have been sentenced to a prison environment. I think that is a significant factor and that is not something that I think you guys have available. You do not have the dual-track system. We do not know - it has never been tested fully in Victoria - how much of our population who are on Children's Court orders could operate on an open site. I think it is significant. They know that it is very much their last opportunity and if they do not take full advantage of it, on their next sentence or even on their current one, they can find themselves quickly within an adult facility. I am not saying that the stick is more emphasised than the carrot, but they are aware of it and they know that this is a great opportunity for them, so that is their decision. Before that there is a very solid process that involves the centre and the regional people at the time of sentencing to make sure that the appropriate people get to that facility. It is not always successful.

Ms MYERS - All the young people in this age group come here, all of those on remand and all of those that have a custodial sentence.

CHAIR - Andrew, as the Operations Manager, you might be able to answer this for me: here at Juvenile Detention Centre where you have boys from 15-18, how do you manage

those that are very tough? Do you separate those out or do you mix them round the whole?

Mr REAPER - We have a classification process. But we do have quite specific purposes for our sentenced units. First of all, we are lucky enough to have a new remand facility that has 26 beds in it. It is separated into two distinct wings and also has the capacity to separate again into a third wing of that building. One of the wings can be cut in half and that allows us to make sure that we get the mix because we average over 20 young people on remand at any given time. About 40 per cent of our population are on remand. That allows us to work on our mix, which has been a hugely beneficial tool. In the past we had one remand facility and everyone was in there. We work very hard to keep our remand boys separated from our sentenced boys as a general rule. Having that capacity to divide and conquer, for want of a better word, we can keep the boys that don't mix well with others separated. In remand we have the 15-18 year olds and that is a great opportunity to do that.

In our sentenced units we have a unit for our most violent offenders and we run a violence program in there. Clearly our heavier boys would end up in that unit in terms of their offending and at times their behaviour. They tend to be in the older age group. When I last did the snap shot, which I think was last week, about 40 per cent of the boys in there were 18, at the very high end of our age group.

We have another unit called Southbank, which is our most vulnerable high needs young people. They generally have mental health issues, ID, really impulsive behaviour, ADHD; some of them have all of things. As at last Friday, 45 per cent of those boys were only 15. Although we are not necessarily classifying on age, that happens.

We have a third unit, which is called Westgate. The fact that it is our only other sentence unit, we are working strongly on the purpose and intent of that unit but basically, if you do not fit into the other two categories that is where you end up. We also have a smaller unit down there that is very much for transitioning and highly motivated young people - not necessarily exceptionally well behaved but highly motivated in terms of addressing some of their issues. They are basically our sentence units. To answer yes, it does allow us to keep them apart to some degree.

Mr MARTIN - So my pecking order question comes in here again. Some would probably say that I am fixated! Does this create a desire to behave badly to -

Mr REAPER - We are no different to any other part of the world in that we have a society with pecking orders. Our staff work exceptionally hard to know exactly where the pecking order fits and to make sure it operates in an appropriate way. So there will always be someone towards the top of the pecking order in every one of those units. We work very hard to make sure that that person is using their leadership capacities for good rather than evil as well as trying to change that pecking order if we need to. It is unfortunate when we do not change that. We have not been able to come up with a system to change. I have worked in schools previously and it is exactly the same. It is probably the same in Parliament and things like that! Generally, people are not very keen to go to Eastern Hill, so they do not want to misbehave to get there. It is an exceptionally structured, ordered and tightly run unit. Whilst the Stop the Violence program is a voluntary program you have to participate if you are classified there. So it

is not necessarily voluntary. Young people are not always keen to undertake that program. There are some big, strong boys at Eastern Hill, so generally people do not want to go there. So we do not have the issue of people misbehaving to get there. Our young boys are allowed to stipulate their preference of classification and they are pretty much on the money as to where they think they will best fit. If a young person is displaying problematic or aggressive behaviour in one of the other units - say, Westgate - we are very reluctant to deal with that by moving him to Eastern Hill. That is generally not done. In nearly all cases the young people are classified to Eastern Hill because of their offence rather than their behaviour.

Mrs JAMIESON - Does that include sex offenders as well?

Mr REAPER - Absolutely. Sex offenders go there, although not always and not as a matter of course. Quite a number of our sex offenders over time would also be seen as particularly vulnerable, not just because of their offence but also because a lot of them are quite low functioning. A lot of our sex offenders also end up in Southbank, for example, as long as they are not seen as a risk to others.

Mrs JAMIESON - And do you have specific sex offenders programs?

Mr REAPER - We certainly do.

Mrs JAMIESON - Is that mandatory?

Mr REAPER - It is generally ordered by the Parole Board, so it is pretty much mandatory.

Mrs JAMIESON - What if there is any display of sexual activity towards other inmates?

Mr REAPER - We have a quite sound operational sexualised behaviour framework. It operates with a series of flags. Our staff have been trained in that and are quite good at identifying and working with that sort of behaviour.

Ms MYERS - Over the last couple of years a piece of work was done around developing this sexualised behaviour program and we trained all our staff in it, and it has been implemented right across our system.

Mr REAPER - It is exceptionally important in the custodial environment to have that framework operating because with so many teenage boys inappropriate behaviour can very quickly become the accepted norm, including by staff, so you have to work quite closely with them.

Mr MARTIN - Is this public knowledge?

Ms MYERS - We can share the sexualised behaviour framework with other States.

Mr REAPER - It is a very user-friendly framework for our staff. It is a matter of 'if you do this, that is how we will react' and the boys are very aware of it.

Mrs JAMIESON - If a kid is clearly in distress, are you allowed to be politically incorrect in any way, or is it very much hands off and talking it through? In other words, are you allowed to give them a cuddle?

Mr REAPER - It is a no-touch policy. You might be able to put a hand on their shoulder and talk to them. But staff would not actually cuddle a kid or do anything like that.

Ms MYERS - We have health services and at Malmsbury we have an internal health service. At this site we have the forensic health services, which is part of the Children's Hospital. That is a funded health service here, and while there would be an immediate response by the staff - the manager and supervisors - to take that young person aside and talk them through the issue and assist them to settle, we would also get health services staff involved immediately. The nurse would come down and so might the psychologist.

Mr REAPER - The framework identifies behaviour that may be appropriate for a young male, but is clearly inappropriate within this environment. We would not necessarily call the health team in, but they would be involved.

Ms MYERS - I was talking about the comforting. If a young person is distressed, while there would be an initial response right here on the spot to understand what is happening to the young person and to support them, we would get health services people to assist.

Mrs JAMIESON - Are health services available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. or 24 hours a day, or what?

Ms MYERS - It is a combination. We have health services staff on site during working hours, but we have on-call access to doctors and psychiatrists all the time.

Mr KAMENEV - I might just add a comment on the separation of clients. Our young women's unit is a 15-bed unit and there could be a 12-year-old remandee and a 20-year-old woman on an attempted murder charge. There is no physical capacity to separate them so the important part about the management is around the assessment team, planning and monitoring of those young people. You don't necessarily need to have physical separation of the different groups and cohorts to be able to manage them appropriately within the same unit or within the same centre.

Ms MYERS - Over the last couple of years in particular we have spent a lot of time and energy in working with our staff around managing behaviour. It has been a real focus of ours. We have done that in a number of ways. We started by doing saturation training, so for all of our staff it was more classroom-based training where we took them out and had a specially designed program around managing behaviour. More recently, what we did as a follow-up was what we call 'unit-based interventions' where the specialist, who was a psychologist who designed the training in conjunction with us, actually went in to every unit across our system and worked with staff to reinforce the sorts of skills, behaviour, and what they had learnt when they were in the classroom. The reality is it is pretty easy to sit there and talk about it in the abstract but the support to be integrating what you have learnt in practice is important.

CHAIR - There are several points that we have picked up through our deliberations already so we would like to touch on each of those so we can make some comparisons. This

might be one for the operations manager: in terms of assaults between residents and staff, do you have a problem with that? In any sort of environment there are low levels or medium levels, do you have a comment to make on that?

Ms MYERS - Can I talk from an occupational health and safety perspective? I prefer to do it that way, if you don't mind. We are passionate about occupational health and safety and we are doing some significant work around making our workplace safer. We do have an issue with occupational violence, as we do with stress, as we do with sporting injuries - slips, trips, falls and manual handling. We have done a lot of work over the last couple of years. One piece of work in particular was where we were working very closely with the BWA - Worksafe - around occupational violence. It was around drilling into what sort of policies, procedures and processes we had in place to keep our staff safe. We have just engaged a contractor to work with us to develop an OH&S management system right across our three centres. I think you can drill into violence or the hazard of stress in the workplace and you can improve it while you are looking at it, but if we are really going to achieve sustainable change, to understand the violence and improve the numbers of injuries that occur we need to do it on a systems level. Our piece of work has started and all of our staff are involved. Over the last couple of days our staff have been involved in really intensive risk assessments and job safety analyses around occupational violence, stress, slips, trips and falls and around manual handling. Over the next five months there is a project plan that maps out the work we are going to do and then that will inform the development of the OH&S management system.

CHAIR - If there are incidents, do you have a formalised complaints procedure - a resident against a staff member or -

Ms MYERS - We have a very formal process. It starts with an incident report. In Victoria, DHS has a very robust incident reporting system and it would start there. It includes things like operational debrief, preliminary assessment investigations - there is a hierarchy of processes.

Mr MARTIN - Is that a policy document as well?

Ms MYERS - An incident reporting policy document, yes. We can provide that too.

CHAIR - In all cases, a youth worker at the bottom level of the pecking order would always get some feedback?

Ms MYERS - Yes, and it is also about understanding what has happened so that we can improve by controlling or managing the risk better or changing practice. It is about supporting the staff member who may have been injured. It maybe about the learning for all staff. It may be that an incident has occurred that has escalated in a way that has meant that a young person has been restrained and isolated because of their behaviour or because they are an immediate risk to themselves or to others. It is really around understanding how it happened, through an operational brief, and is there something that could have been done differently. Was it managed well? Occupational violence has occurred, so staff members are exposed to that but the way things were managed was absolutely appropriate. Everyone followed the procedures the way they should have, but as part of it they might have got an elbow to the chin.

CHAIR - Are your youth workers accredited?

Ms MYERS - They are trained.

Mr MARTIN - What are they learning?

Ms MYERS - Things like restraint. There here is a course that our staff have to do which is around managing behaviour and restraint. They are taught the approved restraint techniques.

Mr MARTIN - How much training do your staff have before they go on the job? Are they qualified?

Mr REAPER - There is a qualification available. I think it is Australia-wide - the Certificate IV in Juvenile Justice. It has been called different things over different times. A significant proportion of our staff have that qualification.

Mr MARTIN - How much training for that and over what period of time?

Mr REAPER - It depends whether you do it full time or part time. It is a TAFE-run course. We recently have supported our staff in doing that and it took a year.

Mrs JAMIESON - How much on-the-job thing?

Mr REAPER - When we recruit or employ staff they go through an induction process, which is 12 days for us. They vary at each centre but generally it's between 10-15 days on-the-job training before they start, which includes shadow shifts, time in the unit, behaviour management, case management, restraint, suicide prevention, first aid, operational security procedures et cetera.

Mr MARTIN - All your staff have this certificate before they start?

Mr REAPER - No, not all. A vast majority.

Ms MYERS - In Victoria it is not mandatory, but as Andrew said the majority of our staff do have Certificate IV. In the last 12 months we worked in partnership with two TAFEs to run programs here for staff who are currently employed but didn't have Certificate IV.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do you ever take kids on any work experience?

Mr REAPER - We have a few young people on placements as part of their TAFE, so they are doing a certificate or diploma at a TAFE and they want to do a two or three-week placement. They go through quite a rigorous screening process. At any given time there would be one, and maybe six over a year.

CHAIR - Do you employ any external security contractors at all?

Ms MYERS - No.

CHAIR - So everybody is within the department?

Ms MYERS - Yes. You may have a similar system where court transport is done by -

CHAIR - Some of that is done by an external contractor?

Ms MYERS - Yes. We don't do court transport.

A new induction program is currently being developed called Beginning Practice, which was originally developed for child protection and has been very successful, and is currently being modified for Juvenile Justice. We will be rolling out Beginning Practice this year for our staff. It's about being much more considered concerning the full range of material, information and skill development that we want. Before people start they would do some shadow shifts, then we would continue to develop their skills.

CHAIR - Karyn, might you also provide the committee with a flow chart across the centres - an organisational chart?

Ms MYERS - Yes. It won't have people's names or details, it just gives you the structure.

CHAIR - That is all we want. I presume you have team leaders amongst your youth workers?

Mr REAPER - They are called unit supervisors, but that is exactly what they are. They lead a team on a day-to-day basis.

Mr MARTIN - How many staff do you have in charge of a unit?

Mr REAPER - They vary. We have set rosters that are agreed to with us and the CPSU. It is hard to answer but five would be a rough estimate.

Ms MYERS - We don't have set ratios. Each centre has different numbers of staff in different units; it is very much about the needs of the particular centre and the particular unit. It is not that we have a set way of doing rosters across the system.

Mr MARTIN - What is the lowest number you would ever had?

Ms MYERS - The difficulty in answering that is that I might have two 12-year-old boys in a unit at Parkville, so the number of staff in that unit will be different from if they had six or eight boys. It does and can vary. In this centre there are a couple of different rosters in place. For example, there are two units that have a completely different roster because the young men are up for longer periods of time, so there is a different roster which has different numbers of staff from some of the other units.

Mr MARTIN - Would there ever be a situation where you would leave only one youth worker in the unit?

Mr REAPER - Only when the boys are all secured in their rooms.

Mr MARTIN - So that can happen of a night?

Mr REAPER - At night we have one, but we would only ever have one staff member in the unit on their own if all the boys are secured in their rooms.

Mrs JAMIESON - So within your rostering do you have the capacity, if you have a very low number in one particular unit, to switch staff from another unit?

Ms MYERS - In some parts of the system. It is different in different centres, given the complexity of the system we are in. The answer would be different from this centre to that centre or to Malmsbury.

Mr REAPER - It's different day to day almost. We work very much under a unit management base model, so a unit manager is responsible for their unit and staffing. Here at this centre and at the other centres, like Malmsbury, there is an operations manager role and the job is primarily to run the centre on a day-to-day basis. His first duty each morning is to go down and have a look at the staffing across the site. There is the potential, maybe, to say, 'They are looking pretty settled so we'll swing one over here', but generally no. We do staff the centre but our starting point is very much unit by unit.

Ms MYERS - It is a reasonable requirement, a requirement under our agreement, that staff know what their roster is in advance and know where they are going to be and what time they are going to be working. That is not to say we do not bring people in at short notice because we might want extra staff because we have some particularly difficult behaviour that we are trying to manage, or some people might have rung in sick or whatever.

CHAIR - To get back to the night-time security, when they are locked down, for one unit you would only need one?

Mr REAPER - We would have one night officer per unit. We also have three additional night officers based in our control room to support running the site.

CHAIR - For this centre you would have how many people?

Mr REAPER - Nine.

Mr MARTIN - What is the procedure for the unit if you have one officer there, they are all secured, but something happens? Maybe if one takes sick or something.

Mr REAPER - We always have the additional staff on site.

Mr MARTIN - The staff would never open -

Ms MYERS - The procedures are not to open the doors until the second person comes. We have very significant operational procedures. Another piece of work that has been done over the last few years is the development of our operations manuals. So we are very clear about rules and behaviour and how we manage the safety of young people and the safety of staff at night. Things do happen at night. If we are heading into the evening or the weekend and we know that we have some unsettled young people or a young person who may be showing signs of self-harming -

Mrs JAMIESON - Epileptic or something like that?

Ms MYERS - Generally speaking we would be managing that medically all the time anyway. If there is something that is making the centre or the unit unsettled, then the CEO and the ops manager would be preparing for the evening or the weekend by making some decisions about staffing. For example, if someone in the unit needs to be on constant observation then you need to think about your staffing matter. You would have some additional staff that were in for that evening to manage that.

Mr MARTIN - Is it possible to share that with us?

Ms MYERS - Yes, the Department of Juvenile Justice in Tasmania can have access to our operation procedures. We shared them with other States.

Mr REAPER - Light reading - only several thousand pages or so.

Mr MARTIN - Has there ever been a situation where an officer has made a mistake?

Ms MYERS - Yes, we sometimes find, following investigations when something has happened, that it was human error. It might be that someone has not followed a procedure exactly as they should have. It might just be an oversight. It is generally not that someone has tried to do the wrong thing on purpose. It may have been that they just responded and did follow procedure. Because of our incident reporting system, which is the department one that we will send you, we have a way of knowing what is going on. We are alerted to the fact that incidents have occurred and we do take the time to understand what has happened to try and learn from it. Of course we have a system in place so that if there has been serious misconduct then the department has a process we follow that means that someone could end up having their employment terminated. But generally speaking it is about working with staff so that they understand what their role is and what the rules are.

Mr MARTIN - What is the gender balance for your staff?

Mr KAMENEV - It's different at the different centres. With the young women's centre it is about 60 per cent female and 40 per cent male. At the other two centres it is the reverse, so it is 65: 35 and 60: 40 per cent.

Mr MARTIN - Do you have procedures for female allocation?

Mr REAPER - No.

Ms MYERS - But we do for searches because it is required to be same-sex.

Mr MARTIN - Would you ever have a situation where there is a solitary male left in charge of the girl's unit?

Mrs JAMIESON - Say at night, for example?

Ms MYERS - I don't have a problem with there being a male staff member. We have male staff working in the young women's unit, just as we have female staff. There are rules

around searches for young women, as there are for young men, and that would only be done by female staff. But male staff work in the unit.

Mr KAMENEV - There are rules around not entering a client's bedroom alone at night and there are some other protections as well.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do you have a problem with contraband being brought in by visitors?

Ms MYERS - Yes, people try to bring it in - family members and visitors. Young people try to bring in contraband.

Mr REAPER - Generally, a significant proportion of our security procedures are dependent on staff adherence. So it is essential that you put in mechanisms, other than incident reports or when things go wrong, to ensure you have some idea whether the staff are following procedure. So I cannot reiterate that enough. We search all young people as they return to the site. We do regular, what I call 'random', searches of the unit - a minimum of two bedrooms a day plus a general live-in area. It is done every day. We do a minimum of two external checks of each building on a daily basis. We do two checks of the perimeter fence on a daily basis. With reasonable cause we search each of our young people after they have had a visit. So it is quite strong.

Mrs JAMIESON - What about pocketless overalls?

Mr REAPER - No.

Ms MYERS - Last year we had a change to the legislation, which now enables us search visitors of young people. We are just putting the policy and procedures together around that. So we have not yet started searching visitors but we will be searching visitors of young people using walk-through electronic searches. We will also have the capacity to do a pat-down search. That will be introduced in the near future across all three centres.

Mrs JAMIESON - Is that because you have had an increase of contraband coming in?

Ms MYERS - No. We ended up having that change to the legislation at the point at which the terrorism legislation was being introduced. However, we do know that contraband does come in because we find it. As a part our need to manage contraband as opposed to just finding it once it is already in here, this was seen as a reasonable approach to that.

Mr MARTIN - How significant a problem is substance abuse within the facility?

Ms MYERS - When we did a snapshot fairly recently, significant numbers of our young people have come to us with drug and alcohol issues - 80-90 per cent. A significant part of the work we do with young people is around drug and alcohol issues.

Mr MARTIN - Do you have a problem within the centre?

Ms MYERS - We have zero tolerance for drug and alcohol use. If you are asking whether drugs get into the juvenile justice or adult correctional systems, yes they do, but because of the regime that Andrew talked about, particularly around young people being searched when they have gone out and come back into the system, we pick up -

Mrs JAMIESON - Do the staff bring in any contraband at all?

Ms MYERS - Generally not.

Mr REAPER - Generally our contraband of choice is tobacco.

CHAIR - Karyn, one of our terms of reference is education. We want to talk about education and programs, so they will both fit in together, if that's okay. Could you talk about that to us, please?

Ms MYERS - As you may know, we have two TAFE providers - Kangan Batman TAFE provide TAFE services on this precinct and BRIT, which is the Bendigo Regional Institute, provide it at Malmsbury. They receive funding from OTE - the Office of Training and Education. It is vocational arm of Education. It funds TAFE to provide vocational services in prisons and in Juvenile Justice. It is run as a TAFE campus, so TAFE is based on site here and on site at Malmsbury. A range of vocational programs are run.

The other thing that happens on this site is that the Department of Education runs school, because we have school-aged young people at Parkville. In a snapshot, we have significant numbers - I think it was 70-80 per cent of young people who have been expelled - who haven't completed school. The majority of our young people have quite poor literacy and numeracy. In saying that we have TAFE, some of the programs that TAFE is running is very around developing literacy and numeracy and re-engaging young people in formal learning because of the young people who are disengaged from the education system.

Mr REAPER - Seventy-two percent have been suspended or expelled from school and 83 per cent who are aged 19 or over never finished high school.

CHAIR - If I could highlight a couple of differences we have already found. In Tasmania there is a very minimal requirement for residents to undertake education programs, whereas in South Australia there are no ifs, buts or maybes; it is mandatory. Is that the same here?

Ms MYERS - Yes. The program at all of our centres is that there is an agreed program, which in fact takes up most of the daylight hours where young people would be part of a TAFE program or a series of TAFE programs. There are also other programs that are structured within the day. For Eastern Hill here it would include the violence program that is mandatory for them to do, but for the rest of the young people here it includes the general violence program. So we have a violence program that is run by our health service, we have the YMCA who come in and do structured programs with young people, we have drug and alcohol programs, a program for young people who have committed sexual offences, and a range of general counselling that is done by health services.

CHAIR - And some life-skills programs?

Ms MYERS - Yes.

Mr KAMENEV - We run groups in all our units, community-type meetings, where they can raise issues - independent living programs.

Ms MYERS - There are parenting programs, independent living programs.

Mr MARTIN - At Parkville, how many hours a week is spent at school?

Ms MYERS - School is every day. Are you talking about the Department of Education?

Mr MARTIN - Yes. How many hours a day?

Ms MYERS - Right through the day.

Mr KAMENEV - I would have to check that.

Mr MARTIN - How much time would an individual student spend at school?

Ms MYERS - School is a requirement but has a different requirement than TAFE. School is run as a school. It could be that a young person doesn't attend the whole day because there is something else that comes up on that day, whether it is court or something else. Generally speaking, young people are at school.

Mr REAPER - From my experience, at times young people are deliberately disruptive, as they would be at a normal school, and are required to be removed from the classroom, but they go back to the unit and sit there and do their school work. They generally get a little bit sick of that and start to behave because they would much prefer to be back in a classroom with everyone else. So it's not like, 'If I misbehave I get sent back to the unit and watch TV'; they get sent back and they have to sit there and do their school work.

Mrs JAMIESON - You have mentioned not watching TV, is there a censorship on videos and TV programs that come on regularly? Are you sensitive about what kids can watch?

Mr REAPER - We do have some capacity for pay television that is limited to x amount. There are restrictions on what movies they can watch. It does of course vary a little from site to site with the different age groups, but they are censored.

Mr KAMENEV - We have a policy on entertainment material, which includes magazines and TV.

Ms MYERS - We are very prescriptive around that. For example, at Malmsbury they don't allow the watching of MA+ films and videos.

Mr MARTIN - Is that strictly adhered to?

Ms MYERS - Yes.

Mr MARTIN - There appeared to be a problem in Tasmania where some staff have discretion about videos that the young people can watch.

Ms MYERS - There are certain things that are rules, with procedures that are required to be followed, and there are certain things where there is discretion. If it is a rule and procedure, there is a requirement for it to be followed. As Andrew said, you have to have systems in place that allow you to monitor that people are following the rules. I am not saying that no-one ever doesn't follow the procedures but we hopefully have the checks and balances in place so that we are able to check compliance.

Mr KAMENEV - For a staff member to bring in a video they would require the permission of the manager.

Mrs JAMIESON - As to neighbourhood security when you have an escape, have you had any interaction with neighbours? Do you let the neighbours know there has been an escape?

Mr REAPER - No.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do the neighbours complain at all?

Mr REAPER - We have had a longstanding and very positive relationship with our neighbours. We have kept in relatively regular contact with them, especially in recent years, primarily about consultation and information as we have redeveloped the site and done some building projects.

Mrs JAMIESON - Is this by newsletter?

Mr REAPER - Newsletters, focus groups, information groups. Generally they leave us alone, which has been great. They are not overly concerned about us at all. It will become more of a challenge for us because the Commonwealth Games site will significantly increase our neighbours, because that has now become residential. We go from a very small group of people -

Ms MYERS - A group of people who have paid a lot of money to live there!

Mr REAPER - to people who have paid a lot of money for the views of the city over the juvenile justice centre. That will be something that we have to encounter but generally, if there is an escape, we don't alert them. They are very happy to leave us alone and we don't have any issues.

Mr KAMENEV - This site has been used for child welfare and juvenile justice for 120 years, so people who buy here know what they are getting into.

Ms MYERS - Can I mention something we haven't really spelt out to you here but something different about this centre which is related to security? We have what is called 'control' - and as we walk around we will show you where it is - it is a unit where the staff's role is to monitor and manage the movement around and into this centre. Other than the remand unit, with all of the other units everyone has to go through control to get there, and even for remand everyone visiting remand would have to go through control as well. Control is monitoring the movement of people around the site. That is their role, as well as admitting people coming into this centre. From court transport would come through control. There are searches complete within control. So there is something that is

different about this centre to our other two where there is that additional function. Control do the perimeter.

Mr REAPER - They do it for the evening.

Ms MYERS - Yes, the evening perimeter searches.

CHAIR - You mentioned bush camps and transitional centres, could you describe those to us?

Ms MYERS - With the community transition program there is a young women's house and a young men's house. For a very small number of young people who go through a rigorous assessment it is thought appropriate and beneficial for them for their transition to be enhanced by a move from the centre out to this community house, which is staffed on a roster of staff who are up all night, so it is not sleepover staff. The restrictions around the use of that program are that young people have to have a complete, structured day program so, generally speaking, they are engaged in work or training. It is not that they are sitting around in a house out in the community, it is that they have a completely structured day program that may include things such as banking, budgeting, learning to use public transport again - some of those transition things that will be enhanced by being out in the community. That is for just a small period of time prior to their being released on parole. Sometimes those houses are empty. While the young men's one holds three boys, so it has three beds, the young women's one has four beds. At the moment we have one young man and no young women, so they are only used at the point at which we have assessed a young person as appropriate for that. It is balancing the needs of the young person and our responsibility to the community. It is a matter of what is appropriate in terms of the young person being out in the community prior to their parole. That is the community program. I sign off any young people going into the community program.

Mr MARTIN - Who owns the house? Is it the department?

Ms MYERS - We own the house and our staff run the house. Andrew has staff who are based at that house, as well as staff who are based on this site.

Mrs JAMIESON - And their locations are?

Ms MYERS - They are not far from here, in the general area.

Mr KAMENEV - It is generally for the last four to eight weeks of their sentence.

CHAIR - And the bush camps?

Ms MYERS - Acheron is a property that doesn't have a fence around it and the program is focused on -

Mr REAPER - It is just under 300 acres. I was having a chuckle to myself at the thought of fencing that!

Ms MYERS - It is a very big property. The program is very much focused on outdoor activity, whether it is horticulture, building and maintaining the property. It is not secure and it is low security, so young people go through a very rigorous assessment process. It has the capacity for 10.

Mr REAPER - We currently have it available for up to 10, but it certainly has the physical capacity for many more. It is a series of huts.

CHAIR - And you find that to be very beneficial?

Mr REAPER - It has been exceptionally beneficial over the time. We are finding a decreasing number of young people in our system who would get full benefit from that, so we are looking at it more generally. Currently there is no-one there.

Ms MYERS - It is a small number of people. If you think about the young person's behaviour, what the young person is experiencing in terms of mental health needs, drug and alcohol needs, whether they have outstanding court matters. You have to want to be involved in a program like that, which means that you are up at six o'clock in the morning and out working on the land. You have to have an interest in that sort of program and want to be involved in it because you can't just sit up there and do nothing. TAFE is up there also and runs the sorts of programs that are appropriate for that sort of facility. Generally speaking, we would have between two and four young people at any given time and sometimes we do not have anyone.

All the staff for this centre are employed to work at 900 Park Street so whilst some people are based up there and their roster is based up there, at the point at which there are no young people up there, while someone would maintain a caretaker role, they might be here.

Mr REAPER - We would certainly have it staffed up there in a caretaker role at this time of year because there is a fire risk and things like that, so we never leave it vacant. The staff work seven days on, seven days off up there.

Mrs JAMIESON - Could it be used for kids who are at low risk and still in the community as a pre-sentence -

Ms MYERS - We are going through a piece of work over the next six months where we will be looking at how we use that property. At the moment it's not, but in the past it has been used for a number of things. We will be doing a piece of work to make some decisions about what we do with Acheron. We have found that for some young people, as Andrew said, it has been a really appropriate, positive sentence management alternative.

Mrs JAMIESON - Could it be contracted to somebody like Whitelion, for example?

Ms MYERS - Anything could happen in the future. It is our property that we run a program in. I would like to do a piece of work to think about what the most appropriate use might be. I don't know what the outcome of that will be.

Mr REAPER - Our client profile has changed a lot in the last five years and that is mainly because of the success of our diversionary programs. We have a much higher concentration of more serious offenders. We have gone from having about 20 per cent of young people who are convicted of crimes against the person to about 65 per cent more recently. That has impacted on our capacity to use our community-based programs or our bush camp.

Mr MARTIN - Your whole model is based on rehabilitation and you have a strong commitment to that program.

Ms MYERS - Yes.

Mr MARTIN - We have had some evidence provided to us in Tasmania for that very reason, the fact that your client base has changed over the last few years in some way. It has been suggested to us that some kids are beyond rehabilitation, can you comment on that?

Ms MYERS - We have a vision statement for Juvenile Justice Custodial Services and it is to engage young people in positive change. That is what every single one of our staff is doing when they turn up to work - engaging young people in positive change. That happens in increments. Do we have young people who come back? Yes, we do. So do you get enough change seeing a young person in custody to change their lives? I don't know, and often no. I suppose what we are doing here is focusing on bringing about some positive change with young people. What we know makes a difference to young people is around engaging them in areas of vocation and employment and working with them around decision making, consequential thinking and things such as relationships with family and housing. There are a whole lot of things that you can work towards improving with young people: drug and alcohol issues, their health. A lot of young people come in here in really terrible health. We are working on those things. Our approach is multifaceted. In terms of saying whether anyone is beyond our engaging with them in positive change in one or more of those areas, I would say no. I think at the point at which any of us think we can't do that then we would leave. I think our whole premise is based on our trying to provide the opportunities so that we can engage with young people in a way that helps to bring about some change.

Victoria is going to be doing some work on recidivism and actually looking at what it is we are trying to achieve with young people that would count as success, because it can be that young people are making change and improving in their ability to not offend but end up coming back into the system anyway. Victoria is going to be thinking more broadly about appropriate measures of success.

Mr REAPER - One of the key identifiers for a likelihood of reoffending is the age that you commence offending, so our young people are in the high-risk category. Having said that, there are many times each year when some of my staff would say exactly the same thing, 'This young person's beyond help. We can't do anything for him. He doesn't want to change'. I, my leadership team and managers are always engaging staff in those sorts of conversations, 'He's openly saying that when he gets out he is going to keep reoffending'. It is in some of those areas that Karyn has talked about that we work with that young person. Of course we challenge that behaviour but at times our staff become frustrated. It is not something I could find impossible to hear, but you have heard about those sorts of things.

Mrs JAMIESON - Sadly, some of the problems are out in the community, aren't they?

Mr REAPER - At times you make a decision and that is the difficult thing. I don't know what other options are available. Of course they have prospects for rehabilitation, however our system may not be the best place for that to occur. You have to accept that at some time.

Mr KAMENEV - We only have young people for a very limited period - three or four months at a time.

CHAIR - Over the last few years have you noticed any particular ethnic groups which are now starting to show up as being more prevalent? Also, what is the percentage of Aboriginal people?

Ms MYERS - We have an over-representation of Aboriginal young people.

CHAIR - We have gathered that from other centres, so I make the presumption that it is probably the same here. Roughly, what is it at the moment in this centre?

Mr KAMENEV - When we did this snapshot last year it was about 10 per cent. It stays around about 10 per cent for young Aboriginal people.

Mr REAPER - We always have a solid representation of Pacific islander boys. We are starting to see a percentage of boys from the Horn of Africa coming through.

Mrs JAMIESON - Eastern European?

Mr REAPER - Yes, but not a significant proportion at this stage. We always have a percentage, but certainly not 10 per cent. I don't know what Malmsbury is like but there is no clear stand-out. We have a good cross-section of the community.

Ms MYERS - One of the challenges for us is the mix of young people within our system. As Alex said, we do have a higher percentage of young people who are in here for offences against the person - so more violent offences. We also have high numbers of young people who are low functioning, have an intellectual disability or mental health issues. There is complexity for each and every one of those young people, but having those young people together, where you have some quite vulnerable young people and some quite sophisticated offenders, is quite challenging. We now have a disability worker who is employed by Custodial Services. He works across the three centres and for all of our young people who present as low functioning the staff in the units would contact this worker and there would be discussion around that young person's management. The purpose of having that position is not only to build the skill and expertise of our own staff around disability; we also trained all our staff in working with young people with disabilities. It is also in recognition that sometimes you have not so good working relationships between parts of the system. He is also helping to make sure that the protocol we have with disability services is working well. One of the problems that can exist is that while a young person is in custody all the other services think they can now stop working with them - because they are overworked and have too many people to

work with. Part of having that position is that we keep those services engaged and get them to be part of the case-management process.

Mrs JAMIESON - Do you have a booklet of rights or something like that? When the kids come in, do you hand them a book of rights?

Mr REAPER - We have an induction package and a DVD that they can watch.

Mrs JAMIESON - Is it possible to have a copy of that?

Mr REAPER - I imagine so.

Ms MYERS - We have a very close working relationship with the Ombudsman's office. I don't know if you do in Tasmania. I meet regularly with the Ombudsman's office, but also the staff in that office have a regular schedule of visits. It's not that they are scheduled in advance; they just decide they will come. They have complete access to the site and walk around and talk to our young people. We have a process in place where young people are given lots of opportunities to talk about issues.

Mr REAPER - All of our young people also have automatic phone access to the Ombudsman. They can get onto the phone system and call the Ombudsman direct at any time, without us even being aware of it.

Mr MARTIN - Do you have a Commissioner for Children?

Ms MYERS - We do. We have the Child Safety Commissioner, Bernie Geary, and he visits here as well. He was previously working in Juvenile Justice.

CHAIR - Thank you all very much.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.