

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

TRANSPORTATION OF DETAINED PERSONS

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE TAKEN
AT PERTH
MONDAY, 14 JUNE 2010**

SESSION THREE

Members

**Hon Brian Ellis (Chairman)
Hon Kate Doust (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Phil Edman
Hon Colin Holt
Hon Lynn MacLaren**

Hearing commenced at 2.41 pm**SCOTT, MS MICHELLE****Commissioner for Children and Young People,
sworn and examined:**

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to welcome you on behalf of the committee to the hearing this afternoon. Before I forget again, I will introduce the other members of the committee! The Deputy Chair, Hon Kate Doust; Hon Lynn MacLaren; and Hon Col Holt. I am the Chair, and we have an apology from Hon Phil Edman.

Before I begin, I must ask you to either take the oath or the affirmation.

[Witness took the affirmation.]

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. You will have signed a document entitled “Information for Witnesses”. Have you read and understood that document?

Ms Scott: Yes, I have.

The CHAIRMAN: These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. To assist the committee and Hansard, please quote the full title of any document you refer to during the course of the hearing for the record, and please be aware of the microphones and try to talk into them. Ensure that you do not cover them with papers or make noise near them. I remind you that your transcript will become a matter for the public record. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today’s proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session. If the committee grants your request, any public and media in attendance will be excluded from the hearing. Please note that until such time as the transcript of your public evidence is finalised it should not be made public. I advise you that the publication or disclosure of the uncorrected transcript of evidence may constitute a contempt of Parliament and may mean that the material published or disclosed is not subject to parliamentary privilege.

I will ask you if you wish to make an opening statement to the committee.

Ms Scott: Thank you very much, and thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today. I appear in my professional capacity as Commissioner for Children and Young People. I am the inaugural commissioner and I took up my position in December 2007. I have very broad responsibilities under the Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006, particularly section 19 of the act, which requires me to monitor the wellbeing of children and young people and to promote programs, policies and laws to enhance the wellbeing of all children and young people. There are approximately 500 000 young Western Australians under the age of 18, and they are my legislative responsibility.

[2.40 pm]

I also must give priority to Aboriginal children and young people, and children and young people who might be vulnerable or disadvantaged for any reason. I mention to the committee that there are approximately 500 000 young Western Australians under the age of 18. There are approximately 26 000 young Aboriginal children under the age of 18. While children generally comprise 25 per cent of our total population, Aboriginal children comprise about 44 per cent of the total Aboriginal population. They are a significant, fast-growing group within our community.

I wanted to advise the committee that, since I have been commissioner, I have had a number of significant priorities and one has been juvenile justice. It is in relation to that area of my activity that I made my submission to the committee, and I am very happy to talk to the committee about some of the concerns I have in relation to juveniles.

Could I just by way of an opening remark inform the committee that I have been briefed on some developments since I made my submission? The first significant issue that obviously impacts on children coming into contact with the justice system is that currently the Western Australia Police transport juveniles. As of November this year, agreement has been reached with the WA Police and the Department of Corrective Services that the Department of Corrective Services will assume that responsibility, and my office has been briefed around those arrangements. Some of the significant aspects of that arrangement are that children and young people will not be transported by road if the travel is in excess of 400 kilometres, so air travel will be used beyond 400 kilometres; no child will be transported unless that child has appeared before a magistrate; and, thirdly, the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services will have responsibility for monitoring the transport of juveniles. These developments have occurred since I made my submission.

I also wanted to highlight to the committee that, in my submission to the committee, I focused on some of the positive developments in Western Australia. One of the key issues for me as commissioner is: how do we divert children and young people away from the justice system? I would like to advise the committee of the Auditor General's report in June 2008 into the Young Offenders Act, which was tabled in Parliament. In that report, the Auditor General found that 96 per cent of children between 2002 and 2008 had no contact with the juvenile justice system or the criminal justice system. We are talking about a very small proportion of children that come before the courts or come into contact with the police. I mention that for two reasons. One is because it is a small proportion and sometimes we can have a view that perhaps it is a greater number than it is; it is actually a small number. Between 2002 and 2008, the Auditor General found that there were about 1 000 children that were coming into regular contact with the criminal justice system. I want to emphasise to the committee that it is a small number of children and that means that we can do something about it. If we invest in programs that truly do divert children away from the justice system for minor offences, then we will not be transporting them and we will not be sending them to a juvenile detention centre.

One of the other points that I made in my submission is that Western Australia has one of the highest rates of detention in the country, if not the highest. Just to give you an example, in Western Australia now in Banksia Hill and Rangeview, we have an average daily rate of about 158 children. In Victoria, which has a significantly greater population than Western Australia, they have an average daily rate of 63. That is a significant difference. So one of my roles as commissioner has been to research, analyse and understand why this might be the case. One of the significant differences between Western Australia and other states like Victoria is that we are not diverting children and young people away from the criminal justice system in the same way with effective programs.

I might just pause there, Mr Chair. There are other things I could add but perhaps it is better if I allow you to ask me questions.

The CHAIRMAN: Thanks for that. One question occurred to me while you were giving those figures. Of that small percentage—it is a small percentage—what percentage would be reoffending at this stage before the programs are put in place?

Ms Scott: I think it is a very small percentage of children who are reoffending. To get a more accurate answer, it is probably best to talk to the Department of Corrective Services, who will be giving you evidence. All of the research shows, though, if you can divert children and young people away from the criminal justice system at that first point of contact then that impacts significantly on whether they will reoffend.

[2.50 pm]

For example, in its prosecutorial guidelines the DPP says, in relation to juveniles, how important it is, particularly for minor offences, to divert children before they are charged. There are two excellent programs in Geraldton and Kalgoorlie that the government has invested funds into which are proving effective already in diverting children away from detention. In Kalgoorlie they have had a 50 per cent reduction in court appearances. In Geraldton and Kalgoorlie, since the introduction of both of those programs, they have not transported kids to Rangeview or Banksia Hill. I was pleased in the most recent state budget that the government has allocated an additional \$44 million for similar programs in the east and west Kimberley and the Pilbara. That will have a significant impact, I hope, on the number of children who might be transported because those programs involve the cooperation of a range of government agencies, the police, the Department for Child Protection, local councils and the Department of Corrective Services working effectively with families and with children who are offending to divert them away for the not so serious offences.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have any comments on the progress of the implementation of the coroner's recommendations?

Ms Scott: I cannot comment on the adults. My main concern is, firstly, that children and young people are not transported unless it is a serious matter. I am pleased with the developments between the Western Australia Police and the Department of Corrective Services. They seem to have reached that agreement. Secondly, I am concerned that we need to invest in alternatives to detention. I am pleased that some funds have been directed to that. I still see some areas of concern in two areas. Firstly, in relation to Perth, we desperately need a 24-hour bail service for children and juveniles. We have a limited bail service that is quite effective. However, that needs to be more adequately resourced. That would prevent children going into detention in significant numbers.

The other issue is that with the new arrangements with the Department of Corrective Services and the WA Police, I am very pleased that they will be transporting children from regional and remote communities by air. The issue for me in Western Australia is that because it is such a huge geographical area at some point children will have to be transported by police perhaps to another police station. One of the concerns I have is which authority has the responsibility for monitoring children when they might be detained for a few hours overnight or some days in a police lockup. At the moment the Inspector of Custodial Services does not have that responsibility. That is an area that needs to be considered.

Hon KATE DOUST: That was a matter that we canvassed this morning.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have any views or comments on the transport of juveniles or whether videoconferencing or video links would be more appropriate?

Ms Scott: I definitely have been advocating videoconferencing and the use of phones in regional and remote communities. I have worked very closely with the judiciary and I was very pleased with the President of the Children's Court issuing a practice direction to magistrates to that effect. I think I made that point in my submission.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to go back to that. You made an interesting comment about the 24-hour bail. Can you explain what takes place now?

Ms Scott: Currently in our juvenile detention centres—Rangeview and Banksia Hill—80 per cent of the children who are in both of those facilities will not receive a custodial sentence when they appear before a magistrate. For all technical reasons, they should be bailed. The reason that many children are not bailed is because there is no responsible adult; they are unable to locate a responsible adult. Part of the service in Geraldton and Kalgoorlie is to find a responsible adult. They have been very effective in doing that. In Geraldton, for example, you might not be able to find a responsible adult. They have a three-bed hostel where a child can be bailed to. In Perth at the moment many children are being sent to Rangeview or Banksia Hill simply because a responsible

adult cannot be found. It is one of the most expensive, least effective options available. It costs about \$500 a night per child in a detention centre, which is probably an expensive source of accommodation. At the moment in Perth, Rangeview has a very good bail service so once a child goes to Rangeview, he or she is able to find bail in a significant number of cases. My concern with that is once the child has been detained in a detention centre, we need to be focusing like Geraldton and Kalgoorlie before the child goes to detention.

Hon COL HOLT: Are only those two operating at the moment?

Ms Scott: Yes, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie.

Hon COL HOLT: They are run by Corrective Services?

Ms Scott: That is correct.

Hon COL HOLT: There is scope for a lot more.

Ms Scott: There is. That is why I was very pleased that in the budget royalties for regions has funded the Kimberley and the Pilbara. I visited all those communities and they have been asking for this kind of initiative. The good thing about Geraldton and Kalgoorlie is that it is evidence based. For every dollar you put in, you are getting positive outcomes. Those sorts of initiatives should be supported.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I was wondering what the average length of detention was for one of those kids who end up in Rangeview or Banksia instead of being bailed.

Ms Scott: I would need to check my submission but I think it has gone up from three days to about 17 days, which is the average now.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I recall that. So they are kept in for about 17 days and then they see a magistrate and then they do not receive a custodial sentence. They have really served three weeks. Do they get paid for that? Is there some compensation for that?

[3.00 pm]

Ms Scott: I think there is a range of matters. The 17 days also could be that a responsible adult is found and they are bailed, so they are actually out of the detention centre. It does not mean that they have appeared before a magistrate and been dealt with. It could mean that has happened or it could be that they have been bailed outside.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Are there any steps being undertaken now to establish that service to find a responsible adult in the metropolitan region?

Ms Scott: I think the Department of Corrective Services sees this as very important, and it is an issue that I have highlighted to them. To some extent there has been a success around Northbridge where agencies—the Department for Child Protection and the Department of Corrective Services—are working well together in relation to some of those children. It is just that we need a consistent approach and we need it 24/7.

Hon COL HOLT: In your view what state government department or organisation should be responsible for the development of interventional programs or preventative programs, post-sentencing programs or whatever it might be? Who is going to be the lead? Who is going to take it and lead it?

Ms Scott: I think currently the leadership rests with the Department of Corrective Services. I think other agencies have a critical role. The Department for Child Protection has a critical role. Many of the children's antecedents for offending behaviour are vulnerability and disadvantage, and many of those children are actually known to the Department for Child Protection and the families are known. So the Department for Child Protection must provide those sorts of interventions.

Hon COL HOLT: I guess I was kind of thinking about even before they get engaged in the justice system. Let us take programs like Clontarf as an example or others. Who should be responsible for developing preventive programs that result in fewer people coming through the justice system? I guess that Corrective Services will take a role after that but what about beforehand? Who is taking the lead in that and who should be taking the lead in that?

Ms Scott: I think a number of agencies are doing things. The Department of Sport and Recreation is one agency that is doing things. The Department for Child Protection is doing some of those things as well. This morning I was at a PCYC in Rockingham that is running some excellent programs with kids and having positive results. I think the issue, though, that you are raising is: who has the leadership? I think that is a critical issue, because unless someone is nominated to have that leadership, everything is ad hoc. There is also a stage before any of this happens, which is really the very early years of a child's life. That is one of my other priorities. If we invested in early childhood services, then we would prevent a number of these issues arising in the first place. All of the research of Fiona Stanley and the Telethon institute and all of the research overseas supports that every dollar you spend in those sorts of areas saves you \$17 later in life. Partly with the juvenile justice issue, that is what we are seeing—that lack of investment in those sorts of programs. I do believe that there needs to be a lead agency around the sorts of issues. I do believe that Corrective Services has a role in bringing the other agencies together. I also think that the Department for Child Protection has a critical role.

The CHAIRMAN: In relation to our third term of reference, in your view why does Western Australia have such a high juvenile imprisonment rate amongst the Aboriginal community?

Ms Scott: I have made a number of submissions to federal inquiries and I commissioned a report by Dr Harry Blagg, which was published in December 2009, and I also made a submission to a House of Representatives standing committee last year in relation to that matter, of which I can provide a copy to the committee because it goes into those issues in great detail. If I could just say by way of summary, though, the Auditor General found that one of the significant reasons in Western Australia was that government agencies were not complying with the Young Offenders Act and the principles of the Young Offenders Act, and that is a very significant difference in other states. He found that they were wanting in a whole range of areas; not cautioning; not investing in diversion programs; not complying with the principles, which are about supporting families to function better, rehabilitation and that detention should be a last resort. Often in Western Australia detention is the first resort rather than a last resort. The Auditor General documented in his performance examination some of the differences between Western Australia and the other states. Having said that, also in some of the other states they have invested for a long time in programs that do make a difference, like Geraldton and Kalgoorlie. We have only had those two programs in operation for the past two years. We are very pleased that they are there. I am pleased that they are being expanded, but we have come in from a very low base.

The CHAIRMAN: Could you provide us with that report that you spoke of?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Is that the Harry Blagg report?

Ms Scott: Yes, that is one.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I was just going to ask a question on notice about that.

The CHAIRMAN: There are two—the Harry Blagg and the —

Ms Scott: Our submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: If those reports are provided, are they public?

Ms Scott: Both of those are public.

The CHAIRMAN: Also, in your view are cautioning and diversionary strategies being used as frequently as they should be under the Young Offenders Act? Are you concerned about the discrepancy between the use of those strategies for Aboriginal juveniles compared with non-Aboriginal juveniles?

Ms Scott: The Auditor General found that cautioning had decreased and that Aboriginal children were not being cautioned at the same rate as non-Aboriginal children. I am concerned about it. I should say, Mr Chair, when I was briefed about the Auditor General's findings and his report was tabled in the Parliament, I wrote to the Director General of the Department of the Attorney General and asked her to consider convening an across-government committee to start to address the concerns. She agreed to do that. The Department of Corrective Services has participated and now actually facilitates the Youth Justice Steering Committee that I referred to in my submission. That brings together a range of agencies. One of the key issues is to address better outcomes for children coming into contact with the justice system and also address the Auditor General's concerns and findings. So I hope that when we look at the Auditor General's report, in a short period we will see some improvement.

Hon COL HOLT: I am just thinking aloud here, commissioner. Given that there is such a low number of juvenile offenders and such a low rate of cautioning, could it be as simple as that at that level of interaction between the police and a child that the policeman says, "What's the point of cautioning this young person because in an hour's time I'm going to see him again doing something else and I will caution him again"? There is that lack of follow-up or that gap about what to do with them in the meantime. Is that conceivable or have you any ideas or evidence of that?

Ms Scott: That is definitely something that police have raised with me. I have travelled extensively, as you know, and I have met a lot of police in regional and remote communities. Geraldton is a very good example, because the police said that they had lost confidence in the cautioning system. With the youth justice service that is now operating there, the police, Child Protection, Education and Corrective Services have a steering committee chaired by the mayor. The police advised me that they felt more confident now, so that if they do caution a child, there are services there to work with the family and the child. That type of comprehensive, holistic, integrated service is important and is having an impact on the cautioning system in those areas.

[3.10 pm]

Hon COL HOLT: If you caution someone, it sets up a trail of events, and if you do not caution them, charge them or take them into custody, it sets up another trail of events. It might be a better outcome for the child in those situations. If you have the right support mechanisms and the cautioning system is right and people have confidence in it, it is probably a better outcome. There is probably some interplay at the local level that occurs on that level.

Ms Scott: I think that is absolutely true. One of the other issues that is commonly raised with me is the lack of safe houses for children in some regional and remote communities. I have just visited another community recently, and that was the number one issue of the police and everyone in that community. Sometimes charging a child is seen as an alternative because it is not safe for the child to be at home and there is nowhere for the child to go in that local community. With regard to what you were saying, sometimes the police are thinking about how the child can be made safe. It is very, very important that we look at the issue of the safety of children. Some children as young as nine and 10 years old are on the streets because it is not safe for them to be at home.

Hon COL HOLT: I guess that the police do not have the options available to them to look at doing things differently for themselves, if that makes sense.

Ms Scott: Yes. I am very pleased that in recent months WA Police has started to look at this issue more strategically and to cooperate with other agencies on the way forward—a different way of working. As I said, this morning I was at a PCYC in Rockingham. It is working really closely with

a range of agencies and is getting good results. Kids are completing certificate 1 and 2 courses and are going on to employment; those kids have been recidivists in the juvenile justice system.

The CHAIRMAN: Could you explain the juvenile justice project team and its membership, objectives and the actions taken by the team?

Ms Scott: I can, in very broad terms. That is the committee that was established after the Auditor General's report that I referred to. The Department of Corrective Services should be able to give you a good briefing on it. Initially, it has achieved a more integrated approach across government agencies. Agencies are working with and talking to each other in addressing the Auditor General's concerns. It has led to cooperation around initiatives such as the youth justice services in regional communities. I think it is positive.

The CHAIRMAN: Have you noticed that there is a coordination of agencies? A criticism in many areas is the disorganisation between agencies.

Ms Scott: I have seen an improvement and it is something that I think could be improved further.

The CHAIRMAN: In your mind, what government actions have been effective in reducing juvenile Aboriginal imprisonment?

Ms Scott: I think that those initiatives in the regions are proving very effective. Also, more recently in Northbridge, agencies and the police have been working very well together. In fact, the police provided some statistics to another parliamentary inquiry that indicated that the number of offences has gone down. The solution everywhere I go in communities is for people to work together—agencies and the local community. As I said, I have just come back from Wiluna. It is a very positive community. In Jigalong, the police run the holiday programs. These are the sorts of things at a community level that make a big difference.

The CHAIRMAN: You mentioned in your submission the non-government organisations. Can you outline the work undertaken by those non-government organisations and communities that reduce the juvenile imprisonment rate?

Ms Scott: There is a wide range of them, including the major organisations like Anglicare, which works very intensively with young people and their families, and there are other agencies similar to Anglicare. Just one example is the YMCA in Vincent. There was a real issue of graffiti in that community. The businesses were very concerned about YMCA being in that community and perhaps attracting young people who participated in graffiti. The YMCA took leadership with the business community and came up with a program of turning graffiti artists into urban artists and reducing graffiti in the community. It has been very, very successful. There are a lot of programs like that throughout the whole of Western Australia. The PCYC, although that is the WA Police and their involvement, run a very successful similar program called Right to Write, involving young kids in the Rockingham community in an urban art program. There are a wide range of things such as Clontarf. Many positive initiatives are being taken by non-government agencies. An issue that was raised before is that the approach is ad hoc and fragmented. Who pulls it all together and who takes responsibility—not total responsibility, but at least leadership—in government? I think it is the Department of Corrective Services in relation to juveniles, but it could be another department in relation to those early years.

The CHAIRMAN: Could you explain your understanding of “justice reinvestment”? That has come up a number of times today.

Ms Scott: Has it? Good. It is a term that I first became familiar with because of Tom Calma, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner, who is with the Australian Human Rights Commission, and the work that he observed in the United States where you might have a high proportion of offending in a particular community. Instead of building more and more detention facilities, they made a decision to put the money into things that might stop people from offending. It was investing significantly in those sorts of programs. That is not dissimilar to Geraldton and

Kalgoorlie—the notion that you invest in the sorts of practical things that divert children and young people away from detention facilities.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you aware of any successful interstate programs that could be implemented in WA?

Ms Scott: Yes. In both of the reports that I referred to before, I identified those in detail. It is much more at the diversion and prevention side of things.

The CHAIRMAN: I note in your submission that you refer to the recommendations, as you have mentioned today, about the Auditor General's report dealing with young people under the Young Offenders Act. The Auditor General found that the juvenile justice system is becoming less effective in achieving the objectives for the treatment of young people as set out in the Young Offenders Act. Can you outline the important findings and recommendations of this report?

Ms Scott: In summary, the Auditor General's report has been very useful because it identified that many agencies were not complying with their statutory responsibilities in relation to the Young Offenders Act, particularly in relation to the principles of the Young Offenders Act, which states a number of things, such as that we should be supporting families, that we should be investing in cautioning children and diverting them away from detention, and that we should be focussing on rehabilitation. As I said, the Auditor General found that the departments were wanting in relation to meeting those statutory obligations. The Auditor General's report, therefore, has been a very important catalyst for refocusing the efforts of government. I was very pleased when I wrote to the director general of the Attorney General's department. She responded quickly to my requests to convene across government those agencies that had responsibilities under the Young Offenders Act. I think we have made some significant progress, but it is not fast enough.

[3.20 pm]

The CHAIRMAN: Is that the only action you understand has been taken by the government since?

Ms Scott: I think that that has resulted in agencies working more effectively together. I think it has resulted in the initiatives such as those taken in Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and now in the Kimberley. Those things would not have been considered previously I do not believe. I think there is a real focus now on young people and on trying to address the very high rates of detention we have. I am very concerned about the rates of detention; they are extraordinarily high. With 150-odd in a state like Western Australia compared to the figures in Victoria, we have a lot to make up for in reducing those numbers.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you feel those responses you have just spoken about are adequate; are they effective?

Ms Scott: I think they are being effective. I think in the metropolitan area we really need the bail service that I highlighted before. We need to sustain some of these programs over the long term; they are not just short-term programs. I think the police have started to see that young people are a very important part of their work. Until recently there was no dedicated priority to young people in WA Police. There is now. Until recently there was not a dedicated priority in relation to juveniles in the adult corrective services area. As a result of the Auditor General's report, there is now that focus, but it needs to be accelerated and it needs to be sustained over the long term.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Commissioner, I really appreciate the tone of your submission in identifying positive approaches and successful pilots that are out there. It has been very educational for me in looking at ways forward. I am hearing you say there could be a more comprehensive and widespread roll-out of some of the successful programs. I assume that in your role as commissioner, you are asking the state government for that approach. I just want to check, because in your submission you say that the rate at which police have directed young people away from court declined by 13 per cent between 2003 and 2008. We recently heard from another department, and

some of the statistics it provided are not indicating that trend. I want to double check that trend with you. Do you want to comment further about that?

Ms Scott: What is quoted in my submission is from the Auditor General's report. That goes up to only 2008. I do not have the figures beyond that at this stage but it will be interesting to see how they compare with that. I think that the Auditor General was saying that WA is behind the other states. There has been a reduction in cautioning, but the Young Offenders Act says the police must caution and that detention should be a last resort. We had the reverse in Western Australia where detention was seen as the first resort. As I indicated to you, one of my largest concerns is that children are there, not because they have committed a serious offence but because there is nowhere safe in the community for them to live. I think that says a lot about the social circumstances in which children end up in detention. Most of the police on the ground that I have met have said to me, "These kids are ordinary kids but they are facing huge challenges, in Wiluna, Jigalong, Fitzroy and all kinds of communities; they need to be safe." That is where child protection and other agencies have a very important role to play. It would be interesting to see those figures post 2008. That is as far as the Auditor General went.

The CHAIRMAN: It is interesting. From what you are saying, the police find themselves in a difficult position. It was put to us earlier today that Aboriginal juveniles are being over policed. Is that your view?

Ms Scott: I think that Aboriginal children are more visible in some communities to the police. I am concerned that 75 to 80 per cent of children in our detention centres are Aboriginal.

Hon COL HOLT: It might be a symptom rather than a cause.

Ms Scott: Exactly; it is a symptom of the social circumstances and our lack of other alternatives and strategies for children and families.

The CHAIRMAN: You may not have a view but our term of reference 4 asks whether the Coroner's Act 1996 should be amended to require the government to respond to the coronial recommendations within a certain timeframe. Do you wish to comment on that?

Ms Scott: I do not; I think that is outside my expertise at this stage.

The CHAIRMAN: Any other questions?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: We could ask you about restorative justice programs and whether you know anything about their effectiveness. It was pointed out earlier that they are often used in juvenile cases.

Ms Scott: I think there are a whole lot of other options such as restorative justice and therapeutic alternatives. One of the first things I did as commissioner was to travel to Kalgoorlie and sit in the Kalgoorlie Community Court. At that time Magistrate Auty was running the court. I thought that was very effective in reducing offending. It was about a community. It was holding a young person to account in their community. I think all those things are worthy of consideration.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions. I think you have given us a very comprehensive view and I thank you for coming to the committee. Can you provide the documents that we have asked for within two weeks?

Ms Scott: Yes; definitely.

Hearing concluded at 3.27 pm