

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Youth Justice
Witness:	Ms Rebecca Falkingham
Committee member:	Ms Bridget Vallence
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Relevant text:

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?

Answer:

The Youth Justice custodial services output provides supervision and rehabilitation, through the provision of case management, health and education services and the establishment of structured community supports, to assist young people to address offending behaviour, develop non-offending lifestyles and support reintegration of young people into the community on their exit from custody.

A component of the 2019-20 Youth Justice custodial services budget will be allocated for staff salaries and related expenses. Further detail on the Youth Justice output is outlined in the department's Annual Report.

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Relevant text:

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?

Question: Of the agency staff in the youth justice custodial service, how long would the average length of a contract be? (list of classifications and the length).

Answer:

The department does not have individual contracts with agency staff, but contracts with an agency for the provision of staffing services. The department requests the number of agency staff required on a particular day from the agency.

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Relevant text:

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?

Question: 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?

Answer:

The department does not have individual contracts with agency staff. Of the four fixed term (contract) custodial employees in youth justice in 2018-19, one did not complete the term of their contract.

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Relevant text:

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?

Question: Of the contract staff, how many have taken leave for stress?

Answer:

Departmental employees may make a WorkCover claim for work-related injuries or illnesses. There have been no such claims received from fixed term (contract) custodial employees in Youth Justice in 2018-19.

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Relevant text:

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.

Question: How many contract staff make WorkCover claims or have made WorkCover claims for injuries?

Answer:

Departmental employees may make a WorkCover claim for work-related injuries or illnesses. There have been no claims received from fixed term (contract) employees in 2018-19.

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Relevant text:

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?

Question: 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?

Answer:

Like all work places, staff numbers at Youth Justice centres can fluctuate, which is why the department has been actively implementing a targeted recruitment campaign to attract more Youth Justice custodial workers.

As part of this custodial recruitment campaign, the department has employed over 350 new Youth Justice workers, with over 200 new staff employed in 2018-19.

As at 30 May 2019, 102 YJW1 ongoing staff have moved on from their role in this financial year.

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Relevant text:

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?

Question: How many agency staff worked in the youth justice system in Parkville and Malmsbury in the 18–19 period?

Answer:

The department has a standing contractual arrangement with a staffing services agency and requests supplementation of staff to meet operational requirements needed on a particular day on an as needed basis. To ensure the safe and stable operation of each custodial centre, a requisite number of staff are required per shift. Like all work places, staff numbers can fluctuate.

The department's objective is to reduce the use of agency staff. A targeted recruitment campaign is underway to attract more Youth Justice custodial workers. To date, the department has employed over 350 new Youth Justice workers, with over 200 new staff employed in 2018-19. The department's use of agency staff has reduced as this recruitment and training activity yields results. This is expected to continue until all ongoing roles have been filled and the workforce has stabilised.

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Relevant text:

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?

Question: 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?

Answer:

The department employs Youth Justice custodial staff directly at a starting annual salary of \$51,717 - \$66,414 per year plus superannuation and penalty rates. The department may also engage agency staff via an agency under a contract. The agency is responsible for remuneration of agency staff, which can vary according to shift times and penalty rates. Prior to commencing work in Youth Justice centres agency staff must undertake the same 7 weeks of pre-service training as custodial workers.

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Relevant text:

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?

Question: How many staff have taken stress leave as a direct result of the 129 category one incidents in 2017-18?

Answer:

Departmental employees may make a WorkCover claim for work-related injuries or illnesses. Information relating to the number of standard claims received by the department (including Youth Justice) in 2017-18 is published in the Department of Justice and Community Safety annual report.

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Witness:	Mr Ben Carroll
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Relevant text:

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.

Question: How much of the custodial services budget from 2017-18, 18-19 and 19-20 is directly related to repairs by client damage at Parkville and Malmsbury?

Answer:

A component of the Youth Justice custodial operating budget is set aside for responsive maintenance and repair works which includes the cost of repairing damage caused to Youth Justice facilities, as well as works for general maintenance issues that arise in the ordinary course of operations that are unrelated to client behaviour. Therefore, as not all responsible repairs and maintenance can be attributed to client damage, direct comparisons cannot be made between the cost of responsive works and the cost of historical works.

The department is committed to addressing legacy maintenance issues to strengthen the safety of the precincts for the workforce and young people.

The cost of repairs due to client damage and other unplanned maintenance is tracking significantly lower for the current financial year compared to previous years.

Youth Justice's overall spend on responsive repair works in 2017-18 was \$4.6 million. As at 30 April 2019, Youth Justice has spent \$2.5 million on responsive repair works for the 2018-19 financial year.

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Relevant text:

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?

Question: Trend of recidivism rates for young people over time.

Answer:

The Report on Government Services 2019 provides data on 'Return to sentenced supervision'. 'Returns to sentenced youth justice supervision' is defined as the proportion of young people released from sentenced supervision who are aged 10–16 years at the time of release who returned to sentenced supervision within 12 months. Available data shows that the Victorian trend is below the national average:

Year	Proportion (Victoria)	Proportion (Australia)
2013-14	39.3%	49.6%
2014-15	44.8%	50.9%
2015-16	46.8%	51.3%

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Relevant text:

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?

Question: How many designated Koori positions are there now and how many will be from the future funding in the budget?

Answer:

The department has recently appointed a new Aboriginal Executive in Youth Justice to lead the system's response to addressing the overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people and to ensure they are receiving appropriate cultural supports. There are currently a number of designated Aboriginal Liaison Officers and one Team Leader who support Aboriginal young people in custody. Two of these positions were created with funding received in the 2017-18 Budget Update and the 2018-19 Budget. The department currently employs two (twelve month) Koori Graduate positions, a Koori Court Advice Worker, and contracts with 13 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to deliver the Community-Based Koori Youth Justice Program.

The 2018-19 Budget included \$10.8 million over four years to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people in Victoria's Youth Justice system. This included funding to establish the Koori Youth Justice Taskforce, the first of its kind in Victoria. This investment also provided \$5 million for the Koori Youth Justice Program, providing increased staffing, brokerage and ongoing support to Aboriginal young people on community-based and custodial orders.

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Relevant text:

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

Question: What is the number of people from CALD backgrounds working in the youth justice system?

Answer:

The department does not currently collect data on the number of staff in the Youth Justice system with a CALD background.

The 2019-20 Budget provides funding for seven CALD-specific positions to support Youth Justice staff to engage with young people of CALD backgrounds and ensure access to culturally-appropriate supports, programs and information. This includes funding for a number of CALD Liaison Officers in custody who advocate for and work with young people from CALD backgrounds in youth justice centres; one CALD Program and Education Manager and one CALD Program Coordinator to deliver CALD programs and services in custody; and one Principal Policy Officer to lead work on a CALD Strategy.

The funding also provides for two Community Engagement Officers in the North West and South East Metropolitan Regions who work with at-risk young people from CALD backgrounds to encourage their participation in community and cultural activities.