STATEMENT BY MR P W CROSSELY, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
NEW SOUTH WALES DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIVE SERVICES

IN RELATION TO AN INQUIRY CONCERNING

PRISON OFFICERS. PURSUANT TO SECTION 15(1)(c)(i) OF

THE INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT 1949

RECRUITMENT OF PRISON OFFICERS

AT THE BASE GRADE AND PROMOTIONAL RANKS

VOLUME I
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CURRENT POSITION: Chief Administrative Officer, responsible to the Corrective Services Commission for providing the full range of administrative and financial services.

(Since 1983)

RELEVANT PREVIOUS POSITIONS:

1970-1976 Budget Inspector, State Treasury
1976-1980 Accountant, NSW Police Department
1980-1983 Financial Controller, NSW Department of Corrective Services

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS: B.Com.(A.A.S.A.) (U.N.S.W.)
PREFACE

This statement is on current recruitment practices of Prison Officers at the Base Grade and Promotional Ranks. It covers the following:

(a) historical perspective;
(b) details of existing policies and procedures;
(c) details of operational problems which have been encountered;
(d) an examination of existing conditions, where appropriate;

In preparing my statement, the views of senior officers have been sought. Documentary material in the form of Departmental files, circulars and reports have been extracted and included in the attached annexures. The conclusions reached in my statement have been endorsed by the Corrective Services Commission.

23 February, 1988
It is reported in the 1965/1966 Annual Report that recruitment of sufficient men suitable for penal work remained a problem. Staff turnover was high and required further investigation as to its cause.

The observation was also made that the Prison Officer's role of traditional confinement was changing. Greater involvement from custodial staff in prisoner programmes was required. However, recruitment and training of officers continued to be security and rule orientated.

During this period, it is important to note that, the Prison Officer was in a position of authority and exercised almost unquestionable control over the inmate population. It should also be noted that sanctions applied as much to officers as they did to prisoners. Invariably disciplinary action was taken against Prison Officers as a result of a breach of the Prison Rules and Regulations. The prison administration therefore controlled the officers as rigorously as it controlled the prison population.

A common theme in the Annual Reports between 1967-68 and 1978-79 highlighted the inordinately high level of Prison Officer vacancies and the difficulty in attracting interested and suitable applicants.

During those years the problem was further compounded by an inadequate staffing formula which failed to recognise such factors as sick leave and other legitimate absences. A study was undertaken by Dr Cooney (Macquarie University) recommending that a new formula be established taking into account these factors. In this regard a submission was made to the Public Service Board recommending that the formula be amended but this was not approved in July 1979. The Public Service Board's reply was, inter alia:

"..... as the provision for paid sick leave is a concession granted to staff (not an entitlement), the Board considers that provision for sick leave in the staffing formula would not be appropriate."

The staffing formula was later reduced during 1985 as a result of a working party recommendation to provide for a component of sick leave.
Prior to 1976, vacant Prison Officer positions were advertised in the Sydney metropolitan press and the New South Wales country press. Applicants were required to:

1. pass a medical examination;
2. be aged between 21 and 44 years;
3. satisfy criteria of height and weight;
4. pass an objective educational test;
5. possess a satisfactory police report;
6. be interviewed by a recruiting officer; and
7. produce documentary evidence as required (birth certificate, employment reference, two recent character references, etc.).

Minimum standards of height and weight were 1.70 m and 67 kg for males and 1.63 m and weight proportioned to height for females.

In 1976 a number of minor changes were made to the recruitment process. Applicants were required to undertake intelligence tests. The tests were administered by qualified psychologists employed by the Department. Recruiting Officers were replaced by Selection Panels, one member being a psychologist.

Officers employed prior to 1st July 1976, could qualify for promotional positions by completing the Senior Prison Officers' In-Service Training Course and the Chief Prison Officers' In-Service Training Course each of 3 weeks duration. In addition, officers were encouraged to undertake relevant tertiary studies. Officers employed on or after 1st July, 1976, were eligible for promotion to Senior and Chief Prison Officer by completing the Supervision Certificate (Technical College) or its equivalent and a series of In-Service Modular Training Programmes. For Principal Prison Officer or higher ranks it became necessary to complete the Associate Diploma of Justice Administration (Mitchell College of Advanced Education) or its equivalent.
Role of the Prison Officer

During the late 1960's and 1970's, the role of the Prison Officer was changing to the point where he/she was required to combine the traditional role of prisoner containment with one of participation with the prisoner in corrective programmes, leisure time pursuits and activities.

In 1972/73 it was recognised that "the overall growth in the range of programmes available creates a need for dynamic and specialised training programmes for correctional staff." Although the role of the Prison Officer had undergone a significant change in the early 1970's, little was done to modify training programmes until 1976.

The Prison Officer was confronted with a more assertive prisoner population, which was taking full advantage of a greater range of gaol programmes. From 1970 a number of prisoner disturbances occurred - two at Bathurst Gaol (the second virtually destroying the gaol); Maitland, Goulburn; and the Central Industrial Prison.

A shift in authority from the Superintendents to Headquarters occurred during this time. Directions became unclear and communication from senior gaol staff to the lower ranks often became distorted. The lack of direction created confusion, disenchantment and tension. The situation was well documented by Justice Nagle (Royal Commission Report, Chapter 11).

Industrial disputation prevailed and reflected the disenchantment and uncertainty of the times.

The foreword of the 1976/77 Annual Report captured the mood of the ranks:

"This phenomenon has exacerbated the problems faced by Prison Officers in a growing uncertainty about their function and related role confusion."
The closure of Katingal in June 1978 was perceived amongst officers to be another step in withdrawing the few traditional avenues of maintaining control over the prisoners in the system. Other factors, including legal action by prisoners had an effect on the role of officers. Officers were more cautious in dealing with prisoners because of the right to appear before a Visiting Justice and subsequent right of appeal to the District Court (refer R. v Frazer Court of Criminal Appeal 15.7.77). In matters concerning breaches against gaol discipline Prison Officers were required to provide accurate documentary evidence and be subject to cross examination under oath. Minimal formal training was provided by the Department to prepare officers for the new requirements.

The rights and privileges of prisoners gained greater recognition following the Nagle Royal Commission. However, as there has not been a new model of prisoner management developed since the Morony era (pre-1968), the Prison Officer has not been sufficiently supported or adequately trained to meet the changing requirements of the prison system. As a result, the Prison Officer has become discontented with the Department’s administration and the perceived reluctance of the Department to exercise authority. This is demonstrated by the lack of staff morale, the ongoing complaints by Prison Officers and the general feeling of dissatisfaction.

Overview

Currently, a large proportion of officers work long periods of overtime and different shifts to raise their remuneration above base salary. It is fair to say that a significant number of officers have reorganised their lifestyles to revolve around the work environment. It follows that less of their time is devoted to personal activities and families.

Additionally, officers with reasonable periods of service seem to be reducing dramatically. Officers are promoted from Prison Officer to the rank of First Class Prison Officer with two or three years experience and sometimes less. Staff attrition also continues to increase, currently twenty-four (24) a month. (Refer Annexure 16 of Exhibit 51.)
Staff support within institutions has been neglected. Designated positions within institutions should be established with the responsibility for the staff support role as there is an apparent absence of effective communication between custodial ranks. Prison Officers at all levels, particularly those on probation are generally not provided with encouragement, assistance and direction to enable them to better perform their duties. The high levels of sick leave and workers' compensation absences are symptomatic of dissatisfaction and lack of motivation and interest throughout the Prison Service.

It is evident that a number of ranking positions exist where the occupants of those positions are performing work of a higher value than was originally the situation. For example, the appropriateness of the First Class Prison Officer rank for the position of Wing Officer requires examination in view of the current duties and responsibilities of the role.

The salary scale for Base Grade Prison Officers no longer reflects the responsibilities of the position. The capacity to attract and retain suitable recruits is becoming increasingly difficult. It is considered that the salary scale for Prison Officers, which offers five (5) incremental salary steps, has not assisted staff retention.

The concept of an incremental scale designed to reward officers for skills development and for progression to higher levels of work as they gain experience ought to be reflected by the number of incremental salary steps in the scale for Prison Officers. The statistics referred to in Annexure 1 confirm the trend of new officers gaining promotion to First Class Prison Officer after two to three years experience instead of the 5 years for which salary increments are paid subject to satisfactory service.
2. STAFFING OF INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

The primary factor determining recruitment strategies, in the absence of a properly defined model of prisoner management, has been the provision of adequate numbers of officers to fill vacancies generated by a variety of causes. These causes are outlined below.

The staffing of posts in institutions has traditionally been achieved by a combination of rostering available officers on their normal shifts, with the remaining posts either undertaken by officers on overtime or if, non-security posts left vacant. In recent years, non-security posts have been increasingly left unmanned in order to curtail overtime expenditure.

Unauthorised posts which were also formerly part of the traditional staffing of institutions were removed as part of a rationalisation of custodial staffing undertaken in 1981/82 under the auspices of the Prisons Rationalisation Plan.

The Prisons Rationalisation Plan resulted in the closure of establishments at Kirkconnell, Newnes and Narrabri. Overall, 231 Custodial positions were deleted. Of these, 172 positions were utilised to establish positions at Bathurst Gaol. As a consequence, 104 Prison Officers were relocated to other institutions.

One hundred and five (105) Prison Officer unauthorised posts at various institutions (filled by overtime) were deleted. Many of the posts originated from innovations in the Vinson era (1979-81) to facilitate extra time out of cells for prisoners and the Sight or Sound policy for officers. The majority of the remaining positions were utilised to staff programmes for alternatives to imprisonment eg. Probation and Parole Service.

The rationalisation of staffing had two major consequences.
(i) It was conducted at a time when the prison population was reducing as a result of the introduction of the Release on Licence Scheme in February 1982. Between March 1982 and June 1983, approximately twelve hundred (1200) prisoners were released on Licence.

Since that time the prison population has undergone a substantial increase.

(ii) Overtime restrictions were applied to all posts other than security posts; to achieve reductions in overtime levels. Educational, vocational and industrial programmes for prisoners were curtailed.

Overtime Problem and Staffing formula

In the early 1980's, the Corrective Services Commission tackled the problem of reducing high levels of overtime worked by custodial officers. After an intensive investigation by the Public Accounts Committee a number of recommendations were made regarding:

(i) Staffing formula: to allow for such contingencies as sick leave and other legitimate contingencies, rather than just for recreation leave and rostered days off.

(ii) The need for controls to overcome the high incidence of sick leave taken by Prison Officers.

The staffing formula was reviewed by an inter-departmental working party comprising of officers from the Department, Public Service Board, Treasury and the Premier's Department. The working party recommended as an interim measure that the staffing formula be reduced from two hundred and thirty (230) to two hundred and twenty (220) officer shifts per year to provide for sick leave of 10 days per annum. The recommendation was approved. It was further reduced to two hundred and nine (209) to provide for rostered
days off as a result of the introduction of the thirty eight hour week.

Provision has not been made for other genuine absences, for example, attendance on Prison Officer training programmes and other leave.

Details of the current and proposed staffing formula together with comparisons to other States are set out in Annexure 16 of Exhibit 51.

The staffing formula for the employment of custodial officers in institutions is based upon a requirement to provide for seven (7) day posts, 365 days per annum and five (5) day posts, 250 days per annum.

In calculating the number of officers required to staff posts the following currently applies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Working Days</th>
<th>Staffing Formula</th>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>Staffing Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>365</td>
<td>209</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.746 officers to staff a seven (7) day per week post.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>209</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.196 officers to staff a five (5) day per week post.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the staffing formula was varied to provide for other contingencies such as workers' compensation and other leave the staffing formula would effectively be reduced to 193. The impact of this would increase the number of officers required to staff posts as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Working Days</th>
<th>Staffing Formula</th>
<th>Calculation</th>
<th>Staffing Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>365</td>
<td>193</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.891 officers to staff a seven (7) day per week post.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>193</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.295 officers to staff a five (5) day per week post.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Should approval be given to vary the staffing formula as proposed, the cost of an additional 196 positions required as a consequence could be offset by reallocating funds from overtime to salaries within the Department's vote. (Annexure 2 relates).

In attempting to control the high incidence of sick leave, the Commission implemented a sick leave policy incorporating stringent disciplinary measures designed to curb sick leave abuse.

Composition of Department's Staff Establishment

Further to the rationalisation of the custodial staffing under a Prisons Rationalisation Plan during 1981/1982 there have been significant staff establishment increases within institutions, particularly since July, 1985. A schedule detailing the increases which have occurred are set out in Annexure 3.

The staff establishment of institutions forms part of the overall staff establishment for the Department. Of the 3674.85 established positions, custodial and industrial positions represent 2448 (including 80 positions of Trainee Prison Officer).

It should be noted that the filling of positions within the Department relies upon a need to ensure that the approved staff number (the maximum number of positions that may be filled at any given time) is not exceeded. There will always be a level of vacant positions which have to be maintained and for which funding it not available.

The Department must hold the equivalent of 276.85 (7.53% of staff establishment) full-time positions vacant at all times to keep within the approved staff number ie. 3,303. Funds are only provided to pay the salary for 3,303 positions, Trainee Prison Officers (80) and Trainee Probation and Parole Officers (15).
The need to keep a proportion of custodial and non-custodial positions vacant places a strain on the management of the prison system. Prison Officer positions are created on the basis of a staffing formula which provides an objective basis for the creation of positions. Hence all established custodial positions should be filled.

An alternative method of administration of approved staff numbers would be to separate the custodial staff from the non-custodial staff and have approved staff numbers for each.

By applying the vacancy gap (currently 7.53%) to Custodial Services staffing direct funding is provided in respect of 2190 positions. The filling of the balance of the positions viz. 178 are funded from overtime. Therefore approval to fill all custodial positions can be facilitated by transferring funds from the overtime allocation to the Al "Salaries Wages and Allowances" budget item.

The Police Department has a government approved number of 12,068 and an authorised staff number of 11,984 for Police Officers. Public servants within the Police Department are subject to a staff establishment of 2,664 and an approved number of 2,290.

In other words 99.3% of Police Officer positions may be filled at any one time. Compared with 92.47% of custodial positions within the Department.

Cleaning staff employed by the Government Supply Department are similarly separated from other operational units of the Department and are authorised to be filled up to 100% of establishment.

Therefore, justification exists to equate the actual and approved staff number of custodial officers with the authorised staff establishment of institutions. Schedules detailing the approved custodial/industrial positions across the Department, actual staff number employed, and vacancy levels are provided at Annexure 4.
Staff to Prisoner Ratio

Details of the staff to prisoner population for New South Wales and other States have been provided in Annexure 16 of Exhibit 51.

The actual staff to prisoner ratio based on statistics provided at 30 November, 1987 is 1 officer to very 2.03 prisoners. If the staff number of institutions was raised to the approved staff establishment level, the staff to prisoner ratio would be 1 officer to every 1.82 prisoners.

However, it should be noted that as the approved staff establishment includes eighty (80) positions of trainee Prison Officer which means that the staff to prisoner ratio effectively employed within institutions would be 1 officer to every 1.88 prisoners.

A further reduction in the staff to prisoner ratio would occur if the custodial staffing formula was revised incorporating the contingencies referred to earlier in the statement to a figure of 1 officer to every 1.74 prisoners (Annexure 2 relates).

Male/Female Custodial Officers

There are currently 25 institutions of which males are predominantly employed in the male institutions and females in the female institutions. The Department's strategy in relation to the employment of females in institutions is set out in the EEO Management Plan.

A schedule detailing the number of males and females at particular institutions with the appropriate percentages calculated are provided at Annexure 5.
3. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESSES

Introduction

Recruitment and selection for custodial officers has not been geared to any clearly defined prisoner management model but rather reactive to gaol vacancies. Custodial recruitment and selection procedures followed in the Department are consistent with Public Service Board requirements. See the Recruitment and Employment Manual (Exhibit 37, particularly pages 2-11, 14-20 and 33-70).

Custodial positions are circulated within the Department. Industrial positions are initially advertised within the Department; and externally in the Public Service Notices, as well as the press, when vacancies are unable to be filled internally.

As indicated earlier, details of Custodial/Industrial appointments following internal advertisement action from January 1986 to December 1987 are provided at Annexure 1. It can be seen from the Annexure that there were 704 promotional appointments and 67 other appointments during the two year period.

Advertising Campaign for Base Grade Prison Officers

The Department's current advertising campaign for base grade Prison Officers is as follows:

Daily Telegraph – each Saturday
Sydney Morning Herald – every second Saturday
St George/Sutherland Area (Leader) } alternate
Wollongong Area (Mercury) } weeks
Eastern Suburbs (Bondi Spectator) } alternate
Bankstown/Strathfield Area (Voice) } weeks.
A copy of the Department's current advertisement is provided at Annexure 10 together with a flow chart of the base grade Prison Officer recruitment process.

Press advertising is supplemented where possible by attendance of an officer from the Custodial Recruitment Section at Career Nights and at Army Relocation Seminars.

The Department has commissioned an Advertising Agency to prepare and design three (3) advertisements for a new advertising campaign.

The new advertisements are to target specific groups:

1. Defence Services;
2. 25-35 years age bracket;
3. 35-45 years age bracket.

The Department has also made arrangements with the Government Documentary Division of the New South Wales Film Corporation for the production of a 15-minute video documentary which will be used as a promotional medium to attract suitable people into the Prison Service as custodial officers.

**Guidelines for Approval to Employ Prison Officers**

Recruitment criteria are as follows:

(a) **Police Records**

Applicants wishing to join the Prison Service must have a satisfactory police record. The distinction between a positive and negative police record is defined below.
Applicants with a record of:

(i) Good Behaviour Bond — a period of two (2) years to expire from the cessation of the bond;

(ii) One (1) PCA Charge — a period of one (1) year from the date of being eligible to re-apply for a driver's licence;

(iii) Two (2) PCA Charges — a period of two (2) years from the date of being eligible to re-apply for a driver’s licence;

(iv) PCA Charge and Other Related Offences — a period of two (2) years from the date of being eligible to re-apply for a driver's licence;

can be considered for employment in the Prison Service. Whereas, the records hereunder preclude employment in the service:

(i) Imprisonment — applicant is automatically assessed unsuitable;

(ii) Other Criminal Offences — to be considered on merit when assessed with other factors associated with the application;

(iii) All Drug Convictions — applicants are advised that the Department’s policy precludes him/her from consideration for the position of Prison Officer.

Each case is individually assessed within the context of the guidelines.
(b) Bankruptcies, Garnishees and Fines

An applicant is also precluded from employment if bankrupt or if he/she has debts for which a garnishee is in existence; or if payment of a fine is outstanding.

(c) Files for Approval

Applications are submitted for approval with the following documentation:

(i) medical clearance;
(ii) police clearance;
(iii) birth certificate;
(iv) passport/certification of permanent residency status if appropriate;
(v) service check (Public Service);
(vi) Senior Assistant Superintendent's comments;
(vii) two character references;
(viii) work reference;
(ix) aptitude test results;
(x) selection panel assessment.

(d) Enquiries – Procedures

Initial Enquiry

The Recruiting Section receives enquiries from several areas. These include:

(i) people who respond to the advertising material;
(ii) people who know Prison Officers;
(iii) people who are registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service;
(iv) people who enquire without prompting;
(v) previous applicants either deferred or rejected; and
(vi) people who have been employed previously.

Age

Minimum Age: 20
Maximum Age: flexible (however in the vicinity of 45-48)

If over 40 years of age, it is explained that an applicant must pass a reasonably intensive physical examination/training programme.

Public Service Board guidelines state a person can be considered for employment prior to normal retirement age (ie. 60 years of age).

Eyesight requirements

Contact lenses are not acceptable. However, glasses may be acceptable provided a person can pass an eyesight test without glasses.

If glasses are worn, the minimum requirement is at least 6/12 in the weakest eye without glasses. The other eye should be normal 6/6 vision.

Health and fitness standards

There are now no height/weight requirements. However, it is considered that because of the nature of the duties and being a uniformed service, staff employed should be of a 'reasonable' physical stature, ie. there should be consistency in terms of height, weight and physical build.

The Director, Medical Examination and Immunisation Centre (M.E.I.C.), Department of Health, must be satisfied that in terms of medical
standards, the physical attributes of applicants are appropriate. It should be noted that the standards are currently being reviewed.

Level of education

About 4th – 5th Form level (year 10-11).

No formal education requirements.

Aptitude Testing

Four areas assessed: (i) linguistic reasoning skills (A.C.E.R. Higher Test – W.L);

(ii) numerical reasoning skills (A.C.E.R. Higher Test – W.Q.);

(iii) logical reasoning skills (booklet with objects and squares) – (A.C.E.R. – Standard Progressive Matrices – PM 38);

(iv) spelling (relating to the judicial system).

A background paper is provided at Annexure 11 regarding the historical aspects of aptitude testing in the Department and details of the current battery of tests.

General

The Department recruits mainly for the Long Bay Correctional Centre (males) and Mulawa (females). Transfers to other institutions are by way of a formal transfer application where custodial vacancies exist.
Testing – Prison Officer Applicants

(1) Applicants arrive at the recruiting office, are given an eye sight test, assessed for criminal involvement/bankruptcy/garnishee and asked to complete a basic information form.

(2) Applicants are then taken to the testing room. The Recruitment Officer delivers a 10 minute lecture on the Prison Officer work role.

(3) The Testing Psychologist takes over at this point and conducts the relevant ability tests. On completion of these tests, the applicants are returned to the recruitment area.

(4) On notification of any failure, the Recruitment Officer interviews the applicant and explains the reason(s) for failure, and where possible, recommend a course of action (further education etc.)

(5) Successful applicants are invited to complete the various forms required for personal records.

(6) Applicants are informed that they should not sign any documents until they are in the presence of the Recruitment Officer.

(7) On completion of the file documents, the applicant is photographed and fingerprinted.

(8) Applicants are then invited to attend an interview and a date is arranged.

(9) In some cases a medical examination is also arranged.
General Information – Recruitment Officer

Advertising

(1) The Recruitment Officer is responsible to the Senior Assistant Superintendent (Personnel) for the monitoring of recruitment trends and advice on advertisement requirements.

(2) She/he is to liaise with the Commonwealth Employment Service in respect of potential referrals.

Testing – Prison Officers

Appointments made by telephone are recorded in the Appointment Book after the relevant characteristics have been ascertained:

- age;
- eyes (glasses or contact lenses);
- criminal involvement;
- education;
- suburb.

All results of interviews must be recorded on the personal file, and the Recruitment Ledger.

Arrangements for Attendance at Training Course

The Recruitment Officer is responsible for ensuring that successful applicants are allocated to training schools and informed in writing of the time, date and requirements of the course.
Interviewing - Prison Officer Applicants

The Recruitment Officer is responsible for ensuring that a selection panel is convened comprising:

- Psychologist,
- Executive Custodial Officer,
- Recruitment Officer.

The Recruitment Officer acts as convenor of the selection panel.

During the interview, the Recruitment Officer enquires whether the applicant fully understands the Bankruptcy Statement and the Statutory Declarations, especially in regard to any criminal convictions.

The results of the interviews are noted on individual files and recorded in the Recruitment Ledger.

On completion of medical and police enquiries, and all relevant background checks, etc., the complete file is submitted for approval.

Following approval, the completed files are submitted to the Director, Custodial Services, for issue of a Certificate pursuant to Section 63, Public Service Act 1979 certifying "that there is no available officer in the Public Service as capable and qualified with respect to the position to which this certificate relates" and that "a competitive examination under this Act has been held and the person named is the most successful available candidate."

Re-employment

If an officer who has left the Department enquires about rejoining, he/she is advised to write a letter to the Recruiting Section explaining the reasons for leaving the Department and why he/she wishes to re-apply.
The applicant's previous sick leave record and work history is obtained and evaluated.

The applicant's previous Superintendent is contacted and asked to advise on the applicant's work performance.

Once the information is collated, a report is prepared with a recommendation for either rejection or acceptance.

The report is then submitted to the Administrative Officer, Personnel Services, prior to referral to the Director of Custodial Services for final approval.

Sections 75 and 76 Appointments.

If an applicant is from another New South Wales State Government Department, he/she would initially be temporarily appointed under Sections 75 and 76 of the Public Service Act during the first twelve months of service. This affords the officer the opportunity to transfer back to his/her former Department if he/she wishes or is unsuccessful for permanent appointment as a Prison Officer.

A Recruiting Officer contacts the releasing Department to obtain verbal concurrence. If concurrence is given, letters are sent to the releasing Department requesting formal concurrence and the Public Service Board requesting approval. If Public Service Board approval is given, letters are sent to the releasing Department and a commencement date is arranged.
Primary Training Courses: 1982-1987

There has been a significant increase in the number of Prison Officers employed in recent years as compared to 1982. The number of Prison Officers who commenced and completed primary training during 1982 to 1987 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Commenced</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1774</td>
<td>1693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Details of courses conducted are provided at Annexure 12.

Recruitment: 1 January 1986 to 31 December 1987

During the two year period (1986/87) there were 6538 applicants scheduled for an aptitude test of which 2961 persons did not attend (45.29%).
Details of Prison Officer recruitment for the two year period 1 January, 1986 to 31 December, 1987 are set out below:

SCHEDULED FOR AN APTITUDE TEST 6538
DID NOT ATTEND FOR AN APTITUDE TEST 2961 (45.29%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTENDED APTITUDE TEST</th>
<th>3577</th>
<th>Passed Test 2085 58.29</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Failed Test 1179 32.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Failed Eye Test 248 6.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Failed Police 65 1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(self disclosure)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3577</th>
<th>3577</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PASSED APTITUDE TEST 2085</td>
<td>Passed Interview 968 46.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failed Interview 824 39.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Withdraw Application 182 8.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failed to Attend Interview 111 5.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2085</th>
<th>2085</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PASSED INTERVIEW 968</td>
<td>Failed to attend medical 45 4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failed medical 45 4.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failed Police check after interview 98 10.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Failed service check 13 1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commenced Training 767 79.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>968</th>
<th>968</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMENCED TRAINING 767</td>
<td>Failed to attend 12 1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resigned during training 48 6.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completed training 707 92.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above statistics show that 6538 persons were scheduled for an aptitude test as compared to 707 Probationary Prison Officers who actually entered
on duty in an institution ie. 10.81%. Compared to the actual number of persons who sat for the aptitude test (3,577) the percentage is increased to 19.77%.

It should be noted that a high number of applicants who did not attend for an aptitude test are referrals from the Commonwealth Employment Service. 7.98% of Commonwealth Employment Service referrals who sat for the test during the seven month period 1 July 1987 to 31 January 1988 actually entered on duty as a Probationary Prison Officer. Details are set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer list of CES Referrals: 1.7.87 - 31.1.88</td>
<td>677</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed to attend aptitude test</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>66.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed (either aptitude test, interview, Police or medical)</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>25.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed (either employed or in the process)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Recruitment Officers the actual number of CES referrals in all probability have been higher than the computer listing indicates.

The Department's recruitment processes, whilst necessarily exhaustive and resource intensive, has been effective in generating adequate staffing numbers to provide a basic correctional service. It is a fact that the Department's capacity to recruit is influenced by general economic conditions, ie. levels of unemployment and the recruitment drives of other paramilitary organisations, particularly the Police force.
4. DIFFICULTIES IN RECRUITING FOR INDUSTRIAL POSITIONS

The Department has experienced the loss of experienced and qualified officers from Overseer and Senior Overseer ranks of the Prison Service.

The Department is of the view that a number of relevant steps need to be addressed in considering the Overseer/Senior Overseer classification. These are as follows:

1. Stem the tide of the ongoing loss of trained and trade qualified officers from Overseer and Senior Overseer ranks to the Custodial Division as a consequence of the obvious financial advantages and promotional opportunities.

2. Draw back the increasing losses of Overseers and Senior Overseers to outside industry, due to the higher salaries on offer to qualified trades people.

3. Advertise so as to attract highly qualified trades people from within the service and from outside industry for Overseer positions.

4. Allow the Department to structure the Industrial Service Division to ensure that an appropriate career path is available to officers of this Division.

5. Encourage all overseers to obtain qualifications relevant to their duties and responsibilities and to seek additional post trade qualifications to ensure that they will be competitive for future promotional opportunities.

6. Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Industrial Services Division of the Department and improve the morale within Industrial ranks.
It is significant to note that the Department currently has a large number of vacant Industrial positions throughout the Prison Service. A schedule of the current vacancies is set out in Annexure 13.

**Filling of Positions**

From an operational point of view, the main recruitment problems for an In-Service applicant are as follows:

1. **Salary rate**: Limited promotional career path and little opportunity exists to earn overtime and shift allowances.

2. Length of time delays in liaising with Industries, Building Services and the EEO Unit concerning qualifications.

3. Most officers do not possess the essential requirements or find they are not particularly attracted to the industrial field of the Department.

4. Constant changes with regard to closing and opening shops often results in positions being vacant for quite a period. Awaiting approval of changes.

5. Problems associated with declaring officers on extended sick leave supernumerary and placing them if and when they return to duty.

6. Because vacancies are advertised internally, there are delays when placing in Public Service Notices and the press, i.e. re-advertising the position.

7. The industrial staffing structure has only four ranks with little possibility of entry to the custodial ranks once officers have been in the industrial field for a time. When officers reach the top rank, little opportunity for advancement to any other field.
Once the position is advertised in the press, further problems occur:

(1) **Salary rate;** well below for example, what can be earned within the Building Trade outside the Service.

(2) Passing checks, such as police, medical, etc.

(3) Passing Prison Officer entry.

(4) The seven week training period which is conducted at Long Bay in the Sydney metropolitan area, often causes problems for country people who have to leave their home for that period.

The issues, in respect of these problems should be addressed. The absence of an effective prisoner management model together with the evolutionary defined lines of demarcation have caused a division between Prison Officers and the Industrial ranks.

In conclusion, a continuing need exists to provide a salary structure for industrial positions which will enable suitably trained and qualified staff to be recruited and be retained within the Prison Service. A career structure is as important for officers in industrial positions as it is for Prison Officers and it is considered that mobility between both the industrial and custodial areas of operation should be facilitated. A more flexible and participatory approach to prisoner management would greatly assist in reducing the divisions.
5. DIFFICULTIES IN THE RETENTION OF OFFICERS

There are two (2) main areas which have been focussed upon in examining the difficulties which exist in the retention of officers within the Prison Service. They are:

(a) prisoner management;
(b) problems related to employment conditions.

(a) Prisoner Management

As stated earlier, no effective prisoner management model exists. The rights and concessions of prisoners have received greater attention in recent times. However, the role of a Prison Officer has not undergone similar development.

The situation has now reached a stage where Prison Officers are disillusioned, confused and angry at the way in which institutions are being managed. Concerns have been expressed that prisoners, not officers, are running institutions.

In order to address this problem, there is a need to significantly improve the way in which institutions are managed, incorporating both the status of a prisoner, based on a system of rights, and a clear definition of the role of a Prison Officer; and addressing the complementary nature of both these factors.

A prison management process which is based on an effective prisoner management model would lead to an increase in the retention of Prison Officers.

(b) Problems related to Employment Conditions

Apart from the more conceptual factors canvassed in (a) above, I am advised by senior custodial officers that the following list fairly
represents the reasons given by officers upon their resignation or early retirement:

(a) Difficult working environment.
(b) Unable to cope with the attitude of some prisoners.
(c) Unable to cope with shift work.
(d) Unable to cope with having to work a substantial amount of overtime to supplement income.
(e) Unable to cope with the pressures placed on his/her family life as a result of (a) or (b) or both.
(f) Unable to cope with the excessive travelling time required to and from the institution in addition to shift work and overtime.
(g) Unable to cope with the costs of travelling to and from work ie. maintaining a car and petrol costs.
(h) Unable to obtain a transfer close to home.
(i) In those situations where an officer was originally from the country, he or she is unable to continue travelling back to his/her family on rostered days off or once a month or longer.
(j) Unable to cope with the lack of staff support and direction from senior officers.
(k) Employment outside the Department.
(l) Unsatisfactory services eg. misconduct and/or negligence.
(m) Other personal or work related reasons.

It is also necessary to recognise that there are eight (8) categories in which separations occur from within the Department as stated earlier in Section 2, ie. retirements, medical retirements, resignations, transfers, annulments, dismissals, abandonment of duty, and deceased officers.

The retention of custodial officers will be significantly enhanced if:

(a) The role was more fulfilling and effective.

(b) The remuneration of custodial staff was reviewed to reflect the level of the duties, responsibilities and experience required.
(c) Institutions were staffed closer to the level determined by the Staffing Formula, i.e. the approved staff establishment.

(d) Positions within the Prison Service being identified with the responsibility for staff support of officers.

The correlation between recruitment and retention processes is undeniable. Unless both issues are reviewed together any ground gained in recruitment will be dissipated by the negative aspects of staff attrition.
6. STAFFING RESOURCES – CUSTODIAL RECRUITMENT/PERSOONNEL LIAISON

The Department is currently seeking to establish a Custodial Personnel Unit within the Personnel and Staff Services Branch to:

1. Provide adequate and appropriate staff resources for Prison Officer recruitment to enable it to respond to increased recruitment demands. This will ensure that priority is given to maximise staffing levels in institutions.

2. To facilitate regular visits by custodial personnel staff to institutions; increase the personnel liaison function with staff members and resolve matters that arise.

3. Promote the role of a Prison Officer so as to attract suitable applicants; and to reduce the level of Prison Officer attrition.

Background

The establishment of a Custodial Personnel Unit by reorganising the existing Custodial Recruitment Unit is essential due to the current level of Prison Officer attrition and existing difficulties with attracting suitable applicants and also retaining officers in the role of Prison Officer. These difficulties have been linked not only to inadequate resources but also to ineffective administrative structures, systems and procedures within the Custodial Recruitment Unit.

The Department is anticipating adopting a complete streamlined recruitment strategy consistent with Recruitment Units in organisations such as the Police Department, Army, Navy and Air Force. In comparison, the Department is under-resourced in terms of the staff allocated to undertake the recruitment function.

There are vital areas that need to be continuously monitored and assessed such as the entry requirements and ongoing advertising campaigns. Continuous examination needs to be undertaken of the conditions and
facilities available to new recruits, including allowances and accommodation, the identification of target groups and areas; and the redesign of training processes with a view to improving retention rates.

As stated earlier, based upon last year's statistics, current recruitment trends indicate that the Department is recruiting an average of 27.66 trainees per month and subsequently losing 24.45 Prison Officers per month.

There is an established need for a promotional unit which focuses upon enhancing the Prison Officer role in the community and throughout the Department. Again, other organisations are fully functional in this area with officers employed to specifically carry out the task. The Department intends to undertake major promotion campaigns involving widespread advertising, recruitment displays at shopping malls, career forums and resettlement seminars. The introduction and development of promotional material such as videos, brochures and information stands at multiple locations, and the use of radio and television promotion will be the responsibility of this Unit.

The personnel liaison function is currently performed primarily by the Personnel Liaison Officer. This position is responsible for maintaining a regular visitation programme to all institutions and is particularly significant in maintaining effective communication between officers in institutions and Head Office. However, the ongoing assistance that is continuously required in recruitment and the day to day administrative component in terms of investigating personnel related matters, overseeing medicals, co-ordinating lateral transfers* has restricted the visitation programme. It is essential that the programme be strengthened to its fullest potential and that the liaison function be expanded to address the issues being raised by staff within institutions.

* 252 transfers occurred during 1987 and 308 during 1986. Refer to Annexure 14 for further statistics and the Staff Transfer Policy.
Proposed Establishment Variations

Attached at Annexure 15 is the existing organisation structure of the Custodial Recruitment Unit i.e. consisting of 5 positions and the proposed organisation structure of the Custodial Personnel Unit which provides for an additional 5 positions.

Custodial Recruitment

The proposed restructure for this specific area will consist of 3 Assistant Superintendents and a Senior Assistant Superintendent (Recruitment). The Assistant Superintendent positions will be directly involved in one to one interviews with prospective Probationary Prison Officers rather than a selection committee panel situation for every applicant. However, it is envisaged that a panel will be utilised for prospective Prison Officers who are not successful for appointment following the one to one interview. This initiative in itself will greatly streamline the process. The rank of Assistant Superintendent is considered appropriate given the increased responsibility in determining the suitability of trainees for appointment as a Prison Officer. A position of Senior Assistant Superintendent (Recruitment) is needed to co-ordinate the functions of this area. The creation of the new positions will enable Custodial Recruitment to fulfill a fully professional recruitment role.

It should be noted that one of the positions of Assistant Superintendent is proposed to be identified for a female officer given the need to significantly increase and promote the employment of women in institutions.

Custodial Marketing/Promotions

The marketing and promotions aspects of the restructure have not in the past been adequately resourced. Given the creation of 2 new positions to attend to this function a tangible improvement in the Department's profile in the community can be expected. The officer selected will be exclusively involved with promoting the role of Prison Officer and thereby attracting
suitable applicants in order to maintain adequate recruitment levels. The proposal is to create a position of Promotions Officer, Senior Assistant Superintendent, or equivalent, to undertake this role and a position of Senior Prison Officer to assist. The Promotions Officer will be required to be actively involved in public relations activities relating to external recruitment and liaise with outside bodies including advertising consultants and organisers of career promotions.

Personnel Liaison

Personnel liaison requires a minimum of two officers to undertake the functions involved. The structure should comprise a Senior Assistant Superintendent and an Assistant Superintendent. The responsibility of visiting institutions will be shared between the Senior Assistant Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent with the Senior Assistant Superintendent being responsible for the co-ordination of programmes and the more complex, sensitive personnel duties required. This would enable an officer to attend to the administrative responsibilities and participate in the institutional visitation programme.

Custodial Personnel Unit

In managing the new staffing structure a proposed position of Co-ordinator, Custodial Personnel is to be created. The proposed position will be established at the rank of Superintendent Grade 3 commensurate with the responsibilities involved in heading up the new unit.

Within the proposed re-structure it is considered that the position of Promotions Officer be classified custodial or equivalent to custodial classifications, so as to ensure that the Department attracts the most proficient applicant for the Marketing/Promotions function because of the specialised skills required.

The establishment variations are essential if the Department is to meet the increased recruitment demands and satisfactorily undertake all facets of
custodial personnel activities. The reorganisation will enable the area to significantly improve services to staff and most importantly operate a professional promotion and recruitment programme.

Costing

The proposed deletions and creations are also provided at Annexure 15. It will be noted that the total cost of creations exceeds the cost of deletions by $149,714.
7. CONCLUSIONS

In the last thirty years, no concerted attempt has been made to formulate a preferred prisoner management model. Nor has any formal action been taken to redefine the role of a Prison Officer. Accordingly, little has been done to change the way in which the Department recruits for the Custodial Service. Rather, in the absence of such analysis, the Department has generally persisted in recruiting the categories of persons who it recruited in the Morony era i.e. perpetuating the myth that traditional, pre Morony prisoner management still applied. The result is that selection criteria relevant more to the past than the present have continued.

Although the recruitment programme pursued by the Department in recent years has been effective in providing the numbers of custodial staff necessary to deliver an adequate Custodial Service, the vital aspect of Prison Officer training and development in the job has been largely neglected. Moreover, the failure to implement effective staff retention strategies has significantly affected the quality of service. The stage has been reached where increasing numbers of officers with insufficient experience and training are unable to cope with the full range of custodial duties.

The deficiencies highlighted are symptomatic of the ill defined job role and any definite expectation in respect of prisoner management. Unless the fundamental question of the Prison Officers' responsibility to the management of prisoners under their care and supervision is addressed, any benefit in respect of improved conditions of employment will be lost.

The situation calls for the development of new strategies designed to improve the staffing of institutions, recruitment and selection processes and the retention of officers in the Custodial Services.

An effective prisoner management model within institutions should also be developed and implemented. This will be the subject of later evidence relating to Unit Management.
The staffing formula should be further reviewed to consider the appropriateness of including other contingencies such as attendance at training courses, workers' compensation, military leave, extended leave and study time.

Additionally, consideration should be given to equating the actual and approved staff number of custodial officers with the staff establishment in institutions.

These initiatives will quite properly influence the staff to prisoner ratio.

The community image of a Prison Officer should be enhanced by positive media coverage and other advertising/marketing campaigns.

The career structure of the custodial ranks is in need of review. Specifically, an examination of the relationship between Prison Officer and Industrial Officer positions needs attention to facilitate mobility within the Custodial Services.

A direct placement policy which addresses the requests of new recruits to work at their preferred institution will enhance staff retention and consequently improve the operational efficiency of the Custodial Services.

It is considered that a greater degree of officer involvement in the custody, welfare, care, education and general development of prisoners must be achieved by redefining the role of the Prison Officer. However, the more fundamental problems outlined in this statement address the issues relating to staffing levels, recruitment, selection and retention of staff which require immediate attention.