

TRANSCRIPT

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Budget Estimates 2019–20 (Youth Justice)

Melbourne—Friday, 14 June 2019

Members

Mr Philip Dalidakis—Chair

Mr Richard Riordan—Deputy Chair

Mr Sam Hibbins

Mr Gary Maas

Mr Danny O'Brien

Ms Pauline Richards

Mr Tim Richardson

Ms Ingrid Stitt

Ms Bridget Vallence

WITNESSES

Mr Ben Carroll, Minister for Youth Justice,

Ms Rebecca Falkingham, Secretary, and

Ms Brigid Sunderland, Deputy Secretary, Youth Justice, Department of Justice and Community Safety.

The CHAIR: After 55 hours over six days of hearings, I declare open the very final session of the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee.

On behalf of the Parliament and my fellow committee members, we are conducting an inquiry into the 2019–20 Budget Estimates. Its aim has always been and will continue to be to scrutinise public administration and finance to improve outcomes for the Victorian community today and tomorrow. What a lofty goal and ambition that has been.

The committee will now begin consideration of the final portfolio of youth justice. I welcome the Minister for Youth Justice, the Honourable Benjamin Carroll, and officers from the department, and I thank you all again for appearing before the committee this evening.

All evidence given is protected by the Parliamentary Committees Act. This means that it attracts parliamentary privilege and is protected from judicial review, something I am very grateful for. Witnesses found to be giving false or misleading evidence may be in contempt of Parliament and subject to penalty, which will include having to sit on this committee for every minute of next year's Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, and if it is particularly bad, we will make you the chair.

Minister, I invite you to make a very brief opening statement of no more than 10 minutes, which will be followed by the very best questions that this committee has to offer for the final time in 2019. Minister, over to you.

Visual presentation.

Mr CARROLL: Thank you, Chair. Since 2014 the government has made significant reforms to our youth justice system. Governance is always the first priority in system reform. Appropriately, youth justice is now the responsibility of the Department of Justice and Community Safety, and I have been appointed the Minister for Youth Justice, the first in Victoria, to continue that reform, support victims of crime and keep Victorians safe.

Significant reform is continuing to overhaul our youth justice system. Since 2014, \$1.2 billion has been directed towards building a youth justice system that focuses on rehabilitation and contributes to reducing crime. The amount spent on our youth justice system in 2019–20 will be 75 per cent more than when we came to government. The 2019–20 budget provides a further \$45.5 million to continue this journey, including enhancements to case management and ensuring custodial facilities are safe, secure and fit for purpose. This increased investment has allowed us to commence the most significant reform to youth justice in a generation. Released in August 2017, the landmark youth justice review by James Ogloff and Penny Armytage provides a comprehensive road map for reform, and we have wasted no time in getting on with the job. Unprecedented investment has gone into repairing, fortifying and building infrastructure; bolstering our response to overrepresented groups, including Aboriginal young people; strengthening diversion and restorative justice practices, including community-based orders and giving our workers the skills they need to respond in a very challenging environment.

Over \$400 million on upgrading new infrastructure, including the new facility at Cherry Creek, is progressing; \$10.8 million into the 2018–19 budget as part of the fourth phase of the Aboriginal justice agreement; \$12.9 million in the 2018–19 state budget on the Children's Court youth diversion service, as recommended by the family violence royal commission. Our successful diversion practices are resulting in a reduction in the numbers of young people in our community on supervision. Significant investment has also been directed to recruit and strengthen security in custody. This includes record funding for additional staff and training, including the establishment of an intelligence unit; safety and emergency response team—otherwise known as

SERT—staff; Corrections Victoria’s security and emergency services group, otherwise known as the SESG; senior operational staff and staff on the unit. Other workforce reforms include enhancements to training; extended pre-service induction, including additional sessions on de-escalation techniques, increased use of scenario-based learning and increased on-the-job placements; and development of a work plan to address recruitment, retention and learning and development.

New laws were also introduced in 2017 through the Children and Justice Legislation Amendment (Youth Justice Reform) Act 2017, strengthening consequences for young people who assault youth justice custodial workers, damage property or try to escape. Reforms in the act also enabled longer periods of detention, created a new offence of recruiting children to engage in criminal activity and introduced more intensive control programs.

In April 2019 I established a dedicated youth justice custodial facilities working group that is now chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Justice and Community Safety. The group comprises senior government and non-government youth justice experts and stakeholders. The working group has met four times and is continuing to meet fortnightly to work through a program of work. The group’s work is also anchored by the Armytage-Ogloff review’s recommendations. To date the working group has been engaged on the key challenge facing the youth justice custodial system, a new operating philosophy for youth justice custodial system, a new security rating system for classifying and placing young people in youth justice custody, the design and operating model for a new intensive intervention unit. This work complements reform already delivered in establishing a high-risk panel to oversee and provide direction around managing young people who are at significant risk of harm to themselves or others in the community and implementation of a new case management framework.

The 2019–20 budget provides over \$25 million to assist people in the community. The funding will ensure youth justice has the necessary and skilled workforce to support the successful management of complex young people in the community, as well as providing continued expansion and extended hours of the youth justice community support service, which provides support to at-risk young people, including after hours and on weekends. It will also enable delivery of evidence-based rehabilitative interventions, including family functional therapy and multisystemic therapy.

Funding has also been provided for programs that target at-risk young people from a range of cultural backgrounds. This funding is for the continued operation of the multi-agency panels across metropolitan Melbourne. Members may be aware that these panels provide proactive case planning of young people who are at high risk of offending and causing serious harm. Culturally and linguistically diverse specific youth justice positions in both custody and the community have also been rolled out. These roles were created to engage with young people of CALD backgrounds and ensure provision of culturally appropriate support programs and information, programs and activities that foster prosocial connection to culture, which serve as a protective factor against reoffending.

In addition to this ongoing work, we are continuing to implement a new approach to case management, which commenced in February this year. This new approach uses validated risk assessment tools to identify interventions and services that target risk, need and offending behaviour. This is complemented by a suite of new youth offending programs and psychosocial programs, which also commenced in February this year. These new programs are available in community and custody and address violence, sex offending, family violence, motor vehicle offending and offending related to the use of alcohol or other drugs. I also recently approved the extension of the Youth Support Service, the youth justice group conferencing and the Youth Justice Community Support Service to ensure young people have access to the programs they need to stop reoffending and to try and do what we can to keep Victorians safe.

We also have the Koori Youth Justice Taskforce, an examination of approximately 250 Aboriginal young people led by the independent commissioner for Aboriginal children and young people in partnership with the Department of Justice and Community Safety. Over the next four years we will be continuing this reform in all our priority areas of the new standalone portfolio to ensure that our youth justice system keeps staff, young people and the community safe. That, Chair, is the conclusion of my presentation.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much, Minister.

Ms RICHARDS: Thank you, Minister, Secretary and Deputy Secretary. I might take the opportunity to ask you to pass on to the people you work with our appreciation for the work that is done. It is really important that they know that that is something we really acknowledge.

Minister, you referred extensively in your presentation to the Armytage-Ogloff review and with reference to budget paper 3, pages 81 and 82, and budget paper 4, pages 73 and 74, I am interested in having you elaborate on the review and speak to how the budget measures are leading to the acquittal of the review's recommendations.

Mr CARROLL: Certainly, Ms Richards, and thank you for your opening remarks. I will ensure that that communication is passed on to our frontline staff both in the custody centres and in the community.

The Armytage-Ogloff review is really a landmark report for our youth justice system. It was given the title *Youth Justice Review and Strategy: Meeting Needs and Reducing Offending*. It is probably the biggest single blueprint since the balanced approach policy was introduced back in the early 2000s, so it is a landmark reform. Penny Armytage will be known to many people in this room as a former secretary, a former corrections commissioner and now for chairing the mental health royal commission. Professor James Ogloff, AM, is the director of the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science at Swinburne, and he is also very much a leader in forensic care and support. I think we could not have had two more competent and expert people to produce this blueprint for the youth justice system. We have accepted all 126 of the recommendations, either in full or in principle, and we have provided the additional \$145 million investment in the 18–19 budget to strengthen the youth justice system but also to roll out increased support for rehabilitation and make sure that we are managing and securing not only the young people in custody but working very much on the security and safety of our frontline staff. This 19–20 budget provides \$45.5 million to carry on the momentum that we have achieved since we began overhauling the youth justice system. I want to put on record my thanks and appreciation to the former minister, Minister Mikakos, for initiating this report. It is essentially the blueprint for the future.

On that note, work is progressing on these 126 recommendations. Thirty-five recommendations have been completed so far with a lot of hard work by the department, the secretary and the deputy secretary and the frontline workforce, as well as stakeholders. A key milestone made earlier this year was the implementation of a new evidence-based case management approach for young people who are in custody and in the community. The review identified the need to strengthen youth justice case management to reduce young people's reoffending, responding to the changing nature of offending and increased complexity of these young people, which was not only borne out in the Armytage-Ogloff report but is very much part of the annual report of the Youth Parole Board.

So after comprehensive training for our staff, in February this year we introduced new assessment tools to assess all young people for their risk of offending, family violence, cognitive needs, mental health issues, violence and sex offending, including a new validated assessment tool to identify the appropriate interventions for young people. That is the key thing. As the Sentencing Advisory Council have commented, all the reports show that you need the early intervention, because the earlier a young person gets themselves involved in the criminal justice system, the more likely, evidence suggests, that they could essentially have a career in criminal justice. So the earlier the intervention, the better. This new validated tool is very important.

We are also rolling out the multisystem therapy and family functional therapy introduced in April this year to support the engagement of young people's families and the social system, such as schools. It would be remiss of me if I did not acknowledge the work of the Deputy Premier through the Navigator program and the work of that multi-agency panel outside of custody to ensure young people get every opportunity to engage in education and turn their lives around. Having said that, Ms Richards, there is still significant work to do in the youth justice system. It is an ambitious reform agenda, and over the next 12 months we will be developing a stronger youth justice strategy that really incorporates our reform priorities and sets out how we will deliver on the recommendations and implement those key recommendations that are highlighted in Armytage-Ogloff.

Ms RICHARDS: Just to dive a little bit deeper, I am interested in finding out what recommendations relate to the leadership and oversight of the youth justice system as well as the efforts to improve the safety and stability of the custodial centres.

Mr CARROLL: Thanks very much, Ms Richards. I might take the second part of your question first, which really does deal with workforce and strengthening the youth justice system. As part of our \$45.5 million allocated in this budget, we are investing \$20.1 million for additional staff to maintain the safety and security of our custodial centres, including the safety and emergency response team, which is the SERT staff. We have also rolled out, and I had the great pleasure of opening their new training facility up in Ararat recently, Corrections Victoria's security and emergency services group, the SESG staff, who are also now working in our youth justice system. So we have got essentially youth justice, frontline staff, psychologists, Corrections Victoria, SERT staff—it is a real amalgam of best practice but also too, it is ensuring that we have got the right mix of staff for the frontline workforce.

In a nutshell, these are very difficult roles, very challenging roles, but also the rewards are there. I have met the frontline staff on many occasions now and I see how they come to work committed to try and turn these young lives around, to get them on the right track and to give them the pro-social networks, the pro-social engagement, even sitting down with them and having a meal, trying to engage the young people, often complex, often trauma-affected, from a range of backgrounds, to try and work with them while their minds are still developing and they are still growing up, to give them the maturity, to give them the education through Parkville College to get their lives back on track.

As outlined in budget paper 3, \$20.1 million is to go on additional staff. We have been doing a lot more in terms of the workforce. The secretary is chairing the custodial facilities working group. We are working very much front and centre to ensure our frontline workforce feel adequately supported, that they get the training that they need and that they go to work feeling secure but also knowing that they are making a very big difference. That is why I have made it part of my role to meet with as many of the frontline workers as possible, both at Parkville and at Malmsbury, and to compliment them on the intensity of the work they are doing.

Ms RICHARDS: Thank you for those insights. Minister, I am going to move on again, although still referring back to your presentation and the reference to the youth justice custodial working group.

Mr CARROLL: Yes.

Ms RICHARDS: I am interested in finding out why—there are several parts to my question—you set up the group, who is represented, what it has achieved and also what work you expect to be undertaking over the coming months.

Mr CARROLL: Thank you, Ms Richards. We have a large program of work underway to reform the youth justice system. This work is underpinned by the landmark Armytage-Ogloff report. The Armytage-Ogloff youth justice review recommended that we establish an intensive intervention unit to better manage the behaviour of some of these young people. One of the priorities as we move forward is to look at interstate best practice and international best practice. As many would be aware, we are also building a new facility at Cherry Creek.

The design of the new unit will be complemented by the custodial facilities working group. The secretary to my left is chairing this working group, with representatives from the deputy secretary to my right and a range of stakeholders, including secretaries and senior executives from across government, including the Department of Justice and Community Safety, the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Health and Human Services, the principal commissioner of the Commission for Children and Young People and the commissioner for Aboriginal children and young people. The Community and Public Sector Union are also represented, as is WorkSafe Victoria, Parkville College, Orygen Youth Health, which is being rolled out this year in our youth justice custodial centres, as well as independent experts, including Robyn Miller, who is also the CEO of MacKillop Family Services.

We believe that close consultation is required with the sector. We also fully understand—and Armytage and Ogloff go to the heart of this in their report—that Victoria is made up of a wonderful range of stakeholders that have very good expertise in the youth justice system. We want to make sure that out of this work and the working group the training for the custodial staff, the YJ frontline staff, the SESG—the security and emergency services group—and Corrections Victoria staff have every support they need. The working group is doing some

important reform looking at best practice. But more than that, too, we really want to get on with the job of implementing the recommendations of Armytage-Ogloff.

Ms RICHARDS: Minister, you have spoken in some of your other portfolio areas about the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in youth justice. Does this funding contribute to the efforts to address this issue?

Mr CARROLL: It certainly does, Ms Richards. On that working group we have representatives that represent that young cohort. If I could sum it up, in our youth justice system—and this is really highlighted in the Youth Parole Board—you have essentially got four cohorts. You have got over-representation from the Indigenous community; over-representation predominantly from our East African, South Sudanese, community; over-representation from the Pacific islander community; and, finally, over-representation from the child protection community. They are generally the four cohorts we are dealing with. Often they have a range of symptoms. None of their behaviour can be excused. They need clear boundaries. But also we need to realise that we need the therapy models in place.

I spoke earlier about the mental health royal commission. One of the proudest things I am happy about is that we will be building mental health beds as part of the Cherry Creek facility. But above and beyond that, we have already got Orygen contracted and working in our youth justice system. They will provide a range of interventions, but also making sure that we have the culturally appropriate trained liaison officers, whether it be for the Indigenous community or other CALD communities, and making sure that everyone gets the intervention that they require.

Ms RICHARDS: Again, I appreciate the incredible insights there and the passion that you bring to this challenging role. The budget paper talks about programs to target youth offending among at-risk young people forming a key part of the youth justice reducing offending strategy. Can you speak a bit more about the mental health services in youth justice and the role they play in reducing reoffending amongst young people?

Mr CARROLL: I certainly can, Ms Richards. As I highlighted earlier, the mental health royal commission will be very important across all of my portfolios, but mental health services are very important. In the adult system we have Forensicare, we have got Thomas Embling. We are rolling out the mental health royal commission, we are rolling out Orygen, we are building on the work of Professor Patrick McGorry, Minister Foley is essentially funding and resourcing so Victoria can become the national leader in youth mental health. So there are going to be really strong complements across government as we address some of the criminogenic needs, those risk factors, protective factors of young people. But we want to make sure that young people get the help when and where they need it.

As I spoke about with the Youth Parole Board, 53 per cent of young people in custody presented with mental health issues, and to ensure they get the help when they need it most, our 18–19 budget provided \$18.7 million over four years to improve health and mental health for young people in custody. This additional investment has funded the significant improvement and expansion of mental health services for young people in custody. Above and beyond what we are doing with Orygen, we have also contracted Correct Care Australasia to begin delivering their primary and mental health services in custody. Every young person in the Victorian youth justice centres now receives a health and mental health screen by a registered psychiatric nurse within 24 hours of reception, or within 12 hours of reception for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. They also receive a comprehensive health and mental health assessment by a registered medical officer within 72 hours of reception and ongoing primary mental health services, including 24-hour access to primary health and primary mental health nursing. In addition I spoke about the work of Minister Foley. With Orygen Youth being rolled out, this will support young people with complex mental needs to give them the specialist assessment and treatment while in custody, because we know the earlier the intervention, the better. Both Armytage-Ogloff and the Sentencing Advisory Council have all highlighted the importance of early intervention, timed intervention and the right intervention.

Ms RICHARDS: At the very beginning you spoke a bit about the workforce, and so I would like to take you there. I will start by referring you to budget paper 3, page 82. I am interested in you describing the ways the 'Youth justice reducing reoffending' output specifically will support the youth justice workforce.

Mr CARROLL: Thank you, Ms Richards, for that. We have gone through a very extensive recruitment campaign for our youth justice workforce. Indeed I have met with the youth justice staff and frontline staff both at Parkville and Malmsbury. I have also met with, essentially, Orygen, and I have met with a range of stakeholders that are really dealing with difficult cohorts at times, complex situations. What comes up regularly is no two days are the same in the youth justice system, so we are very keen to ensure that the workforce is supported every step of the way. That is why this budget does provide \$45.5 million in output funding over two years for initiatives to strengthen the youth justice system, including support for rehabilitation, ensuring the safety of our staff, young people and the community. This includes \$20.1 million for additional staff to maintain safety and security in our custodial centres, including the safety and emergency response team, the SERT staff I spoke about earlier, as well as Corrections Victoria, the security and emergency services team, the SESG—so senior operational staff and staff on the units. I think it is very important, though, to make sure that there is, as I spoke about, the adequate case management and psychological support to ensure—and Armytage and Ogloff said essentially you do have a captured audience while you have them in custody—that they are trained up and they are prepared. Armytage and Ogloff drew very heavily on the work of the United Kingdom, and a lot of the recommendations go towards the education precinct in our youth justice centres. Parkville College is doing some good work, whether it be VCE or VCAL, but there is enormous opportunity there to build on that and ensure they are getting the certificates and the training and education required and the out-of-cell hours to get the rehab, get the support and get the intervention.

Ms RICHARDS: I am interested in having you explain the intensive intervention unit and how that is part of your efforts to make youth justice centres safe and secure, as well as any other outcomes from the youth justice custodial working group.

Mr CARROLL: Certainly. The intensive intervention unit is something that has had some coverage recently, and it was actually a recommendation out of Armytage-Ogloff. But the key thing to think about with an intensive intervention unit, it is about working with some of the most difficult clients we may have. What the best practice says, though, is above and beyond having the intervention unit you need to make sure you have got the right programs and the right therapy in place to ensure you can get the targeted intervention but an intervention that will work with this young cohort. The custodial working group, chaired by the secretary, has those key stakeholders at the table, but it also has representatives from the community and public sector union as well as representatives from the children's commissioner. They generally come at this issue trying to do the right thing and generally want to see the security and safety of staff, but both want to see young lives being turned around. Other states have looked at this. I spoke before about Thomas Embling. Thomas Embling has embarked on a similar-type project for an intensive-type intervention unit for that really difficult, hard-to-manage cohort. This will be embedded in the new Cherry Creek facility, but we are also looking at how we could bring it online earlier, because we think there are enormous benefits to having such a unit and it can make a difference to safety, to security and, most importantly, to some of these young clients.

Ms RICHARDS: Minister, beyond recruitment and additional training for staff, what is being done to improve the overall safety of the custodial workplace?

Mr CARROLL: Thank you, Ms Richards, for your question. One point two billion dollars has been expended in the youth justice system, and I commend the previous minister for her work. If you go to Parkville right now, if you go to Malmsbury, you will see that investment in previous budgets essentially being rolled out with strengthening works, anti-climb measures—a whole range of measures to address essentially the physical locality of these custodial facilities. This is also on the back of the Neil Comrie review. He had a very good look at Parkville. For those of you who are not aware, Parkville was built back in the 1890s not as a custodial facility but rather as essentially a residential home facility for some of the most vulnerable boys in particular. Now over the journey of 100 years it has become a custodial facility with a range of buildings—some of them heritage protected, some of them that can be classified as Art Deco. Hence Comrie, Armytage and Ogloff recommended that you need to put the strengthening works there, but you also needed to get on and build a dedicated, 21st century facility, that we envisage for Cherry Creek, to manage some of this complex cohort. So there are a range of measures, unprecedented investment in the youth justice system. This will take time, but I have got no doubt, if we follow the blueprint of Armytage-Ogloff, we can get there.

Ms RICHARDS: Thank you again for those insights. I am just looking at budget paper 3, pages 81 and 82, and budget paper 4, pages 73 and 74. Could you explain how the youth justice initiatives outlined will improve the system, reduce reoffending and keep the community safe? It could link to your previous presentation.

Mr CARROLL: Thank you, Ms Richards, for your question. There is a range of programs we are implementing inside custody, but there are also a range of programs that have been implemented outside. One of the key things is the multi-agency panels. This really is joined-up government working with a complex, difficult cohort. I actually got to see the work—the MAPs, they call them—at Laverton North firsthand recently. This model is essentially school principals coming together with Victoria Police and leaders in the community to manage some of the most difficult young people that we have in our community. It is providing and doing an enormous resource and an enormous task where you bring joined-up government—essentially health services, community services, police and the courts—together to identify the young person. Where are they now? Are they getting the support? Are they linked in with Orygen? Are they going to school? Where are they now? If they are not going to school, what do we need to do? How is the family environment? It is essentially a model that I think is working.

They have only been around for a little over 12 months, but I think the multi-agency panels—and I credit the Premier and the police minister for their establishment—are a significant reform that will continue to pay dividends on the back of the work we are doing inside the custody centre through Orygen, the work of Patrick McGorry, the work of Correct Care Australasia, the new case management approach, the multitherapy and the work of the psychologists that we also have deployed amongst our youth justice system.

Ms RICHARDS: Thank you, Minister. You have mentioned a couple of times in your evidence this evening the safety and emergency response team and the security and emergency services group. Can you speak about the role of these teams and the overall plan for the strengthening of youth justice precincts and their workforce?

Mr CARROLL: I certainly can, Ms Richards. Thank you for that question. These are an important addition, both the SERT and the SESG. The 2019–20 budget provides funding of \$2.4 million for the continuation of 21 additional safety and emergency response team—SERT—staff to ensure safety and security across both Parkville and Malmsbury. Expanding the SERT incident response capability through additional staffing was a recommendation from Neil Comrie’s review into the Parkville youth justice centre that I touched on a moment ago.

This budget includes outcomes that are continuing to provide adequate numbers of highly trained specialist staff above and beyond our frontline YJ staff. SERT are a specialised team of youth justice custodial officers responsible for the management and safety of emergency incidents in our youth justice centres as well as any young people that may be posing any challenging behaviours. All SERT members are trained in tactical operations to improve the effectiveness of incident response and management.

I spoke about no two days being the same. That is why we have also rolled out the Corrections Victoria state emergency services group through a \$10.6 million over two years investment.

The CHAIR: Minister, I know that you are still motoring through that response, and I do apologise for interrupting, but we do need to move on.

Ms VALLENCE: Thank you, Minister and officers, for appearing. We are in the home stretch.

The CHAIR: Don’t moz us now.

Ms VALLENCE: As is my usual course of action, I will go straight to you, Secretary. I will give you a break, Minister.

Secretary, 2019–20 budget paper 3, page 274, states that youth justice custodial services will receive \$168.1 million in funding. Can you please provide a breakdown of how much of this is allocated to agency or contract staff and how much is allocated to replacement leave staff due to workplace incidents or permanent staff who are on stress leave?

Ms FALKINGHAM: Thank you, Ms Vallence. I will just check whether Ms Sunderland has that information on hand, or else we might take that on notice.

Ms SUNDERLAND: We might take that one on notice.

Ms FALKINGHAM: We will take that on notice.

Ms VALLENCE: You do not have that at hand? Okay. Secretary, of the agency staff in the youth justice custodial service, how long would the average length of a contract be?

Ms FALKINGHAM: We would not have an average length of a contractor. We have obviously a whole range of different positions that we fill for different periods of time. We have dramatically decreased the use of contractor staff over the last two years. But it depends what position you are asking for. So I am quite happy to take it on notice and get you, per classification, an average.

Ms VALLENCE: Okay, all right. Yes, that would be good—a list of classifications and the length. And would you say that of contract staff, who obviously, as you were saying, are on various lengths of contract terms, how many of the contract staff actually complete a full term?

Ms FALKINGHAM: What do you mean by ‘full term’?

Ms VALLENCE: The full contract term, so work through to the expiry of the term of the contract. So say it is a 12-month fixed-term contract—obviously there would be multiple variations of that—how many actually conclude the term?

Ms FALKINGHAM: Again it would depend what classification that staff member is in, and so we are happy—

Ms VALLENCE: No, of all classifications, across the board. How many are actually completing the term?

Ms FALKINGHAM: We would not keep an average of who was keeping their contract, but we are happy to see if we have any additional information and come back to you.

Ms VALLENCE: Sorry, did you say you would not keep an average?

Ms FALKINGHAM: Sorry, can you repeat your question?

Ms VALLENCE: You do not keep track of the contract staff who are concluding or seeking to get out of their contract?

Ms FALKINGHAM: We keep track of attrition, absolutely, but can you just repeat your question and what information you are asking for?

Ms VALLENCE: So of those who are contract or agency staff on contracts of various lengths, how many actually do not complete their full term, or how many complete their full term and how many do not?

Ms FALKINGHAM: We will take that on notice and come back to you.

Mr CARROLL: And I think, Ms Vallence, the key thing is—and Armytage-Ogloff go to this, and the custodial working groups go into this too—there has been a 21 per cent reduction over the past year in the reliance on agency staff and expenditure. So we are moving in the right direction. Our recruitment campaign is working. We are advertising new roles in youth justice. We have got a very committed frontline workforce, and we are very committed to making sure they are adequately resourced and that we do spend less on agency staff. I think to hear at budget estimates a 21 per cent reduction in anyone’s measure is a good thing.

Ms VALLENCE: Yes, it is good if that is the case; it is good that it is reducing, but still we would like that. Thanks for taking that on notice, Secretary. And of the contract staff, how many have taken leave for stress?

Ms FALKINGHAM: Again, that will go to information we hold, information that is held by WorkSafe, so again, I am happy to take that on notice and come back to you with that information.

Ms VALLENCE: So you do not have any of that here, okay. And how many contract staff make WorkCover claims or have made WorkCover claims for injuries? In the workplace, obviously.

Ms FALKINGHAM: Again, I would not have that list of contractor versus permanent staff.

Ms VALLENCE: Okay, we are going well. Perhaps you might be taking this on notice as well—what is the total turnover of staff for the 2018–19 year so far, both the part-time and full-time staff, in youth justice?

Ms FALKINGHAM: I might ask Ms Sunderland to answer that question.

Ms SUNDERLAND: I have an approximate number for you for this financial year to date, so I could take on notice to get you the exact number.

Ms VALLENCE: Yes, approximate is fine.

Ms SUNDERLAND: It is approximately 100 of our YJW1 staff that have left the service this financial year.

Ms VALLENCE: Could you repeat that, sorry?

Ms SUNDERLAND: Yes. So there are approximately 100 of our YJW1 staff that have left this financial year.

Ms VALLENCE: That have left this year? Yes, okay. So that is an approximate number, and if you would not mind getting me the actual number on notice, thank you. And how many agency staff worked in the youth justice system in Parkville in the 18–19 period?

Ms SUNDERLAND: I would need to take that on notice in terms of the number of agency staff.

Ms VALLENCE: Same for Malmsbury?

Ms SUNDERLAND: It would be the same for Malmsbury. So what we are doing is really endeavouring to stabilise that workforce, reduce the reliance on agency staff, so we have had that reduction in the contract.

Ms VALLENCE: So will you take that on notice to get those?

Ms SUNDERLAND: Absolutely, yes.

Ms VALLENCE: And of course with permanent staff and contract or agency staff—of the total remuneration on average—for like-for-like job activities, what is the cost or the remuneration variance?

Ms SUNDERLAND: Sorry, when you say ‘remuneration variance’, do you mean between agency staff and our custodial staff?

Ms VALLENCE: So agency staff and permanent staff are performing the same job duties—and I know there are obviously several. What we are after is the remuneration variance for those.

Ms SUNDERLAND: Okay, so we can provide that on notice. Our YJW staff are on the regular EBA, so we have the pay progression scale that you would expect through the public service EBA, but we would need to provide you with the separate numbers for the agency staff.

Ms VALLENCE: Training is required to work in the youth justice custodial centre. Does the training for agency staff differ to permanent staff?

Ms SUNDERLAND: We put the agency staff through the training program.

Ms VALLENCE: Through a different program? Is it the same program?

Ms SUNDERLAND: The same program, yes. So we put them through the program that we offer our regular staff. It is a seven-week induction program that we offer our regular staff, and then we provide specialist programs for agency staff to come on board.

Ms VALLENCE: Okay, so it is not different in any way. Or is it different in any way?

Ms SUNDERLAND: We would expect them to cover the same core modules that our staff cover, so things like tactical options training, de-escalation with young people.

Ms VALLENCE: May I ask—when you say you would expect them to, do they?

Ms SUNDERLAND: Yes, we provide the training for our agency staff.

Ms VALLENCE: And you document the training they do?

Ms SUNDERLAND: Yes.

Mr CARROLL: And induction as well. We have extended their induction from 21 days to 33 days and put a real focus on changing behaviour, the security techniques, the learning development, to really make sure the workforce has every support they need and every mechanism to work with the young cohorts they are dealing with.

Ms VALLENCE: Obviously we have had a lot of agency staff—and you have said you are seeing a reduction in numbers—but with such a propensity to have agency staff, what would you say is really driving that? Why has there been such a change in the employment agreements of staff? And how do we know that there is control? If we have so many agency staff in the system, how do you have control in the system?

Ms FALKINGHAM: So we obviously have peaks in the use of agency staff. It is fair to say we have used agency staff quite consistently over a decade. Obviously we are developing a workforce strategy at the moment. It has been really important. The minister and I have gone out and met with staff on many, many occasions, talking to them about what would actually make a meaningful career for them longer term in the youth justice system and understanding kind of why they are coming to work, understanding kind of some of the reasons that we have to use agency staff, understanding workloads, understanding within the new operating model how we can ensure staff feel ownership of that model, and making sure that our staff, who are deeply committed to our young people, want to be able to work on a day-to-day basis to be able to stop our young people from re-offending and lead fulfilling lives—

Ms VALLENCE: Yes, it would be challenging, but I guess with such a reliance on agency staff I think the real concern is that there is a lack of control in the system.

Ms FALKINGHAM: Could I just disagree with you? I do not think we have the same reliance we had on agency staff two years ago. We have worked consistently to reduce the number of agency staff by, as I said, really listening to our staff, who we really value—they do really tough jobs—

Ms VALLENCE: It is.

Ms FALKINGHAM: to understand what we can do to make them have a long-term career within the youth justice system. But we absolutely have been reducing consistently the use of contract staff.

Ms VALLENCE: Okay, and we will get to see that data on notice. In terms of the various classifications, what would be the shortest term of contract?

Ms FALKINGHAM: We can do individual shifts for contract staff.

Ms VALLENCE: So how do agency staff get trained for just one shift?

Ms FALKINGHAM: Well, they have the same training, as Ms Sunderland mentioned.

Ms VALLENCE: So they would not commence one shift without having done training? Training is all prior to—

Ms FALKINGHAM: That is accurate, yes.

Ms VALLENCE: Okay. Good. All right. We will move on. How many category 1 incidents have you experienced in the last 12 months?

Mr CARROLL: So category 1 incidents—first and foremost, Ms Vallence, I want to say no incident is acceptable in the youth justice system. With category 1 incidents, I have met with some of the staff involved. I have let them know that as minister I support them every day in the work they do.

Ms VALLENCE: So how many, Minister?

Mr CARROLL: Well, this data is actually publicly available through the *Report on Government Services*—

Ms VALLENCE: Well, good. Can you give me the number?

Mr CARROLL: I have got the number here, yes.

The CHAIR: Give her the website, Mr Carroll.

Ms VALLENCE: No, I have asked for the number.

Mr CARROLL: No, the Liberals should know the Productivity Commission website, Chair, but if they do not, I can spell it out—pc.gov.au.

Ms VALLENCE: We are almost there, Minister, with respect, please.

Mr CARROLL: There were 129 category 1 incidents involving assault in the 2017–18 financial year.

Ms VALLENCE: Okay, I did not hear that, so I am not sure if Hansard—

Mr CARROLL: One hundred and twenty-nine.

Ms VALLENCE: One hundred and twenty-nine. And how many staff have taken stress leave as a direct result of those?

Mr CARROLL: Well, a lot of that would be under the WorkCover minister, and a lot of this information is in the domain of WorkSafe. Of that exact 129, most of those incidents get referred to Victoria Police. In relation to what action WorkCover have done, if there are ongoing investigations or investigations are underway, it would be inappropriate for me as the youth justice minister to be commenting on that.

Ms VALLENCE: But it would impact your operations, so you must know how many actual days of staff have been lost for category 1 incidents so far this year. I will rephrase that: how many category 1 incidents so far this year and how many days off for staff due to that?

Mr CARROLL: There is more information publicly available now on our youth justice system than ever before. There is the ROGS report online which highlights the category 1 incidents. But above and beyond that, before you were elected you used to only report annually.

Ms VALLENCE: I did not.

Mr CARROLL: Well, the government of the day did. We now report quarterly, and it is very transparent.

Ms VALLENCE: How many this year? Just answer. I appreciate that. I am not able to look at the website right now but—

Mr CARROLL: Yes. I said there were 129 for 2017–18. There were 50 category 1 incidents involving an assault for the first three-quarters of 2018–19, including 16 in the most recent quarter, January to March; again, publicly available information.

Ms VALLENCE: Budget paper 3, page 274, I will turn you to now. It says the actual budget spent on youth justice custodial services—that is a mouthful, isn't it—was \$100.7 million in the 17–18 period and the expected outcome in the 18–19 period is \$156.7 million and the target for 19–20 is \$168.1 million. This represents a \$123.4 million incremental increase on custodial services over the 18–19, 19–20 period. How much of that is directly related to repairs by client damage at Parkville and Malmsbury?

Mr CARROLL: We have been implementing and getting on with the job, above and beyond the Armytage-Ogloff to also—

Ms VALLENCE: How much of the incremental increase—a couple of years ago we were at \$100 million-odd. Your actual for the 18–19 period has exceeded what your target was and you have gone up again, so the incremental over the last two years is \$123.4 million. You have skyrocketed over the run rate from a couple of years ago. How much is related to repairing damage from client services in Parkville and Malmsbury? I am just after a number, Minister.

Mr CARROLL: Yes, sure.

The CHAIR: I am sorry to interrupt you, Minister, but unfortunately we need to move along to Mr Hibbins.

Ms VALLENCE: Minister, can I have that on notice please? We will submit that on notice, as acknowledged by the Chair.

Mr HIBBINS: Thank you, Minister and team. Could I just get a breakdown in terms of the new funding from the \$45.5 million. You might need to take this on notice or you might have the information. Can I have a breakdown of how much of this funding is allocated to each of the four areas you have indicated in the budget?

Mr CARROLL: I will pass to the secretary to comment on that one.

Ms FALKINGHAM: Of the \$45.5 million, there are a number of keen issues. For additional staff to maintain safety and security in our custodial centres—so our SERT staff, as the minister has mentioned—there is \$20.1 million; to continue the supervision of our youth control orders and intensive bail, there is \$7 million, and that delivers case management services which intensively target young people's offending behaviour; and then for the delivery of evidence-based programs, such as our multisystemic therapy and family functional therapy services, there is \$5.4 million; to maintain the expanded service level support for at-risk young people, particularly our after-hours and on weekends support services, it is \$7.6 million; and to build a culturally responsive workforce and tailored programs to meet cultural needs of our young people it is \$2.2 million. This obviously builds on the government's previous investment to date in youth justice, which is over \$1.2 billion.

Mr HIBBINS: Now, I noticed for the corrections outputs there was the marker for recidivism rates. That is for corrections. But there was not a similar marker there for youth justice, and I am wondering why that is the case and whether we can have those figures.

Ms SUNDERLAND: The Productivity Commission reports on recidivism for young people. The way they measure the data is when a young person is released from custody and then whether or not they re-enter custody within 12 months of their release. So it started from 2015–16 releases and then matches for 12 months after that.

Mr HIBBINS: Right. Okay.

Ms SUNDERLAND: So in Victoria that is a 46.8 per cent return rate, which is in fact below the national rate.

Mr HIBBINS: Okay. And how is that trending over time?

Ms SUNDERLAND: I would need to take that one on notice in terms of the trend on that one.

Mr HIBBINS: Thank you. In terms of the new custodial and security staff, how many of them will be specifically designated Koori positions?

Mr CARROLL: Can you just repeat that one?

Mr HIBBINS: Will there be designated Koori positions?

Mr CARROLL: In the new custodial staff?

Mr HIBBINS: Yes.

Mr CARROLL: Yes, and that is something we are very mindful of to ensure that it is a career path. We really want to build up their workforce, so the frontline youth justice team as well as the additional staff for the SESG and the SERT as well. Both those three-pronged streams of staff will be dedicated, but we are encouraging them to also look at more broadly where you want to go with a career with youth justice or indeed if you wanted to go into the broader Corrections Victoria system. The secretary might want to supplement what I have just said.

Ms FALKINGHAM: Thanks, Minister. Can I just add to that that in the last week we have been really fortunate to announce the first-ever Aboriginal executive in youth justice, Paula Murray, who is working actively across the entire youth justice system and will be working closely with the ACOs to make sure we can get more Aboriginal representation within our workforce. We hope under the Aboriginal justice forum we will be able to do much more work on that in the coming year.

Mr HIBBINS: Can I just get a figure on how many of the designated Koori positions are there now and how many will be from the future funding in the budget?

Ms FALKINGHAM: We will take that on notice.

Mr HIBBINS: Thank you. Do you have figures on the number of people from CALD backgrounds working in the youth justice system as well?

Ms FALKINGHAM: We do collect that information, so again happy to provide that on notice.

Mr HIBBINS: Are they designated positions themselves?

Ms FALKINGHAM: No, they are not designated positions.

Mr HIBBINS: All right. Thank you.

Ms FALKINGHAM: But we are doing a lot of work to encourage more CALD representation, and that includes obviously working with our key representative leadership groups, particularly our African leaders group. We are trying to get much more representation to ensure that the children can actually see themselves within the workforce as well.

Mr HIBBINS: Terrific. Thanks. In terms of the Armytage-Ogloff report, it found that only 1 per cent of youth justice staff induction training is spent on cultural competency. Has that increased?

Ms SUNDERLAND: It has increased. I would not be able to tell you what percentage by, but certainly in the revision of the induction training there is a much greater emphasis now on cultural responsiveness and cultural work with young people.

Mr HIBBINS: Thanks. There was also a figure in terms of from the youth justice output budget only 1 per cent was allocated to early intervention and support, which was of two programs, and then recently—

Interruption from gallery.

The CHAIR: Just one moment, Mr Hibbins. Can I just ask the gallery to keep it quiet. We have only got a couple more minutes to go.

Mr HIBBINS: That is the first time the gallery has been shushed.

The CHAIR: I know.

Mr HIBBINS: The VAGO report into rehabilitation services and youth detention found that a focus on security had impacted on access to education and health services. What is the current proportion of youth justice output budget allocated to early intervention and support?

Ms SUNDERLAND: Of the \$45.5 million output investment, a number of those initiatives do go to prevention and early intervention. Probably the main one to emphasise there is the MST and FFT investment. You would know that is a well-evidence-based program to work with the young person and their social networks, their families and the school environment they exist in to try to really look at all the factors that can help them start living in a more prosocial way. That is quite a significant investment of approximately \$5.4 million in those programs. We also have expanded the Youth Justice Community Support Service, which is another service that works with young people in the community. We have expanded our service to the weekends and more high-risk times after hours. So again it is that sort of initiative to try and work in a different way with young people.

Mr HIBBINS: Thank you. Just one final one in the time, I have been advised that Parkville College does not provide internet access for students. Is this true, and will that change in the future?

Mr CARROLL: Thanks for that question, Mr Hibbins. Parkville College do very good work, and they are represented in our custodial working group. We—and I as minister—are, though, taking a strong interest in Parkville College. One thing I have identified is that while it is rolling out essentially VCE-type subjects and VCAL, one of the missing links has been vocational education and training. We have just introduced Melbourne Polytechnic at Parkville College and the feedback I have been given—I will get to the nub of your question in a minute—is that the young cohort love getting a certificate from Melbourne Polytechnic because it makes them feel like the person up the road in Brunswick or wherever could have got that same certificate.

There are matters in both youth justice and adult corrections where the internet is considered a form of contraband, but if there are any improvements we can make—obviously with contraband we do modify—through a reduced type of internet or supervised internet, we would certainly look at it.

Mr HIBBINS: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Sorry, Mr Hibbins, to cut you off, but that draws us to the end of the 2019–20 public accounts estimates.

Thank you very much for appearing before the committee today, Minister Carroll. The committee will follow up on any questions taken on notice in writing, and responses will be required within 10 working days of the committee's request, or we will ask you back to do another 4 hours before us.

I also thank all ministers that have appeared before us over the last six days and who have given evidence to the committee today. I also wish to pay particular thanks to both Hansard and also to the attendants and all of the staff in Parliament House that have enabled us to do our job—hopefully as well as we hope that we have.

Ms VALLENCE: Hear, hear!

The CHAIR: One more thank you I would like to say is to Caroline Williams, who is leading our secretariat for PAEC. She and the staff have done an amazing job. I want to especially say thanks to her given that she has had a number of issues that she has had to deal with within her family. I wish her and her family well, and again I express my deep gratitude to all of the PAEC secretariat staff. On that note the committee—

Mr RIORDAN: Chair, may I just second your comments.

The CHAIR: Certainly, Deputy Chair.

Mr RIORDAN: From those in the opposition represented here on the PAEC—

The CHAIR: There is no opposition on this committee, Deputy Chair.

Mr RIORDAN: No, there is not, but we reiterate your words to the executive and to the staff of the Parliament, who have been more than gracious in hosting us and providing what we have asked for. They have been very supportive. It has facilitated the undertaking of your gruelling agenda, and for that we are very grateful. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Deputy Chair. I will just add one more thing.

Mr D O'Brien interjected.

The CHAIR: I will add two more, then, Mr O'Brien. One is to Sam Hibbins, who has for the last three or four days been well below par but has still managed; I am just so grateful that I am not sitting next to him. He has been below par but has been a real trooper and come every day.

On one final note, none of us are here by ourselves. Our families do support us, and we have had a somewhat gruelling schedule, so on behalf of I think every member of this committee we extend our thanks to our partners and our families for accommodating us as well.

That does draw the hearing to a close. The committee will resume consideration of the budget estimates in 2020, when it will be the 2020–21 budget estimates. I do hope you are all looking forward to it as much as we are. I declare this hearing adjourned.

Witnesses withdrew.