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**THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION
COMMITTEE B MET IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, PARLIAMENT HOUSE,
HOBART ON FRIDAY 2 AUGUST 2013**

INQUIRY INTO THE OVERTIME COST OF THE TASMANIA PRISON SERVICE

Mr ROBERT WILLIAMS, DEPUTY SECRETARY AND DIRECTOR OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WAS RECALLED AND RE-EXAMINED, AND **Mr STEPHEN MORRISON**, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WAS CALLED, MADE THE STATUTORY DECLARATION AND WAS EXAMINED.

CHAIR (Mr Dean) - Whilst you are in this hearing you are protected by parliamentary privilege but once you leave this environment you are no longer protected. If we reach a stage of where you believe that evidence you might want to give should be given in camera, then the committee would make a determination and we could receive that evidence in camera if the committee so felt.

The interim report has been produced and Robert was there during the parliamentary discussions on that. It was deferred and that report was originally put in because we wanted to listen to what would come out in estimates. Now we want to know what has happened further in relation to the overtime position at the jail, what has been put in place, and where it is tracking at this time. If we could be given the financial data around that at the end of the financial year, that would be important for the committee as well.

Mr WILLIAMS - Thank you for the opportunity to come back again. I provided some information to the House through a question on notice. I put up a graph of progress of overtime, which showed a downward trend. I would like to provide an update on that graph.

We have done a lot of things in the meantime to keep progress on this. We are now nearly 50 per cent reduced in overtime costs in the prison system. The Y axis on the graph is the fortnightly overtime costs in dollars. Around December, we were just under \$200 000 per fortnight. The trend line now is taking us down nearly to \$100 000 per fortnight. That is a 50 per cent reduction. You can see on the graph that we have fluctuations from fortnight to fortnight, but the significant trend is down towards \$100 000. Our aim is that, with the things we have put in place, we are not finished in dealing with bringing the overtime down at this stage. We spoke at length to the people from New South Wales to benchmark how -

CHAIR - I am very pleased that you have done that, Robert.

Mr WILLIAMS - We had a lengthy conversation with them and talked through how we were going. Their sense was we about where they have got to after several years, which is about a 50 per cent reduction, but we think we have quite a long way to go. They thought that we were tracking pretty well and doing the sorts of things that they had

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done. In fact Mr Edwards has been to their Brush Farm Academy and lectured them about some of the things we are doing. That was a pretty useful exchange of information.

At previous times we mentioned that getting control of rostering practices was a very important thing. I have now signed off on the tender process to purchase an electronic rostering system, which is what they have done in New South Wales and in a number of other areas. That is just a tool. Part of the reason we have been able to manage our overtime more effectively is that we have had a centralised rostering process in place for some time now. The electronic rostering system just gives us the tool to do that more capably, but the business process is already in, in terms of centralised rostering. Some of those things were key in New South Wales and other places; every prison system tackles this problem week on week.

I will go through some of the things we have done that have got us to this place and that we will continue doing. The overarching thing is that the industrial relations and the trust between prison management, unions and staff are probably at the highest level that certainly I have seen, and from the people who have been around a lot longer than me, for decades. We are working with our staff, who are committed to change, in a way that we have not seen in years past. That is a great credit to them. When we look back at the Palmer report, which was really a line in the sand for the prison service, Mr Palmer recognised that in fact the prison service was full of good people who wanted change and wanted to do a better job. I would have to say that just on one graph this represents huge cultural change for the prison service. The commitment of the management and staff to this change is incredible. We are not fixed yet but we have so much progress and I am very proud of what the staff have achieved.

Some of the things specifically we have done are to get behind the reasons for the overtime. The first thing we did was to look at our staffing model - to find that we did not have an effective staffing model. We had not in the model included provision for leave, for example, so structurally built into the staffing model for the prison system was a failure. We had to pay overtime every time someone went on leave. It was not until we pulled that apart and rebuilt the model last year that we realised we needed more staff on because everyone takes annual leave. There are a couple of days' sick leave every day or so and we had to build those into a staffing model. There are always people on board at single time which meant we didn't have to pay overtime. That was an important thing.

We have recruited 43 new correctional staff over the 2012-13 financial year. That is against a loss by natural attrition of 16 staff and means we've had a net gain of 27 staff. We will also be recruiting again in the near future for about 16 staff to take into account departures, resignations - those sorts of things - to make sure we have a full complement of staff. If you look at the graph, it was in January that those staff came on board and they made a very significant difference over the forward rostering periods to the level of overtime. Before that we put in place a range of practices around absence management. I can tell the committee today that at 30 June the average for the financial year of days per sick leave per staff member was 9.4. That is below accepted industry standards. I have worked in large national organisations previously. We were struggling with frontline staff, because you get higher sick leave with frontline staff interfacing with the public. I think at that time we were trying to get to 11, so if you get around 10 for the Prison Service is an excellent result and I think puts paid to the myth, if it was ever true, that prison staff use their sick leave excessively because that is just a benchmark that is

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used internationally as days per full-time employee for sick leave. That is down from 13.5.

As to workers compensation, one of the biggest impacts on our overtime now that we've had the structure reform in place since last year about the staffing model - and we're now working with staff on sick leave, faster return to work and better reporting, those sorts of things - has been workers compensation claims. As you know, in the past few years we've had significant numbers of workers injured and that is unacceptable. We have worked very hard this year to try to bring that down and I can tell you that the rate of serious assault in the prison has come down significantly in the last 12 months. There are still assaults and they are unacceptable but the seriousness of them has decreased and, as such, the number of workers compensation claims for the financial year was down. I think we have given figures, probably in Estimates, but over the last three years the numbers of workers compensation claims was 73-79 and in 2012-13 it was down to 59.

That has a double impact on our budget. First of all, when someone is off injured it is obviously a tragedy - people shouldn't go to work and leave injured at the end of the day - but it means that the vacancy they leave has to be filled and because we have just enough staff to do it, it's usually on overtime. The key thing we've done is to try to focus on return to work and making sure we are as flexible as we can in getting people back into the workplace, back from their injury. We have decreased the level of assaults, which increases the safety of the workplace. The new workplace health and safety legislation means that we've had to have an increased focus on the safety of our workers, which is entirely appropriate.

The other thing is there is a longer-term tail to workers compensation. Quite often stress-related injuries especially have a long tail, a long return-to-work time, and post-traumatic stress disorders and things like that typically last a long time; the average is I think around two years for return to work on workers comp. The other aspect is our workers compensation premium has increased dramatically over the last few years, and I'll give you the figures.

One of the things I wanted to bring to the committee's attention today is that as we bring the overtime costs down and keep doing that, we then in terms of our overall budget position raise the more fixed cost increases. For workers compensation, for example, the premium for 2010-11 was \$993 000, in 2011-12 it was \$1 070 000, and in 2012-13 it is \$1.6 million. While overtime has always been a really important issue for us to tackle because it is representative of management failure and cultural issues, as we tackle that we now expose the other aspects of our budget that were always there. Workers compensation premiums have gone up 69.9 per cent in three years, electricity has gone up 11.7 per cent, IT costs have gone up 8.5 per cent, and rates and water 7.2 per cent. Some of those things are very hard to change because the electricity price is set by the market and we go to market like everyone else.

On the positive side, we have been trying to tackle some of these non-salary costs, so travel and transport for the Prison Service has gone down 71 per cent; property costs, excluding rates, have gone down 25 per cent; and a sort of general category of goods and services that run the prison like materials, supplies and maintenance, has gone down 13 per cent. We have been doing everything we can to try to tackle the fixed costs and then we look at things like workers compensation and think that is within our control to try to

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manage, but it has a three-year rolling average, so the benefits we gain from increasing staff safety at work will not give us that financial benefit till much later, but the overtime impact will occur as the injuries decrease. So there are a couple of dynamic components to that.

In terms of the change process, we have changed our operating models which has led to increased staff safety. One of the things we have done for the first time in a long time is given our supervisors some training so they can really take a bit of autonomous control of their units. We have devolved a lot of the authority for the operation of the prison down from higher levels of management back to the local unit managers, and as we start to tackle things like sick leave which was more centrally managed in the past, we have actually now put in an electronic employee self-service system into the prison which the department already had more broadly, which means that the managers on the floor have to deal with the sick leave applications themselves instead of them being sent off. That means they are more aware of absences and how to manage them, how to support staff back into the workplace, and these things have made a big difference. This past Tuesday was the second day ever that we had zero sick leave in the prison system, and the other day was within the last six months as well.

The trend line in the overtime costs, the sick leave outcome in taking it back down to a reasonable benchmark and the fact that we are having days when no-one's sick is indicative of a much broader commitment by the staff to the job they are doing and doing well, and that is making the whole place run better, aggression is down with new operating models, especially in the high security units.

Mr Edwards, who unfortunately cannot be here today because he is in Europe finalising his affairs as he comes out now for a permanent contract, has made an enormous difference in the way he has provided the frontline leadership to prison system. He received an OBE for fixing the prison system in England, and it is his knowledge of prisons that has been one of the key success factors over the last year. Although we had started the changed process earlier, Mr Edwards' arrival has really made a big difference.

The things we have to do to keep going forward are pretty much the same as I have outlined. It is accountability in management for delivering on things like staff support, adhering to protocols, keeping on driving the change process. During the estimates hearing we said that one of the things we did at the beginning of last year was take all the reports we have received into the prison system over the years - the Palmer report, the ombudsman's report into the Tamar, a Workplace Standards report into workplace health and safety called 'Breaking the Cycle - an education strategic plan', and internal audits - and put them into a measurement system so we could measure our progress against them because we had lost sight of some of those. We have now completed about 80 per cent of those findings which total 333 in all. Some of them are getting to the harder stage, they're longer-term issues; some of them require funding; and some of those findings require the prison infrastructure project to be completed before we can sign off on those. The prison infrastructure project is very important.

In maximum and medium security, staff have been managing prisoners in essentially a half-built facility. Staff are doing an incredible job in not only bringing culture change forward in advance of those facilities being finished, but the way we have reorganised some of the operating procedures has created more activity for the prisoners. When we

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get to the final PIRP stage D facilities, this will be a significant event for the operation of the prison because bored prisoners create issues for us; they create unrest, angst and potential violence. I don't want to overemphasise that as a reason we shouldn't get on and do what we're doing, but it has been recognised by Mr Palmer, recognised by our staff and by all, that that is a critical success factor for taking that part of the prison system forward.

If you look at some of the indicators such as day release passes, we have gone from about 500 four years ago to 11 000. As of today, we are out working with the scouts, we are doing bushfire recovery, fencing; we have a team out doing that. We are doing a Landcare project at Risdon Vale reclaiming their creek from willows and fixing that up. We are doing other Landcare projects and are looking for more ways. We also do the Botanical Gardens and other things like that.

We have a real culture change throughout the whole system which is just getting the activity levels up and in the Risdon Prison complex that is harder because of the infrastructure, but we have still managed to do that. We have increased education in the vocational education and training area by more than 50 per cent over the last couple of years and that is pretty significant because it is those skills that will help tackle the recidivism issue.

Mrs TAYLOR - The starting point was pretty low, though.

Mr WILLIAMS - The starting point was low.

Mrs TAYLOR - Fifty per cent off is not much, is it?

Mr WILLIAMS - It was about 15 000 hours a year and it is now 37 000 hours - that was our best estimate

Mr MULDER - Going from 15 000 to 37 000 is more than 50 per cent, it is -

Mr WILLIAMS - Sorry, it has doubled, and that is indicative of a huge turnaround in the culture. I think the upshot is that the overtime is coming down but we think it still has quite a long way to come down and we will keep doing the things that have taken us this far but we are very pleased with the progress.

CHAIR - Robert, we will go into questions now. First of all, could we be given the figures on overtime as at the end of the financial year 2012-13 as compared with the figures of the previous year? I think it was \$4 million or something the previous year.

Mr WILLIAMS - I will give you the three years that I have. In 2010-11 it was \$5.1 million; in 2011-12 it was \$5.05 million; the end result for 2012-13 was \$4.76 million. Obviously we do not have a figure for this year as it is early but based on the trends and the current overtime rates we will be down significantly again. If the rates keep coming down then the estimates will come down, but we will shave millions off this year potentially.

CHAIR - It is heartening from the committee's point of view that overtime is starting to go in the direction that I and many believe it should have been for a long time. We accept the fact that you are saying it still has a long way to go and I can understand that as well.

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Mr MULDER - Just on that point, you have given us the dollar trends but do you have the figures for the actual amount of hours of overtime rather than the cost of it?

Mr WILLIAMS - I don't know whether this will fully answer your question, Mr Mulder, but in comparison to July 2012, the number of correctional overtime hours incurred by the Prison Service in July 2013 has decreased by 37.8, so that is down from an average of 2 960 hours per fortnight to 1 840 hours per fortnight.

CHAIR - This is overtime per fortnight?

Mr WILLIAMS - That is correct.

CHAIR - I will come back into finance. Mike was first off the rank so we will go straight to his question.

Mr GAFFNEY - It leads on from what you just said about the 2011-13 figures. I know systemic change is really difficult and I think with an organisation like yours to see that improvement is terrific because we know it is difficult.

Mr WILLIAMS - I am very pleased to be able to come here and tell you that.

Mr GAFFNEY - On 16 April 2012 when you first presented to us you were able to give us a percentage breakdown of what contributed most to the overtime budget. You have mentioned how sick leave was coming down because of some of the positive and practical things that were put in place, but back then you said that sick leave contributed to 33 per cent of the overtime, workers compensation was 24 per cent, vacancies was 24 per cent and a conglomeration of miscellaneous activity was about 19 per cent. So even though it is coming down, what is your percentage breakdown of, say, the last 12 months in those four areas because you have to identify which one is still your big spender?

Mr WILLIAMS - Can I take a moment to see if I have anything handy?

Mr MULDER - Mike, are you talking about the pie chart?

Mr GAFFNEY - I just got that from the transcript.

Mr WILLIAMS - We haven't redone that calculation. As it has shrunk, obviously the percentages will change. My guess is that the percentage relating to workers compensation will have increased. We could get that but it would take some time to pull that data together. That was a graph of what was driving the overtime.

Mr GAFFNEY - If you can do it within your work hours it's not overtime.

Mr WILLIAMS - We can get something for you for the current year.

CHAIR - Rob, that would be helpful if you could get that in a reasonable time. Obviously you could spend months doing it.

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Mr WILLIAMS - No, it would be days.

Mr GAFFNEY - It does help us. They have put energy into here and this is coming down but on the other hand this side, percentage wise, has blown out, so that would be helpful.

Mr WILLIAMS - It probably will change. It is always hard to compare pies when the pie shrinks. We will get that and have a look because it may be useful to us as well.

Mr FINCH - The absence management - you were talking about average per staff.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, that's right.

Mr FINCH - You mentioned a figure of 9.4, down from 13.5. It would be interesting to extrapolate those figures and what you are actually talking about.

Mr WILLIAMS - That is a sick leave measurement, basically taking the total sick leave that has been taken and dividing it by the number of full-time staff. It is just an average that gives a sense of where we are travelling.

Mr FINCH - Days per year?

Mr WILLIAMS - It is days per year. When you have 20 days sick leave in a year, typically in organisations it is very hard to get down to a figure of 10 because the sick leave is an entitlement; it is for people who are genuinely sick. If someone is sick they shouldn't come to work, for all sorts of good reasons, and we are not trying to back away from that. If someone is sick, we want to get them back as quickly as possibly. We want to support them. Where there are sick leave irregularities, we are looking at them because we do have a right, in the few cases where we have concerns, to challenge sick leave. If you did a bell curve of sick leave, you are going to have some high outliers - which could be a broken leg or cancer. It could be that someone is misusing the system. In the middle is the bulk of people and then at the other end there are people who never take sick leave. While we tackle some of the high-end ones and make sure they are genuine, which most of them are, the aim is to push the whole bell curve down a bit. That is where the real gain is in terms of productivity for an organisation.

It is also about the health of the staff. If you have high sick leave it indicates that you have a work environment that is either unhealthy physically or emotionally. You have a culture problem where people don't want to come to work so they will use their entitlements in a certain way.

So moving the average, as we have, is a significant thing because it is not about having dealt with some outliers. It means that everyone is using their sick leave properly, being supported. We are getting the best productivity while people still have the right to be not at work if they are sick.

Mr FINCH - And by comparison, 9.4, around 10, is a good result.

Mr WILLIAMS - When I worked at Centrelink as a national manager, which had a lot of front-line staff and a bit of customer aggression from time to time, we were trying to get it down around 11 per cent. I can't tell you what it is now but the aim was to get it down

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to that level. Ten per cent for a prison system is pretty good because of the nature of the work.

Mr FINCH - It has come down from 13.5 over what period of time?

Mr WILLIAMS - The figure we have calculated was the financial year to 30 June, which was 9.4. At September last year, for the year we were tracking at 13.2, so it is a point-in-time calculation, but the latter one is the whole year. If we had not dealt with it, we would be 13 per cent still.

Mr FINCH - Do you think this is the change management program that has had the impact on those figures?

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely. The culture change has been significant. People have an entitlement to sick leave, and for good reason. To bring it down is a commitment of the staff to the organisation, but it is also a reflection that we have improved the management of the organisation as well, because high sick leave is not just about people being sick. It is about sick organisations and culture, and people wanting to be in the workplace and finding less reason not to want to be there. This reflects a much healthier organisation than we were in September last year.

Mrs TAYLOR - In 2012-13, you are \$4.76 million in overtime, which is a reduction from previous years, which is good, but in each of those years you budget has been less than you have spent and each year you have had to come and ask for extra money. Can you remind me what is in the budget for overtime this year, because it was never anything like \$4.76 million? It is not standard because in previous year we have said at estimates, shouldn't the budget be higher, and you have had an increase in budget over the last few years.

Mr MULDER - One of the problems, to clarify this, is that the actual overtime budget level is not presented in estimates.

Mr WILLIAMS - That is correct.

Mrs TAYLOR - Is there a budget for overtime?

Mr MULDER - There is but it is not in the estimates; it is a line item of salary costs or something like that, but in estimates we do not get the details. What you are asking now is what is the budget for overtime inside the prison service.

Mr WILLIAMS - That is absolutely right. There is no allocation in the global budget through the budget process.

Mrs TAYLOR - It is only within your area.

Mr WILLIAMS - It is only within the internal allocations. While we have been busy focusing on overtime, which is the right thing to have done, that is a thing we have to deal with, in the past we have ignored all the other increases in costs. For everything that is left over we have said that the overspend was in overtime.

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Mrs TAYLOR - Last time when we asked, it was not, so we know.

Mr WILLIAMS - I think this year about \$3.5 million would be in our budget to bring us in on budget.

Mrs TAYLOR - Of overtime?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Mrs TAYLOR - Because it has been that sort of figure every year, and every year you have had to ask for more money. I know that some of it has been for other costs, but this particular question is about salaries. Do you think that this year what you have allocated internally for overtime will cover your overtime costs, or are you thinking you will blow out? I was shocked to hear that you had a system that did not allow for leave. That just seems crazy not to count leave as part of your salary costs.

Mr WILLIAMS - We had not staffed up to the right number of people to fill in the holes.

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes, because your model did not account for the fact that people go on leave. I am glad that you do now. What you have done, and rightly so, is brought your staff levels up.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Mrs TAYLOR - Your salary costs should now be a whole lot less in overtime, and will be. Obviously you are trending really well, but there is a compensating cost then in ordinary salaries because you have more people employed?

Mr WILLIAMS - That is right.

Mrs TAYLOR - My question is what is that balance? Are you spending more in salary costs than your saving in overtime?

Mr WILLIAMS - No, quite significantly less. You're absolutely right, the base salary costs excluding overtime have come up and will be up, but the overtime has come down and the differential is basically two to one because overtime is paid at double time. Our aim this year is to bring the overtime budget back to what we think is a reasonable level. We have set ourselves the target of coming in on budget this year and if our progress and the commitment of our staff continues to the change process I have a very strong feeling we're going to get very close, and that is a significant turnaround. I know you've been talking about this in this committee for a long time but the seriousness of the things we've been doing is really driving at the heart of the issues now.

Mrs TAYLOR - We are obviously as delighted as you to hear what you are saying and hope that that trend continues. When we had the figures in response to a question earlier it had only been for I think three or four pays or something and that is why we wanted further figures because that could have been just a blip, whereas now you are looking at six months or something and it looks a whole lot better. But do you see what I am saying? If you do come in on budget on overtime, which is fantastic, you're still going to have a higher salary cost?

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Mr WILLIAMS - That's right, some of it.

Mrs TAYLOR - So your total salary costs are still going to be bigger than they were.

Mr WILLIAMS - The picture I wanted to present was that we have to look at the global budget and the base salary costs for that overtime have gone up in order to bring the overtime cost down, but sick leave and workers compensation are probably the more significant components of the overtime now that we have a good complement of staff on board, so it's those areas that we have to really drive at to move. They aren't increased salary costs to achieve those decreases. That is different management of return to work, staff safety at work and those sorts of things. As we bring the overtime down the focus shifts from not having enough staff to the workers compensation, the sick leave -

Mrs TAYLOR - Yes, everything should be affected.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, and three years hence, if we keep our workers compensation coming down we will reap benefits of maybe \$1 million in the budget.

CHAIR - If we can continue, I take it that the \$4.76 million currently expended on overtime in the 2012-13 year relates to correctional officers only?

Mr WILLIAMS - That is where 99 per cent of our overtime is. It is driven purely through the roster system where you have a certain number of posts. We have nine posts in medium security, for example - two supervisors and seven people to manage up to 200 people. If one of those people is not there the staff need to make an assessment of whether they can open the facility safely, making a judgment on the day of how things are looking, et cetera, and if they say they can't then we need to call someone in from somewhere else on overtime to fill that position. For a 24/7 operation with that sort of parameter, if you have three people in a maximum security unit - and you really need three people; you need two on the floor and one in the supervisor's box or you can't really open it - you have to bring someone else in to fill that complement for safety reasons.

I think one of the culture changes we have had - and this is where the staff have really given a commitment - is that they have been more flexible about how we work things out on the day and instead of slavishly just looking at the numbers. We have a talk and say, 'Can we take someone from somewhere else?' and they say, 'Yes, that'll work, we're okay with that', or, 'No, today it's really dangerous. We've got a lot of escorts, a lot of problems, there's unrest and it's not safe'. So the staff have changed their commitment to being flexible about some of these things with a more flexible risk assessment. A lot of factors are at play.

CHAIR - That was one of the issues that came out of New South Wales, where they said what had a big impact on their overtime was completing a risk assessment every time a person reported in sick. Rather than just bring in somebody in, they would have to carry out a full risk assessment of that position and obviously you are now undertaking that.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely. I mentioned that we have tried to push the autonomy for operations down to the frontline supervisors and given them the ability, with their staff, to make the call instead of being told from afar; that they make the assessment because

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they know what they're dealing with in the environment. I think that is a big step for the organisation to let those frontline people do the things they do best.

Mr MULDER - I think you have given us the budget figures for July 2013 and July 2012. You have also given us the amount of overtime worked and I think the hours you gave were 2 900 in July 2012 and July 2013 was 1 800, so we are looking at 1 100 hours reduction. Rather than the overtime, I am interested in your actual absenteeism. Mr Gaffney referred to the figures he had from the record but I think what the reference was, and for the record I am referring to the pie chart that was previously provided to us, which was the Risdon Prison Complex overtime breakdown by reason 2007-08 and 2008-09 as per the KPMG audit. In there you have sick/carers leave - which Mr Gaffney raised - which was 39 per cent; posts not covered was 24 per cent, and I think the figures you are using are an update of that same pie chart in the current trend.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Mr MULDER - Previously this committee has heard evidence that the bulk of the overtime has resulted from both short-time, unplanned sick leave and posts not covered and that those two were intermingled because quite often the reason a post is not covered is because someone has called in sick or you haven't had the staff on board to cover it.

Mr WILLIAMS - They are separate categories but you're absolutely right. We could say post not covered was covered with sick leave if we joined the two together.

Mr MULDER - I would like to deal with the two together because then you get, even on the KPMG figures, something like 53 per cent of overtime in those two particular areas. Are the actual hours of overtime that are being worked trending down, and if so is it because there is a reduction in these two areas?

Mr WILLIAMS - The answer is yes, and I will need to come back with Mr Gaffney's request later with an updated pie chart. My guess is that what we will see is that the percentage related to workers compensation will have increased significantly as we decrease the sick leave. The post not filled was largely a structural problem of not having enough staff on board to fill the holes as they occurred, either unexpectedly or expectedly through rec leave. My guess is that workers compensation will now be a much more significant part of that pie as it shrinks.

Mr MULDER - But that is a function not of more workers compensation but a smaller pie -

Mr WILLIAMS - A smaller pie.

Mr MULDER - and the same level now constitutes a greater percentage, which is always a danger with percentages when the pie changes.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Mr MULDER - Posts not covered should have fallen dramatically now that you have 27 extra FTEs. Is the fact that you have these 27 extra FTEs the major impact it's having is not on the short-term unplanned sick leave as much as the fact that it's a post not covered?

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Mr WILLIAMS – That is where the impact would be. I don't have the figures but we will get them in an updated pie chart, but that is exactly right. We are taking out the structural built-in overtime and I think last time we were here we talked about the fact that we needed to get control of the thing as it was then and in the future as we go forward look at more structural issues. One of the structural issue we have had to tackle is making sure we have enough people at single time for all the known events that are coming and reduce the unknown events, which is the sick leave. To have a zero sick leave this Tuesday - the second time ever - is a significant indicator of how we are going.

Mr MULDER – I would like to focus on the sick/carers leave and the actual trends in that area in global overtime because that is where the cultural issues are having the most impact. The post not covered, as you have pointed out, is a structural issue which is basically fixed with your 27 FTEs. But what has been of concern to both the Prison Service and all the inquiries, including this one, has been the cultural issues surrounding the alleged rorting of the sick leave. I would be very interested to see and measure the success of your performance in the cultural change area by its impact on the sick/carers leave figure.

Short suspension - fire alarm.

Mr MULDER - Back to carer's leave and absenteeism.

Mr WILLIAMS - At the moment we think it is down to around 10 days per FTE. There has been the suggestion of misuse of sick leave by prison staff for years. From my perspective, that just is not true because we have the number down. When I talked about how you plot your sick leave, there always outliers. Some people will have broken legs but an outlier could be someone who was doing the wrong thing. We are now making sure we look at those abnormal sick leave patterns to see if we can find any reason we might want to query it or look into it further. At 10 days per FTE, I am very satisfied that the majority of our staff are using their sick leave at a rate that is not excessive. We would like to bring it down and you can get it lower than that.

Mr MULDER - The 10 days per FTE is interesting but, once again, it is per FTE. If you had just had an increase in 27 FTEs, that skews that benchmark figure. What were the actual number of days, if you have the data, of sick/carers leave in 2012-13?

Mr WILLIAMS - I do not have that with me but I can get that.

Mr MULDER - In 2012-13, what was the departmental budget for overtime? We have the actual spend but what was the departmental budget for overtime? At the same time, you can give us this year's so we can keep you to it. How much have you put in the bucket for prison overtime?

Mr WILLIAMS - It is \$3.5 million this year and last year we had \$1.8 million.

Mr MULDER - So \$3.5 million for 2013-14, which is what you have allocated, and last year you had allocated \$1.8 million and spent \$4.7 million?

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Mr WILLIAMS - Once the overtime budget had run away, the internal allocation was what was left over once we had budgeted everything else. The overtime budget was always over and the internal allocation became rather pointless in a number of ways. This year we have tried to put a zero outcome for our budget for the year and imagine, realistically, how much we can spend. Based on the trends and the current overtime spent, we expect we will meet that overtime budget this year.

Mr MULDER - This year you went to a zero-based budgeting program?

Mr WILLIAMS - We have always had that, but we think with the progress we have made, and putting a more realistic overtime budget into our global budget, that we will make it.

Mr MULDER - As you are aware, this committee has been running for well over a year now. We have had two lots of estimates. Prior to last year's estimates there was some suggestion that the minister should give some thought to the fact that he knew the overtime was going to thing, so instead of coming to us for a supplementary halfway, which he did anyway, the minister actually added the extra money for the anticipated overtime costs into the Corrective Services budget. It is quite clear from the fact that you said you only put \$1.8 million in the bucket that you had not actually got that money for the overtime that the minister said he had put in the budget for you.

Mr WILLIAMS - That was our initial budget for the beginning of the year. We had a practice forever of budgeting everything else, and overtime was just what was left over, regardless of how much was realistically going to be spent. What we have done this year, and with Mr Edwards' help, is pull the budget completely apart, discover the failures of the staffing model, pull all of the budget to pieces and put it back together in a way which we think reflects the reality of what we need to do. We have been working on the non-salary costs quite strongly, travel and other costs, and bringing them down. That \$1.8 million was probably not a figure that we could ever have achieved.

Mr MULDER - Quite clearly not, given that in the previous two years it was around \$5.1 million. This is our concern with the various ministers of this area, that they keep coming cap-in-hand to this parliament to seek supplementary allocations when the money has been woefully inadequate in the first place.

Mr WILLIAMS - From our perspective, I cannot talk for the minister, the cultural change program to bring overtime down started a few years ago. It really took hold with Mr Edwards' leadership in February last year. We have now achieved what we expected to for the year. We will be looking at a much lower overtime figure than we have in previous years. We are stepping down from \$5 million to \$4.6 million, and stepping down to a much lower figure again this year. Having pulled the budget to pieces and some of the modelling that was not helping us understand what was driving overtime, if we had not pulled the budget to pieces we would still be fighting structural overtime without any insight into why.

Mr MULDER - With the 27 extra FTEs, when did they actually come on stream?

Mr WILLIAMS - Nineteen came in at the end of January. They were on the books for their 11-week training in January, but the bulk of them came in at the end of January.

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Mr MULDER - Just as this curve that you have given us starts to drop?

Mr WILLIAMS - That is right. From probably the second half of last year, the policies that underlie the culture change around sick leave, workers compensation, return to work and things like that, were all in place, but it was not until the bulk of the staff came on that we were able to completely drive that culture, change because we had enough staff on board. To be fair to everyone involved, some of our staff were working so much overtime that they did not want to work. They were getting tired. It was hard to get those other policies about absenteeism working while your staff are struggling and we were asking them to work a lot of overtime. It was not a rort; it was structural, based on workers compensation and sick leave absences, so all the things came together in our plan when those staff came in and filled in those holes. That is why it is trending down from that time.

Mr MULDER - In terms of the staff, in one of our previous sessions, I think in an exchange with Mr Partridge, we were talking about the impact of having minimum staffing levels in some of these areas. In other words, if you had minimum staffing levels on a particular custodial shift and there was an absenteeism, because of minimum staffing levels you were compelled to fill the position. Could you tell me whether the minimum staffing levels have remained the same as a result of the extra 27 or have they been increased now that you have the 27 staff to go there?

Mr WILLIAMS - No, those levels haven't changed.

Mr MULDER - You have maintained your minimal staffing levels so are you now sometimes overstaffed in those shifts?

Mr WILLIAMS - We still have enough people on workers compensation. We don't have days where we have more staff than we need but the number of hours that we need to fill overtime for has decreased significantly. We are not overstaffed in that sense because we have these people on our books or we're paying their sick leave or whatever too.

Mr MULDER - What I am getting at is that minimum staffing levels are a safety issue.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Mr MULDER - But there would not be anything wrong with having extra staff over and above the minimal staffing level, which would give you some flexibility if someone was absent from those posts. Have any of these 27 been deployed to these areas where there is minimal staffing?

Mr WILLIAMS - There are lines in rosters that are available for redeployment and those people are rostered on and used to fill the holes in the rosters day by day. In effect, we do what you're suggesting, which is have more staff around, but because there are more holes than we can fill, we've decreased the number of holes we can't fill with single time.

Mr MULDER - If there isn't a hole to fill, what do those staff do?

Mr WILLIAMS - I will tell you when that day arrives that we have that situation because we still have holes.

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Mr MULDER - At this stage they are blocking up the minimal holes.

Mr WILLIAMS – That is right, it is about making sure we have enough on board to do the best we can with the predicted absences.

Mr MULDER - Which then drives the imperative to get to the sick/carers leave.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, and that is why I say the percentage of workers compensation that is driving overtime will now be the bigger slice of the pie while we work on that.

Mr MULDER - In percentage terms?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, that is my guess.

CHAIR - We need to move on from that now.

Mrs TAYLOR - What effect has this had on lockdowns?

Mr WILLIAMS - The lockdowns have decreased dramatically. We have had very few lockdowns related to staff absence. We have had a few others related to operational things like security searches and things like that but the level of lockdown has diminished completely. The daily report has very few reports of lockdowns. The staff have been more flexible about how this happens and not only are they far fewer, they are for shorter periods of time where possible.

Mrs TAYLOR - Do you have data on that, Robert?

Mr WILLIAMS - I do.

Mrs TAYLOR - That would be good because we hoped one of the effects would be fewer lockdowns.

Mr WILLIAMS - I will see if I have that data with me.

Mrs TAYLOR - I am happy for you to provide that later if you do not have it now.

Mr WILLIAMS - One of the things I wanted to mention is that we now have a suite of KPIs that has been running since the beginning of the year.

Mrs TAYLOR - I was going to ask you about that later.

Mr WILLIAMS - We have a number of other service delivery indicators we are working on which aren't yet robust enough. When you start collecting data you haven't collected before, you have all sorts of things to deal with. I don't think I have the lockdown numbers here but I can get those for you and it is a dramatic level of reduction.

Mrs TAYLOR - That has to make for a happier prison as well, one would imagine.

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Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, that's right, but the most important thing is the level of activity, especially for maximum security. That is the killer outcome out of the infrastructure development that we will get some real benefit from.

Ms RATTRAY - I want to say that most of the questions in relation to staffing have been covered fairly well but I'm encouraged by what I have heard this morning and obviously there has been a huge amount of work gone into what we're seeing from when we first commenced this committee so I congratulate everyone involved in that.

I just want to take you to the increase in correction officer numbers. The committee was told that there would be an increase of 35 and we have a net increase of 27, so is there some training underway that will get that increased to 35 or have you reassessed that number?

Mr WILLIAMS - No, we have been really scrupulous about maintaining the standard of staff we have. The January figures were for 19 staff starting and we actually hoped for 25 but that didn't eventuate as one dropped out and we didn't get the numbers, so we're going to recruit another 16 in the next little while to keep building that number up.

Ms RATTRAY - To allow for natural attrition and the like?

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely. We would have liked 35 but we weren't going to choose people not suitable for the job.

Ms RATTRAY - That was one of the key points that had been made before to the committee, that you have to have the right type of person to undertake the work at the prison.

CHAIR - When the committee met in the prison, Robert, and you were part of that committee meeting - I think it was October or November last year or late last year -

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

CHAIR - We had present there Mr Edwards and we also had present at that meeting the then director Mr Greenberry. Mr Greenberry identified at that time to this committee that there were a lot of issues he was looking at in relation to overtime and driving it down. He had lots of ideas that he was progressing. Are the changes now being implemented some of those positions put forward by Mr Greenberry? Are there other matters he put forward that are still being considered? What is the position there?

Mr WILLIAMS - We have had Mr Edwards on board since February last year and then Mr Greenberry in June and by the time Mr Greenberry arrived all the things we needed to do were pretty much known. We had been producing that graph about the percentage of what was driving overtime for some years so really what we had -

Ms RATTRAY - Is that your delivery action plan?

Mr WILLIAMS - That was Mr Edwards' delivery action plan but I was actually talking about the graph that Mr Mulder and you were talking about there, Mr Gaffney -

Mrs TAYLOR - That was in 2007-08 so it is old.

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Mr WILLIAMS - The job was pretty clear as to what to do and it was about implementing it. Mr Greenberry worked to me, as did Mr Edwards, so between the three of us we were working on what needed to be done in relation to dealing with overtime. Yes, Mr Greenberry had input into all of those ideas, as did Mr Edwards and I.

CHAIR - I think I am right in saying we were suitably impressed at that meeting. We could see that things were likely to happen and we didn't want it to stall in any way at all. That is where we were coming from in relation to that matter.

In New South Wales it came out in the discussions we had with them that they devolve their budget back down the line to senior managers within the organisation and then hold budget discussions and meetings on a very regular basis. Is that now happening within the organisation?

Mr WILLIAMS - That's what we're working towards. It's very difficult to take what was a very centralised budget and step it down to each individual unit but that's what we were doing. I mentioned that I have devolved delegations that I used to just give to the head of prisons and I now give those delegations to some of the lower-level managers so that they're both responsible and accountable for what they're doing, but they have to show leadership around those things as well. In terms of the KPI report I've handed out, our aim is to be able to send those KPIs down to a sort of unit level and we haven't quite got there with all of that. Sick leave is one where we have because we're sending the data to the unit. As to the financials, we will get there; I'm not sure exactly how long -

Mr MORRISON - Part of the transition for the [inaudible] went over to help out the prison and along with Brian have devised budgets in terms of driving the overtime down to the various responsible areas, as well as maintenance and normal day-to-day operating costs as well. There is still some high-level stuff centralised because we are still working through whether that can be devolved down or is better left centralised.

CHAIR - Robert, I make no excuses for the way we are questioning you because, as we know, this has gone on for something like 30-odd years with previous committees looking at this and nothing happening, which is the reason this committee wants to be thorough in what it's doing and ensuring that things are now being implemented.

Mrs TAYLOR - In relation to KPIs but certainly to management, I think when you and Mr Edwards first appeared before this committee we were talking a year ago about changed management and what you were hoping to put in place. One of the things I asked about was performance reviews and, as I recall, the answer was that there had never been any at the prison from management down and that was one of your intentions. The conversation went on about KPIs and that if you don't have annual performance reviews you can't set KPIs for people and know whether they met them. So I am pleased to see you now have a report on KPIs but to what stage are you now doing annual performance reviews from the top down?

Mr WILLIAMS - We expect to have those at about 80 per cent by the end of this year.

Mrs TAYLOR - The end of this financial year, this calendar year?

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Mr WILLIAMS - Yes.

Mrs TAYLOR - So where are you at now, because we asked this question a year ago and Mr Edwards said to us that within two weeks the first of those management reviews would begin?

Mr WILLIAMS - A lot of those have been done. I will take that on notice. What we've done, Mrs Taylor, is develop a comprehensive package around performance management. We've worked with Skills Tasmania to come up with a skills package that says what competencies a person needs to have at each level through the system, and that has formed the basis of a performance package we now have and a predetermined pro forma and we're now rolling it out. These are happening and I'll get some figures for you on how far it's gone but we hope we'll be 80-90 per cent complete in this financial year which will be a huge push forward. It is part of the leadership devolvement we've undertaken.

Mrs TAYLOR - I am not arguing about your intention. I would like to know the progress from last year because at that first hearing we were told it was going to start with senior management or the top levels in a fortnight's time and we would be given figures later as to how it was rolling out. We haven't had any follow-up on that and it is really important.

Mr WILLIAMS - Senior management and management levels have had theirs but I will get you the overall figures.

Mrs TAYLOR - It is not a matter of having it once. We need to be talking about annual performance reviews and a system, a pattern, being in place.

Mr WILLIAMS - We now have that, so it is now a good chance of taking it down and down to the front-line people.

Mrs TAYLOR - Thank you. I have a very hard question that I am a little reluctant to ask. Was Mr Greenberry's appointment a mistake?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, it was.

Mrs TAYLOR - It was a position that was not needed?

Mr WILLIAMS - No. The Director of Prisons position to which he was appointed was a position that was always in existence. The Director of Change Management was a position that was created by the government following the Palmer report, which recommended that as a change agent. Giving you a graph of overtime today, it looks like the result of some of those things coming into play.

Mrs TAYLOR - I was not speaking, I think, in terms of Mr Greenberry the person but rather the job at that point. We have already today talked about the fact that the change management person was really important, the position was really important, and I think the Chair asked did Mr Greenberry have input into that. You started off by saying the basics were already started and recognised before the appointment of Mr Greenberry, but

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that, of course, you and he both had input into that developing. It is a matter of concern although I am not sure how it is related to prison overtime.

Mr MULDER - I think it is because a lot of weight was put on that.

CHAIR - You have said that a lot of this was in place and was being implemented at the time Mr Greenberry came on board, but at that meeting Mr Greenberry was fairly clear - I would need to go back to *Hansard* - where he said he had a number of good ideas, positions, that he wanted to adopt and implement. Were any of those issues that Mr Greenberry was talking about implemented as a part of this or are they are still out there at this stage?

Mr WILLIAMS - Mr Greenberry wanted to implement a number of things, as did Mr Edwards, and to all intents and purposes they were largely were the same. There were some things Mr Greenberry wanted to implement to which I said, no, he couldn't, because they were simply not the right thing to do.

CHAIR - Such as?

Mr WILLIAMS - Mr Greenberry wanted to have a barbecue for all the staff who were not sick, who had not taken sick leave, as part of the culture change. As you can imagine that was, in my view, the most harebrained idea I had ever heard of, because for the people who had cancer or a broken leg that was an enormous slap in the face. It would have been in complete and blatant disregard of the Tasmanians laws in relation to antidiscrimination for people with illness or disability. It was an idea that I had to stop.

CHAIR - I take it he was wanting to reward staff for being on the job? Is that what it was?

Mr WILLIAMS - That was his intention, but it was incredibly misguided to go down that path because you could not reward staff who had not taken sick leave and at the same time make the statement that the person who had cancer or a cold or a broken leg was no less deserving an employee, no less committed. So there were things like that that we did not implement and I would never implement. I just wouldn't go there. They were inappropriate

Mr FINCH - While we are hearing these positive reports today, I am still reconciling that with the fact that it has taken many years of badgering and hounding at budget estimates to actually get this sort of progress that we are seeing from what you are saying today. Serious assaults have come down, so claims are down. You mentioned figures of 73 and 79, down to 59. What do you mean by 73 and 79 and down? Were they for different years?

Mr WILLIAMS - They were the previous three years and were the number of workers compensation claims we received. In the last year we received less workers compensation claims by a factor that was not insignificant over the previous two financial years. That is an indication of assaults coming down, the environment being safer, and will have a flow-on effect in overtime and long term. With a compensation premium of \$1.6 million, we can reduce that very significantly with a much safer workplace than we have now. Prisons are a risky environment, with risky people in jail, and we have to work as hard as we can to keep it safe. I have no doubt that in prisons

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around the world there will be injuries from time to time. It is about doing everything you can to make sure that the employers have done what they can to make it safe.

Mr FINCH - The better management, of course, of your operation I imagine would come back where you mentioned training given to your leaders.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely.

Mr FINCH - Was that part of the training about workplace safety and needing to improve that circumstance where officers perhaps are not put in a situation where they may suffer serious assault?

Mr WILLIAMS - It is a really interesting dynamic in prisons. We have a program for leaders going on, which is for managers at the moment, and which is being run with Community Corrections. We have had supervisor training, probably for the first time in many years, where we have given them three or four days out of their job to skill up on leadership and prison management and get in touch with the strategic direction we are going.

In some of the units where most of the difficulties occurred in the past, what was called the Tamar Unit but which is now called the Transition Unit, and some of those high-security, high-management units, what we had not done for many years is train our front-line staff on how to deal with things like de-escalation of situations and things like that. The tendency had been, without those skills, for those staff to call on the tactical response group, but most of those smaller incidents are now handled at the front line by the staff who have received training feeling more confident. We have not had the tactical response group out for quite a long time, whereas in years past they were out all the time. All credit to them, they were very professional, but being in control of the situation means the front-line staff are now taking control of their environment. They are finalising these issues without recourse to other things. The level of aggression has decreased.

It is our job to have given them those skills, and we still have a lot of training to do, but we have reorganised how training is done. We used to have some lockdowns on Tuesday afternoons when we did it, but it was not very effective. Now we have built it into people's annual leave patterns, so when they come back from annual leave they will have a small period of training out of the job where they will go and do training. That is how we are delivering it without costing ourselves more overtime. We are building in some single-time training time for people who otherwise have all their shift patterns straight into the units and working. This is building training time into the structure, which they have not had for years. That is pretty important as well.

Mrs TAYLOR - That is related to your annual performance reviews, because that is where you identify what the next step in training is for each individual person, rather than do it blanket.

Mr WILLIAMS – You are absolutely right in that respect but we have established the skill sets and the capabilities needed for each level. Now we are going to do a skills audit which will identify how much training in each area we need to do and then it comes back to the individual plan and say, 'You need to do de-escalation techniques and we need 500

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courses of those because that's the gap', or whatever it is. It does come all the way back down to the individual performance around it to say, 'As an officer at level 1, you need these 10 things and you only have six of them'. We haven't had that sort of clarity and structure in the process before.

Mrs TAYLOR - That is scary for a prison service.

Mr FINCH - I wanted to go to another subject, Chair, in respect of activities. When we had our inspection and viewing at the prison, a couple of things that stood out in my mind on reflection was that there was a group of prisoners just aimlessly moving around in an area, and I think that was temporary situation that was looking to be improved but it looked like an opportunity for all sorts of venting of aggression and boredom. Then we talked about the activities provided at the prison and it seems that there was an area that was going to be developed, should have been developed, should have been in the original plans, but wasn't there, and you couldn't help but relate the two to each other - that there wasn't enough for people to do to keep them occupied. You talk here about the cultural change occurring and that activities for prisoners have improved.

Mr WILLIAMS - They have indeed.

Mr FINCH - Can you detail some of that, please?

Mr WILLIAMS - The education outcomes - 15 000 hours, up to 37 000 hours of vocational education and training delivery and we had the first ever pre-apprenticeship course graduations this week in certificate 3 in construction. In the Ron Barwick minimum security prison and in the women's prison we now have the Handmade with Pride program, which makes clothing for people with cancer, neonatal baby support materials and the Launceston General Hospital is getting a whole lot of stuff from there, so we have huge levels of activity there. In the medium-security area we have the commercial laundry. It is in those areas you were talking about such maximum security that we have very little for people to do. Now that we have started the construction program of the education and recreation facilities they have lost access to the oval which was the only real outside time that some of these people had.

The infrastructure program is now being built, and you might have seen the holes - the gate has gone through the fence at the second port. They are now doing the prep work for the recreation and education facilities in there. We have already extended the exercise yards, which was one of the Ombudsman's recommendations for all those maximum-security units, but the real change comes when the craft rooms and the recreation hall are built. In the budget this year, into the out-years, the funding was provided for the activities. We had the capital funding but in this year's budget there is a slow start-up, but rising to give us teachers, sport and recreation staff industry's managers. We will also be building an extra industry shed inside that maximum-security fence for those people. The level of activity will increase dramatically and the budget not only has the infrastructure but it has the people to run it. We are stuck with those people being quite bored at the moment and the observation is absolutely correct that bored prisoners create issues for prisoners.

Ms RATTRAY - What is time frame around the completion of the works?

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Mr WILLIAMS - The estimated completion is in the current financial year.

Mrs TAYLOR - Of all those buildings that were planned, because in the last budget there was \$20 million and you didn't get to spend it all.

Mr WILLIAMS - The bulk of the money has come in this year. The scope had to be adjusted slightly as we got more refined costings but the industry building, education rooms, multipurpose, recreation hall or concert hall or whatever it is that will be used -

Mrs TAYLOR - So that will complete the prison? All the buildings that were originally planned and weren't ever built?

Mr WILLIAMS - No, Mr Palmer's report outlined that in fact this is called stage D which was going to cost just shy of \$50 million. We have \$21 million which was costed five years ago, so it has lost about \$3 million or \$4 million in inflationary terms. What was in the original stage D plan were things like kitchens, some sort of religious facility; they are not included but I can only do what the budget allows me and \$48 million versus \$21 million means the scope is much smaller than the original.

Ms RATTRAY - So isn't it again going to fall short of what is absolutely necessary to have the right environment for prisoners?

Mr WILLIAMS - No, I think it takes us to a place where we will have a well-functioning prison. You could always have more. I would have liked a kitchen in there but the budget doesn't run to that. We have a good kitchen that supplies the food from Ron Barwick Prison but I think it takes us to a stage where we will no longer have prisoners who are bored constantly. We will have enough activity and capacity to have a well-functioning prison.

Mrs TAYLOR - It isn't just a matter of prisoners being bored and not aggressive, it's also the fact that prison is a place where you rehabilitate people.

Mr WILLIAMS - Absolutely.

Mrs TAYLOR - So it's not just a matter of not keeping them bored but in terms of training and where prisoners go and what happens to them afterwards, because if some of the circumstances that have led to them offending are still the same when they walk out then you have achieved nothing in a sense except kept the public safe, so to speak, from those prisoners. I am concerned that those facilities are not just to keep them entertained or healthy or whatever, it's also a matter of progressing their own lives.

Mr WILLIAMS - That is absolutely our main focus. The safe custody we can do; it's making the community safe for when these people come out, and we have a whole range of things. Some of the KPIs we are developing that haven't quite got to maturity yet are things like every prisoner has a sentence management plan when they come in to say, 'Your literacy is not good enough, so that's where you need to start. You don't have a qualification in the vocational sense.'. We are going to actually measure how many prisoners have that sort of plan. We are going to measure as a KPI in the future the average hours of purposeful activity a prisoner has so that we can start to say, in fact, that this is the change and this is the level of activity.

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The whole thing is about transition. We have opened the O'Hara units which are the four units outside the wire for transition, and that focus will be on the things that we know work - people having basic literacy skills, some employment skills, sound family relations, social support, accommodation, Centrelink payments sorted and things like that so they have the best chance of succeeding. That is our primary goal.

Mrs TAYLOR - That is what I understand part of that infrastructure build was about.

Mr WILLIAMS - That has been the driver of that.

CHAIR - I think we have moved away a little bit from our terms of reference.

Mr WILLIAMS - I am in your hands.

CHAIR - You are right. I was letting it go to some degree.

Ms RATTRAY - The facilities do impact on the prisoners.

CHAIR - That is the way I was trying to see it.

Ms RATTRAY - To go back to the roster system, you have talked about the new system but one of the previous criticisms was about people not having a roster system well in advance. Will that new roster system address that issue?

Mr WILLIAMS - I'm not quite sure where your comment has come from.

Ms RATTRAY - From our report.

Mr WILLIAMS - There were always rosters in advance, but they were inflexible and they did not necessarily suit staff needs. The way you are rostered in at the moment is that your leave is when it appears on the roster, not when you want to negotiate it. Leave out of sequence causes issues for us. This new system, and some changes we have made to the way we want to roster people, will not only give us better control and vision of how the rosters are being put together, who is put in what position, who backfills where and how and what skills, but we will also try to achieve roster outcomes where staff have better flexibility in their personal lives, which is important to all of us.

Ms RATTRAY - Happy staff, happy life.

Mr WILLIAMS - It is a very good start for keeping the thing on an even keel.

Mr MULDER - We have previously discussed, and I think you have previously dismissed, the idea of having a casual work force, which gave you the great advantage, of course, that when you did have some overtime to fill you could draw on people at ordinary time rather than double-time and a half. I am wondering whether you have changed your views on that or why we are still sticking with what is obviously a good idea that works in many other correctional institutions around the country?

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Mr WILLIAMS - At this stage we have not pursued that further. There are different ways to skin a cat. One of the things we would like to look at in the future, once we have the basics sorted, is whether we can get things like job-sharing so we can perhaps have more flexible arrangements. At the moment we could do that but we have not really institutionalised it. There are a lot of people who retire and they basically retire fully, but some of them would like to come and do part of a job. We think we are making good progress with what we have done. I do take your point; New South Wales has used casual employment as part of their strategy. I cannot rule it out but we need to see where we get to with the strategies we have. We will be thinking of more flexible working arrangements that will help us into the future, like part-time and job share.

Mr MULDER - Are you meeting union resistance to the idea?

Mr WILLIAMS - We have not really raised it in recent times. We have before. The issue was about, in a small place like Tasmania, having enough people who could remain properly trained. A correctional officer takes 11 weeks to train, which is one of the better training schemes but not the longest. The issue we were going to face if we wanted to have a casual pool was how do you have enough people who are trained sufficiently and get enough work for it to be a viable investment. It was going to be very expensive to train people for nearly three months and then to have them perhaps only do a small amount of work. In New South Wales - we did talk to the people that Mr Dean and others have talked to - they have a lot of jails they can send people to from a casual pool. We have not seen it as a priority at this stage because the investment is high and we might not have the return. We are starting to talk with staff about things like, if people want graduated retirement, can we do job-sharing so we have people we can put into shifts who are not full-time but give us the same outcome.

Mr MULDER - The question of 12-hour shifts?

Mr WILLIAMS - We are certainly talking with unions at the moment about how that works. We do have 12 hours, 10 hours and eight-hour shifts, and various combinations of those. The 12-hour shifts certainly make sense in some places and not others.

Mr MULDER - I raise it in the context of previous reports of the Legislative Council committee, going back years, and also some evidence we have had about the fact that you could do three days on and four days off arrangements, and that those four days off mean people are unavailable or unwilling and that the prison service becomes a second career to the one they do on the other four days. There are also cultural issues surrounding 12-hour shifts and the impediments. I know a lot of organisations have tried them, particularly 24-hour service delivery organisations. They have walked away from them because of the impact on the availability of staff. Even if it is a crisis and a return call, you get people who are regularly unavailable due to the fact they are doing something else on those four days.

Mr WILLIAMS - I am aware of those issues. If you look at the history of overtime in the prison system, I do not think you could have said we have had a gross unavailability of people who want to come and do overtime. By the end of last year, because we did not have enough people in the structure, people were getting to the stage where they were starting to say, 'Enough; the overtime is too much'. I do not think the 12-hour shifts have created the issue of people being unavailable for overtime.

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The other issue of a second career, I am aware that some people do other things on their days off, but we have to manage. It comes back to the accountability and management of absences as the way we manage that, because with 10 days sick leave as an average for FTEs, we have achieved a pretty good level which does not indicate there is any widespread misuse of sick leave. It is at the industry standard you would expect.

Mr MULDER - I recall several years ago after the last major riot and takeover - resolved not by pizza but by Kentucky Fried Chicken, delivered by the secretary of the department in those days, Peter Hoult - they introduced a practice requiring a prison officer to be present during any instruction and classroom things. I know that then became prohibitive. A lot of training programs that were in full swing in the department were suspended and never resumed. I wonder whether we are now in a position to resume some of that training without the requirement for a prison officer to be in the classroom.

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes, and we have started to do some of those things. Some staff who are not correctional officers receive an allowance if they are required to supervise inmates. For example, in medium security there is a computer room and several classrooms. There might be a correctional officer in the facility but not necessarily in the room. We have moved a long way away from some of those. Some of those were old-style claims from the management versus staff stand-off eras. We have moved so far from that. VET education has increased to 37 000 hours.

Also, some of the correctional officers are actively engaged in some of those programs, whereas before it was a demarcation between whose job it was. That has all changed.

Mr MULDER - Perhaps some of them have benefited from the certificate 3 course for their four-day jobs. In relation to the certificate 3 in construction, what do they do on the practical side in the course? What does certificate 3 in construction allow them to do?

Mr WILLIAMS - The certificate 3 is a pre-apprenticeship certificate which includes modules that an apprentice would have to do if they were fully apprenticed outside the prison. For example, they pour concrete slabs, build things around the prison, and get tickets for different aspects of registration. For employment capability, it means that the employer who might want to take them on does not have to get them to complete these things; they come with a whole range of things.

Mr MULDER - Things like the white card?

Mr WILLIAMS - We do all that as well. We do that separately and it can also be part of the courses.

Mr MULDER - So it qualifies them to go out and work in footpath construction and minor building works?

Mr WILLIAMS - It would give a future employer someone who was more learned and better skilled than someone who had not done the course. So it will give them a foot up into construction work.

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Mr MULDER - Having that, I take it they build footpaths and things inside the prison. I guess some of that might be outside work, like your Risdon Vale Creek program?

Mr WILLIAMS - We are opportunistic if we have things to do and we find people who are doing different things. They have built things inside the prison - laying concrete slabs, building minor structure -

Mr MULDER - Escape tunnels -

Laughter.

Mr WILLIAMS - No, never say never but -

Mr MULDER - Sorry, I distracted you there. They are doing things inside the prison and outside as well?

Mr WILLIAMS - If needs be around the prison property. Some of these people work outside the prison. We have an apprentice who is actually apprenticed to an employer and who goes out every day and works. We now have this model because people who are in short term in prison cannot generally complete apprenticeships. What we can do is give employers value by sending someone out who has a package of skills more than they had before. We are also working Skills Tasmania to develop a model where employers might be able to take on apprentices who go out each day to work as an apprentice and come back at the end of the day and spend their time.

Mr MULDER - Are there any post-release programs or parole programs where someone who has this basic knowledge and limited amount of skills is transitioned into the workforce after prison rather than just during?

CHAIR - A happy prisoner means probably a happy correctional officer.

Mr WILLIAMS - When someone comes out of jail, the things that stop them from re-offending are having their Centrelink sorted, some literacy skills, some jobs skills, a social and family environment that works -

Mrs TAYLOR - Somewhere to live.

Mr WILLIAMS - and somewhere to live. We are putting a lot of work into that. We work with Job Services Australia and with Centrelink to create some of those. Also, the Salvation Army and all of those organisations all offer services of different sorts to people. We try to pull them together for a transition so that all the good work we have done does not just fall in a heap as they leave the gate. The pre-apprenticeship program is one that Skills Tasmania thinks gives employers a real benefit, a cost-saving to getting the person on board, but also they are part way through an apprenticeship.

Mr MULDER - I was more interested in what has often come up in the context of the cultural change of prison and the boredom so that they don't assault prison officers, which means overtime. You have the programs, the halfway houses so that you have things like Centrelink sorted out, but more than that we need an active program where there is a mentor or a program that says, you are out of prison, probably on parole, and

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now we have Skills Tasmania or one of the employment agencies actually taking that prisoner into a post-release work program. I know local government is fairly receptive to this, given that they are the people who own the footpaths and who are under constant pressure to build them, and yet here is an opportunity to get some of these people at least some work experience post-prison in the day labour force on a council doing the very things they have been trained in prison to do.

Mr WILLIAMS - One of the focuses we have at the moment is about developing a better transition plan for all the aspects including employment, but we already do things with a whole range of outside organisations and you probably don't want me to go through the list but it is an extensive list including STEPS, PROP, Bethlehem House and MAX Employment, which is a private employment company, because taking it to that end goal is the focus.

CHAIR - I have a couple of issues with sick leave. I think we were told previously that over the past couple of years two employees were asked to seek employment outside the organisation because they were probably better suited to some other area of work and so on. Have there been any further developments in that area? Are there correctional officers, for instance, who have been identified as taking a deal of sick leave that requires further investigation? Where are we moving in that direction?

Mr WILLIAMS - One of the strategies that has helped to bring the sick leave down is not only the broader cultural change but we are challenging sick leave in some cases where we think people might be not using it appropriately. We are doing it from the approach that we want both our staff and our workplace to be healthy and that people taking lots of sick leave is not necessarily an indication of those things occurring.

We have put in place a number of rules that had not previously been in place. If you are coming back on a graduated return to work from a workplace injury you won't be working overtime until you are fully fit on the basis that if you can't do your full job you certainly would not be expected to do extra. That is not a measure to punish people. It is a measure to say we have to have safer workplaces and we need to get you back to full work as soon as possible, because all the literature and all the learnings are that the longer someone is on limited work or no work following an injury, the less chance of return.

CHAIR - That is a model that New South Wales was using where they believed excessive days of sick leave would have been taken and not just workers compensation, and it was then identified that for those people their health was more important than working overtime therefore they would not be on overtime rosters until their health picked up.

Mr WILLIAMS - We have certainly implemented approaches to that. These are obviously very individual circumstances in each case but we are certainly pursuing that issue.

CHAIR - The other point was that in each case where sick leave was being taken there was a follow-up to that person through a phone call or a visit, or whatever, to see if they were okay and needed help and support. That was also a New South Wales strategy.

Mr WILLIAMS - It is in place in the Tasmanian prison system now. We actually introduced an HR position that had not been previously there. It is not that position's job to make the

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phone call; it is that position's job to make sure that the phone call was made. As I said earlier, we have sent the processing of sick leave back down to the local managers whereas before it was centralised.

Mr FINCH - You talked earlier about communicating with New South Wales and the way they deal with their operation there and their electronic rostering system and so on. Are you intending to maintain communication with them on some sort of regular basis or to check in that you are getting the results of where you are going?

Mr WILLIAMS - Yes. Mr Edwards is already one of the lecturers at the Brush Farm Academy in New South Wales for correctional officers but we agreed that perhaps Mr Edwards and I would go to New South Wales and meet up with the people we spoke to. Prior to that we had worked with them to work out what electronic rostering system we might want to buy, based on their experience. I don't think we bought what they bought but what they had learnt was instructive to us in that process.

I sit on the National Corrective Services Administrators Council and this year I am Chair. Through that process we have a lot of engagement with other states and try to pick up their stuff. We did talk to the New South Wales people about overtime but we are also talking to the other states. We take a lot of input from other states. We are too small to develop our own sex offender program so we take an accredited one from Queensland and pay them to come down and support us. In a range of different ways we are connected to them because we need the support of bigger places.

Mr FINCH - It was specifically overtime and the way they control it and overtime will be the focus when you talk to them.

CHAIR - If there are no other questions, it would seem that we have covered the issues that are important to us. Robert, we will write to you with those matters on notice so you can provide that information as soon as you are able to because the committee wants to get this report in as soon as it can, hopefully this year. That is what we are looking at, anyway, at this stage.

Having said that, we thank you very much for your attendance today and for the candid way in which you have answered questions.

Mr WILLIAMS - Thank you very much.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW.