



NCVER



Vocational education and training for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia

Research readings

Edited by
Susan Dawe

research

Publisher's note

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Research readings are comprised of a collection of selected research papers on a particular topic of interest.

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Foreword

THIS BOOK WAS commissioned by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) and forms part of the National Vocational Education and Training Research and Evaluation Program, funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training on behalf of the Australian Government and state and territory governments.

This book of readings will be of particular interest to policy-makers, employers and community service groups who are committed to helping prisoners and offenders re-integrate into the community after release from custody. It will also appeal to practitioners and administrators in educational institutions and other training organisations who work within and outside the correctional system to provide training for prisoners and offenders. It provides clear directions on what works for adult prisoners and offenders and demonstrates recent improvements in the delivery of vocational education and training in Australian prisons to enhance sustainable employment opportunities for ex-prisoners.

This book represents a collaborative effort between the corrective services systems in Australia and NCVER. Time and effort put in by the different researchers and staff in the government departments responsible for corrective services and vocational education and training in the states and territories are greatly appreciated.

Tom Karmel
Managing Director, NCVER

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Introduction

Susan Dawe

Background

IT IS MORE than five years since the first National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) review on the topic of vocational education and training (VET) in Australian correctional institutions (Semmens & Oldfield 1999). More recently, a chapter on prisoners (Noonan 2004) was included in *Equity in vocational education and training: Research readings* edited by Kaye Bowman. Following that publication, NCVER agreed to commission this current book to review VET for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia.

The readings in this book examine the role of vocational education and training in the rehabilitation of adult prisoners and offenders, and demonstrate how recent improvements in VET delivery have led to better outcomes for adult prisoners and offenders. This book comprises five chapters on international and Australian research on adult prisoners and offenders, and six chapters on improving delivery of VET for adult prisoners and offenders in the Australian context. Included in the latter are chapters about literacy and oral language competency and Indigenous-specific programs and initiatives.

The 1996 *Report of the Inquiry into Education and Training in Correctional Facilities* (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee 1996) supported the integration of offender education and training with the national VET system. Following this, the Australian National Training Authority¹ (ANTA) developed a national VET strategy for prisoners (people in full-time custody) and offenders under community-based orders.²

The National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia (ANTA 2001) was endorsed by all state and territory government departments responsible for VET and those responsible for correctional services. More recently, the Corrective Services Administrators'

1 The Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) was abolished in 2005 and its responsibilities taken over by the Department of Education, Science and Training.

2 Community-based orders include non-custodial sanctions (including unpaid community work components, personal development program attendance, or home detention restrictions).

Committee endorsed *Rebuilding lives: VET for prisoners and offenders* (Corrective Services Administrators' Committee 2006), the implementation framework for 2006–10. The vision of the national strategy is 'to provide adult prisoners and offenders with educational and vocational pathways which will support their productive contribution to the economic and social life of the community' (ANTA 2001, p.3). The strategy consists of four objectives considered to be critical to the continuing development of and support for vocational education and training of offenders:

- 1 To improve access to vocational education and training for adult prisoners and offenders
- 2 To support successful participation and attainment across a range of fields of study and levels of vocational education and training
- 3 To contribute to the employment and learning pathways which can support the successful re-integration of offenders into the community
- 4 To create an accountable system that provides quality vocational education and training outcomes for offenders³ (ANTA 2001).

This current book of readings aims to investigate the implementation of this strategy by providing an update on how each jurisdiction is improving VET delivery and outcomes for adult prisoners and offenders.

We begin with a brief profile of correctional services and VET provision in Australia.

Correctional services in Australia

The Australian Constitution of 1901 established a federal system of government. The Constitution defines the boundaries of law-making powers between the national government (the Commonwealth) and the government of the states or territories. Correctional services remained the responsibility of the state governments, and so correctional systems have developed independently of each other. The names of the government department responsible for adult prisoners in each jurisdiction in Australia are listed in table 1.

The department of corrective services (or its equivalent) in each jurisdiction may deliver services directly, purchase them through contractual arrangements, or operate a combination of both arrangements. There are no federal prisons in Australia and prisoners sentenced under federal legislation are accommodated within the jurisdiction in which they are sentenced.

The objectives of correctional services in Australia are to provide:

- ❖ a safe, secure and humane custodial environment
- ❖ effective community corrections environment
- ❖ program interventions to reduce the risk of re-offending (Productivity Commission 2007).

3 Updated in 2006 to read 'To promote quality and accountability of the system' (Corrective Services Administrators' Committee 2006).

Table 1 Name of government department responsible for prisons by state and territory, 2006

State/territory	Name of government organisation responsible for prisons
New South Wales	Department of Corrective Services
Victoria	Department of Justice—Corrections Victoria
Queensland	Queensland Corrective Services
South Australia	Department for Correctional Services
Western Australia	Department of Corrective Services
Tasmania	Department of Justice
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Correctional Services
Australian Capital Territory	ACT Corrective Services

The adult prisoner population includes people at or over the minimum age at which sentencing to adult custody can occur in each jurisdiction—17 years in Queensland and 18 years elsewhere (Productivity Commission 2007).

At 30 June 2006, there were 25 800 adult prisoners (20 200 sentenced and 5600 unsentenced⁴) in Australian adult prisons (ABS 2006a). This represented an imprisonment rate of 163 prisoners per 100 000 adult population. The average daily prisoner population has increased by 42% since 1996.⁵ However, the majority of prisoners in Australia are on short-term sentences (fewer than 12 months).⁶ Of the total prisoner population, only 7% were female. The median age of all prisoners was 33 years. Fifty-seven per cent of the prisoners had served a sentence in an adult prison prior to their current episode. Hence, an objective of the corrective service authorities and the VET sector is to reduce the number of re-offenders.

Indigenous Australian prisoners represented 24% of the total prisoner population at 30 June 2006 (ABS 2006a). Reflecting their population share, the proportion of prisoners who are Indigenous varies across states and territories, ranging from 82% in the Northern Territory to 6% in Victoria. Indigenous people in Australia are around ten times over-represented in the correctional services system compared with their representation in the general population of 2.4%, and are the topic of the last chapter of this book.

4 This excludes those persons on community-based orders or sentences who are the responsibility of the community correctional services units (52 200 people by comparison with 24 800 people in full-time custody at 1 June 2006 [ABS 2006b]) and those persons in periodic detention (which occurs only in NSW and the ACT).

5 These data come from a census (on 30 June) and do not capture the many prisoners with shorter sentences who pass through prisons during the year. For example, in *Crime and justice statistics for Western Australia: 2004* (Ferrante et al. 2005), there were nearly 6800 total receipts (or admittances) to prison during 2004. This represented 5500 distinct people for the 12 months compared with around 3300 prisoners in the census on 31 December 2004.

6 *Crime and justice statistics for Western Australia: 2004* (Ferrante et al. 2005) reports that 60% of the total prison population in Western Australia is serving prison sentences of fewer than 12 months (13.9%, less than one month; 19.3%, one to fewer than three months; and 26.6%, three to fewer than six months). It can, therefore, be assumed that the majority of prisoners in Australia are on short-term sentences (fewer than 12 months). Despite the abolition of Court sentences of fewer than three months in 1995 and under six months in May 2004 in Western Australia, there was a 36% increase of prisoners with one to six month sentences in 2004 from the previous year. This trend is a result of the increased penalties for driving offences and imprisonment of fine defaulters.

Excluding periodic detainees⁷, 24.6% of adult prisoners were held in open prisons (facilities classified as low security) and 75.4% were held in secure facilities in 2005–06 (Productivity Commission 2007). On a daily average, 17.9% of the total Australian prisoner population (excluding periodic detainees) was held in privately operated facilities during that year (Productivity Commission 2007).

All jurisdictions also have community correctional services units which are responsible for a range of ‘community-based orders’ such as non-custodial sanctions (including unpaid community work components, personal development program attendance, or home detention restrictions). They also deliver post-custodial interventions (such as Adult Parole Board orders) under which prisoners released into the community continue to be subject to corrective services supervision (Productivity Commission 2007). A daily average of 53 200 was serving community corrections orders across Australia in 2005–06 (Productivity Commission 2007).

The responsibility for prisoners and community-based offenders is generally split between two different divisions or offices. For example, in the Western Australian Department of Corrective Services⁸, the Adult Custodial Division⁹ is responsible for managing the 12 public prisons, seven work camps and one privately operated prison, while adult offenders in the community are managed by the Community and Juvenile Justice Division through community justice centres and community justice officers. Within the Victorian Department of Justice’s Corrections Victoria, Community Correctional Services manages those adult offenders serving community-based orders (and those who are conditionally released from prison on parole¹⁰) while the office of Prison Services manages the Victorian prisons.

The objective for Corrective Services and the VET sector is not simply to rehabilitate prisoners during incarceration, but also to assist offenders and ex-offenders to build meaningful law-abiding lives and to make a positive contribution to their community. This requires the integration of education and training, with support from other government and non-government agencies, employers, and social networks in the community.

VET provision in Australia

While VET provision is mainly the responsibility of the state and territory governments, the Australian Government provides additional growth funding according to the Commonwealth–State Agreements.

7 During 2005–06, there were 862 periodic detainees per day in NSW and ACT.

8 At any one time, the WA Department of Corrective Services is responsible for managing about 3000 prisoners and about 5000 offenders who are serving some type of order in the community. The establishment of the Repay WA initiative, which expanded the community work order program, supported the abolition of sentences of six months or fewer, which came into effect on 15 May 2004, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au>>.

9 In WA, a third division called ‘Offender Management and Professional Development’ manages the education services for both prisons and community justice.

10 The term ‘parole’ refers to the liberation of a person from prison, conditional upon good behaviour, prior to the end of the maximum sentence imposed upon that person. The person may be referred to as a ‘parolee’ for the non-custodial period of their sentence.

Prisoners generally belong to groups with multiple social and economic disadvantages (Noonan 2004). In addition, incarceration further disadvantages them by separating them from their family, social and employment networks in the community. For many offenders there is also a feeling of shame or low self-esteem, and they may also suffer from substance abuse, mental health problems or post-traumatic stress disorder.

The closed institutional nature of prison has often resulted in the separation of prison education from mainstream adult education. Many of the initiatives highlighted in this book, for example, the development of basic skills and special programs for the educational disadvantaged, are not new. What is seen as new in Australia is linking prison education to mainstream education, and linking mainstream employment, housing and health services to correctional services.

What the research says

The first five chapters in the book examine international and Australian research on adult prisoners and offenders. In their chapter, Chavez and Dawe outline key research and directions in education and training provision in correctional settings internationally. Canadian researchers in the late 1990s promoted a model of rehabilitation based on the premise that reductions in re-offending (or recidivism) can be maximised when high-risk offenders participate in programs which target factors known to be directly related to the reasons for offending, including antisocial attitudes, substance misuse and anger. Chavez and Dawe argue that the 'Three-State Recidivism Study' conducted in the United States of America by Steurer, Smith and Tracy (2001) provides the most convincing evidence for the long-term benefits of VET for adult prisoners and offenders. This study not only considered the impact of correctional education on recidivism but also on post-release employment outcomes. Subsequent research in the United States has shown that successful transition from prison to community requires the integration of education, training and support, both in prison and in the community.

In their chapter, Callan and Gardner confirm the findings of Steurer, Smith and Tracy through their Queensland study into the role of VET in recidivism. It examined the links between prisoners' participation in VET programs and the likelihood of returning to prison. After controlling for background variables (such as education, sentence length and type of crime), involvement in VET by prisoners was associated with a lower rate of recidivism. Overall, 32% of those who did not participate in VET before their initial release returned to custody within two years, while 23% of VET participants returned to custody within the same period. Interviews with prisoners and correctional services staff revealed that the adoption of a module-by-module approach to training and dedicated training workshops in correctional centres were key components in making VET more accessible in prison.

Graffam and Hardcastle report on two studies that focused on the employment of ex-prisoners and ex-offenders in the community. The first evaluated the impact of an employment assistance program for prisoners and offenders in Victoria and identified significantly lower rates of re-offending

for those in the program. The second study investigated the perceptions of employers, correctional services staff, employment service providers, and prisoners and offenders towards the employability of people with criminal histories. It found that people with a criminal history were rated as having less chance of getting and keeping a job than were those with chronic illness, with a physical and sensory disability, or with a communication disability. However, ex-prisoners who had been involved in pre-release training were regarded as having better employability prospects than those with other criminal histories. The authors concluded that involvement in VET and employment assistance, combined with employer willingness to employ ex-prisoners and ex-offenders, are critical to successful employment outcomes, which then results in better integration in the community.

Giles, Tram Le, Allan, Lees, Larsen and Bennett examine the education, training and work experiences of Western Australian prisoners before and during their current term of imprisonment. This study was unique in two respects. First, prisoners themselves were asked about their expectations for future employment and earnings. Second, the interview included questions from a 'life orientation test' which assesses individual differences in terms of general optimism versus pessimism. The analysis examined factors affecting prisoners' choices between education/training and work in prisons. No correlation was found between prisoners' generalised optimism and their expectations of good work prospects after leaving prison. However, the study found that significantly more prisoners undertaking VET courses expect better labour market futures (such as work, more enjoyable work, and more money) than those undertaking non-vocational education courses or prison work alone.

Finally, de Graaf explores current debates about models for education delivery in correctional centres with a view to examining proposals for making it compulsory to participate in education. Education in prisons is supported in all jurisdictions but is mandated by legislation only in Victoria. He believes that it should be compulsory for correctional systems to provide all prisoners with access to education and vocational training. If this were the case, then state and territory governments, he argues, would need to allocate sufficient funding to enable all adult prisoners to participate in VET.

Improving delivery of VET for adult prisoners in Australia

The remaining six chapters of the book update progress by the jurisdictions in implementing the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia (ANTA 2001). There are challenges in providing VET in prisons, but many examples of innovative and good training practices are provided in these chapters.

Halliday Wynes presents a summary of how prisons and VET delivery are managed in each state and territory. The government departments responsible for correctional services and education and training in each jurisdiction were asked to provide details of how their department was implementing the four

objectives of the national strategy. Halliday Wynes highlights the different funding arrangements for VET in prisons across the jurisdictions, and the cooperative arrangements for VET in prisons between the various government departments within the jurisdictions. She also notes a number of inconsistencies in the delivery of VET in correctional centres across Australia. For example, three jurisdictions are currently offering apprenticeships and traineeships to adult prisoners, while the remaining jurisdictions are not.

Laird, Chavez and Zan describe how the direction of correctional education in Western Australia has been shaped by international research findings. The correctional education service is based on the concept of partnerships between correctional service providers and industry and employers providing relevant VET and work experience for offenders. The correctional education service coordinated by the Education and Vocational Training Unit of the Department of Corrective Services was recognised nationally when it was awarded the 2004 National Australian Training Initiative award as a model of best practice in the VET sector. More recently its Labour Market Skills Program was a finalist for the 2006 Premier's Award for Jobs and Economic Development¹¹ for training prisoners specifically in industries where there are skills shortages. Through partnerships with industries, including construction, hospitality and agriculture, employment is secured for prisoners on release from prison. Western Australian research shows that VET training and these jobs play important roles in keeping ex-prisoners from re-offending.

Banfield, Barlow and Gould explain the concept of 'throughcare' as it is being implemented in the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services. 'Throughcare' aims to be a coordinated and integrated approach to reducing re-offending by people who are the responsibility of the department, from their first contact with the Department of Corrective Services to their transition to law-abiding community living. The authors note that central to the concept of 'throughcare' is an assessment of offenders' risks and needs and the provision of rehabilitative and offence-related programs (such as substance abuse and anger management). The Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute, the registered training organisation associated with the Department of Corrective Services, contributes to reducing re-offending by targeting education-specific risks factors (such as low-level literacy skills and educational attainment). Basic education, employability skills and vocational training programs are delivered by the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute, TAFE NSW institutes and other registered training organisations. 'Throughcare' also involves the electronic management of case files and the establishment of links between the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services and other government and non-government agencies that support integration of ex-offenders in the community.

In her second chapter, Halliday Wynes presents examples of innovation and good practice currently being implemented across Australia. These include

¹¹ 2006 Premier's Awards for excellence in public sector management, Government of Western Australia website, viewed December 2006, <http://www.premiersawards.dpc.wa.gov.au/documents/Profile06_web.pdf>.

initiatives and programs to improve the transition from custody to independent community living and assistance post-release. Successful programs emphasise the need for ex-prisoners and ex-offenders to have one-to-one counselling and ongoing monitoring and assistance if they are to gain and retain sustainable employment and appropriate housing, health and social support.

The chapter, 'Improving literacy for adult prisoners and offenders', is based on three presentations on this topic at the 2005 Australasian Corrections' Education Association conference. Firstly, Meatheringham explores the relationship between prisoners' literacy levels and their ability to learn from programs which target factors known to be directly related to the reasons for offending, including antisocial attitudes, substance misuse and anger. He also describes the development of a national literacy indicator tool (including the seven principles that underpin the literacy assessments in Australian prisons) and its use of the National Reporting System (NRS) scale. Secondly, Snow and Powell discuss their research on oral language deficiencies in male juvenile offenders and the implications for literacy education and vocational training in correctional settings. Thirdly, Fewster reflects on his experience with adult Aboriginal students in the Alice Springs Correction Centre using the 'Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills' (THRASS[®]) system for teaching literacy.

This brings us to our final chapter by Miller. Indigenous Australians are significantly over-represented in the correctional systems in all states and territories in Australia. Miller notes that the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) found that a nationally coordinated strategy was imperative to address the education and training needs of Indigenous prisoners. A strategy was developed in 1999 and, fifteen years after the Royal Commission, implementation of this strategy does not appear to be rigorous or consistent across Australia. Indigenous-specific education and training programs have been developed in some jurisdictions and good practice examples are described.

What have we learnt?

Adult prisoners and offenders typically have inadequate literacy skills and/or school education and a history of unemployment. Indigenous Australians are significantly over-represented in the correctional systems in all states and territories in Australia. To assist ex-prisoners and ex-offenders to return to the community as law-abiding citizens, correctional services deliver (to high-risk offenders in particular) learning programs which target the behaviour directly related to the offence, for example, substance abuse and anger management. To date, these programs are not as effective as they should be, since 57% of individuals incarcerated have previously been in an adult prison. This represents an immense financial and social cost to the community at large.

The following are the key findings from this research.

- ❖ Recidivism or re-offending is affected by a range of factors, including education level, employment history, substance abuse, social support, physical and mental health, and accommodation. The lack of education

and employment skills and other factors that correlate with recidivism often result in unemployment.

- ❖ Education and training for adult prisoners and offenders can make a significant difference to successful post-offending employment outcomes and thus reduce the likelihood of re-offending.
- ❖ Only a small percentage of all prisoners are participating in VET in most jurisdictions except the Northern Territory (where most prisoners are involved in education). Increasing participation rates is likely to reduce re-offending.
- ❖ Employment assistance programs for adult prisoners and offenders can significantly lower the rate of re-offending.
- ❖ Irrespective of whether prisoners have a pessimistic or optimistic attitude to life, those prisoners undertaking vocational education and training courses expect better labour market futures (such as work, more enjoyable work, and more money) than those undertaking non-vocational education courses or prison work alone.
- ❖ The willingness of employers in the community to employ those people with a criminal history is critical to successful employment outcomes.
- ❖ Adult prisoners and offenders participate in VET programs that are recognised nationally by industry and therefore by employers and other training providers in the community.
- ❖ The integration of education and training with personal support is required for successful transition from prison to the community. This includes one-to-one counselling and ongoing monitoring and assistance.
- ❖ Indigenous Australian prisoners and offenders require access to Indigenous-specific education and training which is appropriate to their community to reduce the likelihood of re-offending.
- ❖ Working closely with the communities of Indigenous Australian prisoners also ensures that further education, work opportunities and community-support services are available after their release from prison.

As noted earlier, the primary motivation for this book was to consider how the 2001 national strategy was faring. We conclude that there has been considerable progress against the four objectives, as the following summaries demonstrate.

1 To improve access to VET for adult prisoners and offenders

All jurisdictions have registered training organisations providing education and training inside correctional centres. Most jurisdictions also assess, at the beginning of an individual's sentence, literacy and numeracy skill levels, and learning needs. Education profile interviews, or similar, are used to develop an individual management plan. This takes into consideration an individual's education assessment, skills, knowledge, abilities and needs, along with risk management. The education sentence plan, or similar, contains the individual's goals and timelines, and progress is reviewed regularly.

Some jurisdictions have implemented:

- ◆ VET integrated with all prison work—both prison services and commercial industries
- ◆ dedicated training workshops within correctional centres
- ◆ access to apprenticeships and traineeships for adult prisoners
- ◆ ongoing monitoring and assessment of offenders' perceptions of themselves, education and training and employment history.

- 2 To support successful participation and attainment across a range of fields of study and levels of VET

All jurisdictions provide programs that address basic literacy and numeracy skills, while most jurisdictions are:

- ◆ addressing barriers to learning (learning disabilities, low self-esteem, past education experiences etc.)
- ◆ delivering VET more flexibly, especially offering short courses and modules or units of competency from various national training packages
- ◆ offering VET courses which address the interest of prisoners
- ◆ developing training pathways for prisoners moving between correctional centres and into the community
- ◆ adapting learning materials to meet specific needs, such as for Indigenous Australians and recent immigrants to Australia.

- 3 To contribute to the employment and learning pathways which can support the successful re-integration of offenders into the community

All jurisdictions are providing education and training for adult prisoners that contributes to industry-recognised certificates, such as those encompassed by national training package qualifications. Most jurisdictions have implemented programs for transition from prison to community and provide pre- and post-release assistance and support for adult prisoners.

Some jurisdictions are:

- ◆ providing social and life skills education as well as career counselling
- ◆ providing prisoners with personal work references
- ◆ developing partnerships with industry and employers to provide work experience in the community.

- 4 To create an accountable system that provides quality vocational education and training outcomes for offenders.

All jurisdictions are subject to external audits to ensure training provided by registered training organisations in correctional services facilities meets Australian Quality Training Framework standards. Most jurisdictions are improving data collected on education and training of individual students and have or are developing the capacity to provide prisoner data to the national VET Provider Collection in accordance with AVETMISS.¹²

¹² AVETMISS is the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard.

Some jurisdictions have already implemented an 'integrated offender management system', which includes data on education and training participation in prisoner files that are electronically accessible to staff statewide.

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Part one:
What the
research says

International research and trends in education and training provision in correctional settings

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Criminal justice systems overseas (such as the United States, Canada, United Kingdom and New Zealand) are increasingly referring to research findings which confirm that appropriately supported rehabilitation programs for adult prisoners and offenders can save the community the costs associated with repeat criminal behaviour. In the 1990s, to reduce re-offending, Canadian researchers promoted programs which target factors directly related to the offence, including antisocial attitudes, gambling, substance abuse and anger. Other researchers found that programs which focus on more than one risk factor at a time are more successful than those which target only one such factor. However, the most convincing evidence of prisoner education having a positive effect on post-release behaviour has come from the 1999 study of recidivism in the United States, the *Three-state recidivism study*. This not only considered the impact of correctional education on recidivism but also on post-release employment outcomes. Subsequently, research in the United States has shown that successful transition from prison to community requires the integration of education, training and support, both in prison and in the community. Effective programs provide intensive job-placement services and an extensive network of employers who have demonstrated their willingness to hire former prisoners. Ongoing one-to-one support for offenders after release from prison is critical to getting a job, retaining a job, obtaining housing and health care, and establishing social and family support networks in the community. Australian research appears to support these findings, which require coordinated actions by government agencies, non-government service providers, and the community.

Introduction

FOR MOST OF the twentieth century in western society, the term ‘correctional’ was taken literally, and meant that those who break the law should be rehabilitated (that is, their behaviour should be corrected). From the 1970s onwards, however, politicians and criminologists have questioned the viability and effectiveness of this form of offender treatment. This was fuelled by the influential review undertaken by Martinson (1974) whose name became synonymous with the ‘nothing works’ doctrine. This title came from the often-cited article by Martinson (1974): ‘What Works?—Questions and Answers about

Prison Reform', which reviewed 231 studies of prison rehabilitation programs and concluded that offender treatment programs had been largely ineffective.

Many of the practices of the last three decades arguably sought to increase the punitive aspects of correction. This approach was embraced by the public in the United States and in Australia (Applegate & King Davis 2005). For example, the use of incarceration as a way of controlling crime has increased substantially in the last decade, and most recently mandatory minimum sentencing policies¹ have gained widespread popularity. The principal rationale for mandatory minimum sentences is the belief that length of time in prison acts as a deterrent to future re-offending and that the 'punishment' should fit the crime.

Reducing recidivism

Recidivism refers to re-offending which may be defined in many different ways, including re-arrest, re-conviction or re-incarceration. It is also important to note that in calculating rates of recidivism there is no one distinct measure and that often a combination of different measures is used. Most prisoner recidivism rates are based on a release cohort, that is, a group of inmates released during a specified time period and over a specified follow-up period. One recidivism study found that a period of two years allows enough time for rates to become stable, reliable measurements (Florida Department of Corrections 2001).

Beck (2001) provides a description of the different approaches to measuring recidivism applied in different states in the United States. For instance, the Florida Department of Corrections does not count technical violations or being incarcerated in jail for a lesser offence as recidivism; however, such violations are counted as recidivism by the prison systems of Mississippi and Colorado. The timeframe used by prison systems throughout the United States for measuring recidivism varies anywhere from one to 22 years. This makes comparisons between the states a particular problem. Beck is also of the view that the recidivism rate of a particular program does not mean much, unless comparisons are made with other programs.

Critics of the 'nothing works' doctrine actively challenged the assumptions and empirical evidence presented by Martinson (1974) and colleagues. Foremost in this debate were a number of North American researchers. Analysis of the same data used by Martinson (1974) by Palmer (1975, cited in Anstiss 2003) found that more offender treatments worked than the original analysis showed. Similarly, Gendreau and Ross (1979) and Ross and Gendreau (1980) reported on studies that documented positive outcomes. Martinson (1979) also acknowledged errors in his earlier reviews and cited findings from new studies which demonstrated that some treatments did work. Thus, he recanted the 'nothing works' statement made in his 1974 article.

1 The Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, an independent statutory authority established by federal legislation in 1986, was critical of mandatory sentencing imposed by law in the NT and in WA (Jonas 2000) as it is arbitrary and violates people's rights under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

There are also schools of thought about how successful prisons are in applying punishment that reduces criminal behaviour. The first is that prisons are very effective in suppressing criminal behaviour. The second perspective contradicts this and believes that prisons increase criminal behaviour. The third contends that the effect of incarceration on offender behaviour, with a few exceptions, is minimal. Gendreau, Goggin and Cullen (1999) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of recidivism studies to determine whether or not prison reduces criminal behaviour or recidivism. Fifty published studies (dating from 1958 to 1990s) involving 336 052 offenders mostly in North America and the United Kingdom were included in the analysis. A total of 325 correlations were identified between recidivism and, first of all, length of time in prison or, secondly, serving a prison sentence versus a community-based sentence.² These analyses indicated that prison produced slight increases in recidivism, with a tendency that those offenders assessed as low risk were more likely to re-offend after a prison sentence than a community-based sentence.

Gendreau, Goggin and Cullen (1999) concluded that:

- ❖ prisons should not be used with the expectation of reducing criminal behaviour
- ❖ excessive use of incarceration has enormous cost implications
- ❖ in order to determine who is being adversely affected by prison, it is incumbent upon prison officials to implement repeated, comprehensive assessments of offenders' attitudes, values, and behaviours while incarcerated
- ❖ the primary justification of prison should be to incapacitate offenders (particularly those of a chronic, higher-risk nature) for reasonable periods and to exact retribution.

A three-year follow-up study was conducted of 3342 inmates (male, female and aboriginal) released from Canadian federal institutions in 1983–84³ (Bonta, Lipinski & Martin 1991, cited in Jones & Connelly 2001). Overall, nearly half of all male offenders, and one-third of female offenders, re-offended within the three-year follow-up period. This compared with two-thirds of aboriginal male offenders. In addition, the majority of the recidivists tended to be younger, male, unmarried, and had an extensive criminal history.

Although rehabilitation was once maligned as impractical and ineffective, recent research reveals that treatment can produce considerable reductions in re-offending. Andrews and Bonta (1998) found that across numerous studies offender treatments which were the most successful in achieving high reductions

2 A community-based sentence refers to a legal requirement for offenders to serve their sentence in prescribed activities in the community as an alternative to incarceration. Such activities may include unpaid community work components, personal development program attendance or home detention restrictions.

3 In this study, recidivism was defined as any released federal offender who was convicted, within three years following release, of a new indictable offence that led to a custodial sentence.

in recidivisms were the cognitive-behavioural programs.⁴ That recidivism rates can be dramatically cut when programs use cognitive-behavioural approaches and target high-risk offenders and factors known to be related to the offending behaviour has been noted by Cullen and Gendreau (2000), Andrews (2001) and McGuire (2002). Such findings have promoted the use of cognitive-behavioural approaches in prison as 'best practice' examples and increased international acceptance of cognitive-behavioural intervention programs to reduce criminal behaviour.

There is also a belief within the adult education movement and in prison education around the world that the priority is to provide students with the ability to understand the whole world around them (Duguid 1998). This is similar to the liberal arts education philosophy held in North America which requires all first year university students to study the arts (political science, philosophy, sociology, psychology, history) in order to get a better grounding of the background of society. This view holds that the emphasis for prison education should be on adult literacy and liberal arts education, and not only on vocational education and training (see also de Graaf's chapter). For example, Clements (2004) argues that creativity and heuristic⁵ learning enable personal transformation for prisoners towards a self-directed rehabilitative process.

The 'what works' model or models?

The Canadian 'what works' model suggests that reductions in recidivism can be maximised for high-risk offenders if they are involved in learning programs which target factors that are known to be directly related to the reasons for offending (including antisocial attitudes, gambling, substance misuse and anger). Andrews and Bonta (1998) noted that the higher-risk offenders will benefit most from these rehabilitation interventions. In this model, risk is assessed in terms of *static* risk factors that are not amenable to intervention (including age of onset of crime, offence history and family structure) and *dynamic* risk factors that might change over time (such as family and social factors, substance abuse history, educational factors and non-severe mental health problems). Risk factors that are *dynamic* or amenable to change through intervention are also referred to in the literature as 'criminogenic needs'. Interventions consist of learning experiences which use cognitive-behavioural approaches based on psychological theories of behaviour management. The extent to which learning is facilitated or inhibited is mediated by offender age, ethnicity, gender, disability and socioeconomic status (Andrews & Bonta 1998). These factors have also been called 'responsivity' factors.

4 Cognitive-behavioural intervention programs target offending behaviours and anti-social thinking. These cognitive-behavioural programs are designed to assist offenders to confront and understand their past criminal behaviour and to develop pro-social skills and techniques to control their behaviour and avoid situations that may lead to further offending when released from supervision or custody. These programs may target specific offence types such as substance abuse, gambling, violence and sexual offences. One example is the Self Management And Recovery Training (SMART) program which has been implemented in NSW as described on the Department of Corrective Services website, viewed 20 December 2006, <http://www.dcs.nsw.gov.au/information/news/smart_recovery_in_custody_and_in_the_community.asp>. Further information is also available from the website <<http://www.smartrecovery.org>>.

5 Heuristic learning uses a teaching method which encourages the student to discover for him/herself.

This theory of rehabilitation has been influential, particularly in Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. However, Petersilia (2003) considers that the 'what works' movement in the United States evolved from a sociological rather than a psychological perspective and is applied in a different way.⁶ In particular, intervention programs for offenders in the United States focus on the community environment and the ex-offender's employment, education, health support and housing needs in that community. Intervention programs, known as 'prisoner reentry'⁷ programs in United States, assist the transition of ex-prisoners into the community as law-abiding citizens. Petersilia (2003) is of the view that combining the Canadian model of 'what works' with that applied in the United States would be of benefit. Such a program would:

- ❖ mostly be conducted in the community, be intensive and of six months duration
- ❖ focus on high-risk individuals
- ❖ use cognitive-behavioural techniques
- ❖ match therapist and program to specific learning styles and characteristics of individual offenders
- ❖ provide offenders, once they have changed their thinking patterns, with vocational training and other job-enhancing opportunities.

The most convincing evidence that education for prisoners has a positive effect on post-release behaviour of prisoners in the United States was provided by the *Three-state recidivism study*⁸ (Steurer, Smith & Tracy 2001). This study, conducted in the states of Maryland, Minnesota and Ohio, compared two groups of offenders, those who had participated in correctional education while in prison and those who had not (referred to as non-participants). The study was designed to assess not only the impact of correctional education on recidivism but also on employment outcomes after release from prison. This study concluded that education for prisoners enhances employment opportunities, decreases criminal behaviour and, in so doing, reduces the overall cost of crime to the community. By focusing on the financial savings to the community, such studies have increased the likelihood of funding being made available for correctional education for prisoners.

There is a substantial body of work, including from the Urban Institute⁹ in Washington DC, that also establishes a strong case for remedial intervention programs in basic literacy and adult education for prisoners with low-level skills

6 One US example is 'Breaking the Cycle' — a statewide intervention program to reduce drug use among offenders and so break the link between drug use and crime (Harrell et al. 2003).

7 Travis (2005), in his book, *But they are all come back: Facing the challenges of prisoner reentry*, explores the nexus of returning prisoners with seven policy domains: public safety, families and children, work, housing, public health, civic identity, and community capacity. He proposes five principles of reentry that encourage change.

8 The *Three-state recidivism study* was funded by the US Department of Education, Office of Correctional Education, and conducted in 1999 by the US Correctional Education Association.

9 The Urban Institute is a non-partisan economic and social policy research organisation that publishes studies, reports, and books on timely topics worthy of public consideration <<http://www.urban.org>>.

in reading, writing, mathematics and oral communication. However, a recent study in the United Kingdom found that literacy and numeracy tuition alone did not significantly reduce recidivism (Stewart 2005).

A recent study of prison education in Scandinavian countries (Nordic Council of Ministers 2005) provides a comparative view of education and training in prison in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Although the prison authorities in all of these countries actively advocate lifelong learning and skills enhancement for adults, this study revealed that prisoners' rights to education and training are not clearly defined. In summary, it was noted that, if prisoners are to receive education and training on the same terms as the rest of the society, it is a basic prerequisite that their rights must be clearly stipulated in the legislation (see also de Graaff's chapter).

The Nordic study noted that many prisoners have had inadequate schooling compared with the rest of the population. Therefore, from the humanitarian perspective, prisoners have the right to education and training since, without the skills and knowledge needed to face new employment situations in society, individuals will be excluded from the labour market. In terms of rehabilitation, education and training in prisons should be defined broadly and considered investment in crime prevention in the sense that more prisoners will continue their education and find jobs after release.

The Nordic countries use different models for prison education and training, ranging from all full-time teachers appointed by the Minister of Justice in Denmark, to all full- or part-time teachers appointed by the educational authorities in Norway. Finland uses a combination of both models, while in Sweden prison teaching has been outsourced to a large number of different adult education centres, with contracts for one to two years and an experiment in 2003 where prison teachers were appointed by the correctional service under the pedagogic direction of the Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning.

Despite the different models for prison education and training, a joint Nordic starting point was found to exist in the sense that education and training are perceived as being both a benefit to the individual prisoners, for personal development, and a step on the way to the ability to cope upon release from prison—hopefully to a life free from crime and drugs. While the organisation, courses, methodology and priorities should, therefore, be based on the prisoner's situation, the teachers need the skills to be able to identify the different learning needs of the individual prisoners and, in terms of their language, religion and culture, where these may differ from the mainstream society. Claesson and Dahlgren (2002) stated that 'good prison teachers' must be: firstly, 'devoted to the teaching profession' and 'aware of the social dimension'; secondly, be 'extremely hands-on and practical, and prepared to be flexible about learning and teaching methodology'; and thirdly, make the individual 'feel it's OK to be bad at school work' and welcome them to 'give it a try'.

Although many prisoners need formal education and training, the Nordic report also identifies 'a major need for informal skills (life skills, the ability to function in a team at work, in society, in the family etc.)'. This adds to the evidence for the special needs of prisoners, and that remedial literacy and

numeracy skills and upper secondary education are not enough to ensure rehabilitation. It also notes that participation in both creative and physical activities often encourages prisoners to go on to other kinds of education. However, the report describes education as 'one important piece of a larger puzzle' and notes that education can be more effective if it is combined with work, treatment programs, and other approved activities.

Day release privileges for educational activities are important, both in terms of offering more educational options and in giving inmates the opportunity to study in a 'normal' study environment. In addition, there must be opportunities for independent study with tutoring, to meet individual needs. Inmates also need access to information and communication technology courses, as the new technology is the natural tool in relation to expanding access to various educational options outside prison.

The Nordic report notes that 'good cooperation between the Prison and Probation Services and other authorities is one of the key starting points for satisfying prisoners' educational needs'. It also notes that the prison education offered in Nordic countries only accounts for a small fraction of the cost of a place in prison, and since 'demand far outstrips supply' and this group is also difficult to reach on the outside, increased investments in prison education should add value to society as a whole.

Apart from Norway and Sweden, little evaluation and research has been done into prison education and training in the Nordic countries, although quality assurance is a general requirement in the Nordic education systems.

Successful reintegration into the community

In the United States, issues concerning successful re-integration of prisoners into the community are discussed in an ongoing national forum of prominent academics, practitioners, community leaders, policy-makers, advocates and former prisoners. This forum is the Reentry¹⁰ Roundtable which explores how best to deal with various components of returning to the community after prison. These include housing, health care, public safety, civic participation and employment. The goal of the roundtable is to develop new thinking on these issues and to foster policy innovations that will improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities (Solomon et al. 2006). The May 2003 Reentry Roundtable¹¹ focused on employment issues for prisoners, and the report recommended 'a legislative mandate for inmate employment' (Solomon

10 'Re-entry' is the term used in the US, and hence 'prisoner re-entry' or 'returning prisoners' refers to the prisoners after their release from prison as they return to the community from which they came. While Petersilia (2003) defines 'prisoner re-entry' programs to 'include all activities and programming conducted to prepare ex-convicts to return safely to the community and to live as law abiding citizens', others may use a narrower definition of programs which specifically focus on transition from prison to community (Seiter & Kadela 2003).

11 Findings were published by the Urban Institute in a report titled *From prison to work: The employment dimensions of prisoner reentry* (Solomon et al. 2004). A recent Reentry Roundtable explored the link between prisoner re-entry and community policing in the context of enhancing public safety (La Vigne et al. 2006).

et al. 2004). Key barriers to the implementation of prison-based work programs were identified as:

- ❖ lack of space and funding
- ❖ insufficient private partnerships to provide meaningful work to all inmates
- ❖ opposition from local businesses and residents competing for contracts and jobs
- ❖ inconsistencies between state requirements that restrict interstate commerce.

The roundtable also discussed the difficulties prisoners faced in gaining employment upon release and identified programs which had been successful in helping ex-prisoners find suitable jobs. According to Solomon et al. (2004), the period immediately following release from prison is a challenging time for ex-prisoners, as they need to find work, housing, health care, and reconnect with families. However, finding paid employment has been identified as the most critical and the main focus for the first month after release from prison (Nelson, Dees & Allen 1999).

Effective re-integration programs, which Solomon et al. (2004) identified as being successful in helping ex-prisoners find suitable employment, were found typically to provide intensive job-placement services, ongoing monitoring and support to assist with problems that arise to ensure job retention, and an extensive network of employers who have demonstrated their willingness to hire former prisoners. Successful employment placement and training approaches for hard-to-employ populations (such as former welfare recipients) can be used to develop effective programs to re-integrate ex-offenders into employment and the community.

The United States *Report of the Re-entry Policy Council* (Council of State Governments 2005) also highlights the importance of implementing a holistic program which includes both in-prison and post-release support for offenders. According to Gail Spangenberg (2004):

The fact is that unless parolees¹² and others released from confinement have the skills needed to obtain and keep a [meaningful] job, they are apt to find themselves back in the same circumstances that produce the criminal behaviour in the first place.
(Spandenberg 2004, p.1)

The Management and Training Corporation (MTC) is an international organisation dedicated to helping people to realise their learning potential. It is the United States Department of Labor's largest contractor and the third largest operator of adult private prisons in that country. The Management Training Corporation Institute is the research division of this corporation and is dedicated to promoting innovations, exemplary practices, and projecting trends that are relevant to job training and correctional programs. One recent report (Management and Training Corporation Institute 2005) notes that the most

¹² The term 'parole' refers to the liberation of a person from prison, conditional upon good behaviour, prior to the end of the maximum sentence imposed upon that person. A person may be referred to as 'parolee' for the non-custodial period of their sentence.

effective prison-based treatment programs aimed at reducing recidivism are integrated programs that deal with more than one problem. The report concludes that:

Offenders who are prepared to transition into the community are those who have the required skills to gain legal employment, those who can find housing, and those who have an established family or community network that can help them attain the needed services.

(Management Training Corporation Institute 2005, p.2)

McGuire (2002) is also of the view that interventions that tackle a range of problems will be more effective than those that tackle a single problem. This is because offenders often have multiple problems and criminogenic needs. A recent review of education and training provision in Victorian prisons (known as the Bearing Point Review) also foregrounded the need to deal with multiple criminogenic needs of prisoners. It noted that:

... in recent times, there has been a significant increase in the number of prisoners and a commensurate increase in the complexity of the needs of prisoner population. More prisoners now have substance abuse problems, mental health issues, chronic health problems, poor or limited vocational skills, low educational attainment and established histories of repeat offending than previously. Such are the multiplicity and complexity of needs [of prisoners] that they significantly limit an individual prisoner's capacity to be successfully reintegrated into the community. If strategies are not implemented to address these issues while the individual is in prison, their likelihood of successful reintegration into the community upon release is greatly reduced.

(Bearing Point 2003, p.14)

According to a recent report by Coley and Barton (2006), investment in correctional education programs in the United States is not keeping pace with the exploding population of prisoners. In challenging society to support this important investment and consider the plight of prisoners' children whose chances of following their parent's footsteps are high, these authors note that:

Ever-larger numbers of ex-prisoners are returning to their communities poorly prepared to re-enter the workforce and, as a result, to support themselves and their families, or to form families and rear children.

(Coley & Barton 2006, p.2)

The impact of corrections on re-offending has also been the subject of a recent systematic review of research in England (Harper & Chitty 2005). This study notes that quasi-experimental or non-experimental evaluation studies make it difficult to attribute outcomes to the effects of a treatment or intervention. The report concludes that 'outcomes studies need to be based on more effective research design' and 'at the same time, [apply] sufficient focus ... on implementation to ensure that programmes are delivered as intended so that theory failure and implementation failure do not confound evaluation of effectiveness' (p.xii).

In the United Kingdom, the high unemployment rate among ex-prisoners and subsequent higher re-conviction rate among those unemployed was noted in the 2001 research report by Webster et al. However, they noted that the government's

new 'Custody to Work' plans were intended to ensure that, in future, prison industries and workshops would provide more meaningful work and prepare prisoners more effectively for jobs in the community. It was envisaged this would be achieved by working more closely with employers to meet their needs and priorities.

The integrated Offender Learning and Skills Services Program in the United Kingdom has been designed and funded by the Learning and Skills Council in partnership with the National Offender Management Service. This integrated service caters for offenders in custody and in the community. Prior to the program 'going live' in August 2005, researchers from the Learning and Skills Development Agency¹³ conducted an interim evaluation of the prototype activities in the three development regions. The evaluation notes that successful transition to the community can be helped by one-to-one support and motivation for prisoners who 'move through the gate'.

The time that lapses between release from custody and registration with an employment agency or enrolment in a course is considered to be a crucial time for ex-offenders, as it is at this time that many 'fall through the gap'. It is also essential for staff in community-based centres to be specifically trained to work with offenders. The recruitment of ex-offender learners to tutor training courses is also a highly effective method for improving transition outcomes. Also required is an effective data management system which can provide a record of courses and programs that an individual has successfully completed, either in custody, or in the community after release from custody. However, the evaluation noted concern about how such a system would be coordinated nationally. Similar concerns are expressed by Walker, Deane and Pettersson (2006).

In contrast, Australian correctional education services have agreed to comply with the national standard for collecting and managing electronic information on vocational education and training (VET) course enrolments and completions. This standard is the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard. Compliance with this standard means that records of adult prisoner and offender VET achievements are accessible in prison and in the community. Australian prisoners can now participate in courses leading to nationally recognised and accredited VET qualifications. These courses may be delivered by external registered training organisations or by the relevant prison education unit if it is a registered training organisation. Their qualifications will be indistinguishable from those delivered in the community and will facilitate an integrated individual 'learning journey' in transition from prison to community.

Australian research conducted by Hinton (2004) reviewed the current and potential role of the 'Supported Accommodation Assistance Program' in meeting the needs of ex-prisoners in Tasmania. The report highlights the urgent need to develop a 'throughcare' model which provides pre-release housing assistance

13 The interim report titled *Evaluation of regional plans for the new integrated offender learning and skills service* highlights findings and lessons learned from evaluation workshops and interviews with key stakeholders in each region (Walker, Harrison & Zwart 2005).

to prisoners and involves community-based service agency staff and a cross-government approach to meeting the housing and support needs of ex-prisoners.

Implementing a holistic program which includes both in-prison and post-release support for offenders relates to the 'throughcare'¹⁴ philosophy being implemented in Australian correctional services (see Banfield's chapter and that of Laird, Chavez and Zan).

Australian prisoners returning to the community

The federal Attorney-General's Department commissioned the Australian Institute of Criminology to assess the state of interventions for prisoners returning to the community in 2003 (Borzycki 2005). The evaluation noted that:

Ongoing criminal careers and crime are costly to the community, so the provision of post-release services should be the concern of government agencies for housing, health and education as well as faith-based and voluntary organisations which provide social support; businesses and industry; and the communities to which ex-offenders return. (Borzycki 2005 p.5)

Also noted was the shift in focus on the various social and economic disadvantages that characterise prison populations in western jurisdictions, that prisoners are not a homogenous group, and that certain subgroups have special needs. These include prisoners with mental health problems, those with an intellectual disability, females (especially those with dependent children), Indigenous prisoners and offenders, and those who have been incarcerated, or on remand¹⁵, for very short periods of time.

The evaluation concluded that effective 'throughcare' required coordinated actions by all sectors: government agencies, non-government services providers, and the community. This would ensure that ex-prisoners do not fall through the service gaps between agencies. In addition, all sectors needed to participate in the transition process because post-release adjustment is best addressed well before prisoners are released from custody (Borzycki 2005). It was also noted that the variety of challenges facing ex-prisoners returning to the community was beyond the scope of the corrective service authorities alone. Suggestions were made for corrective service authorities to consider whether post-release service delivery should be standardised within the jurisdictions (particularly relevant for continuation of services to prisoners transferred between correctional facilities), and whether a *transitional culture* could be developed within the existing prisons or whether a dedicated facility or *transition centre* should be established within the jurisdictions.

14 Throughcare' describes the process of delivering continuous care—providing consistent services and support to prisoners within and beyond prison in an holistic program of rehabilitation, ideally commencing at first contact between the offender and the justice system (see Borzycki 2005).

15 Offenders charged but not convicted may be held in the custody of correctional services 'on remand' while awaiting trial, when the judge has not granted them bail to live in the community (i.e. to provide surety that they will appear at their trial).

In summary

Research findings from Canada, the United States of America and the United Kingdom confirm that appropriately supported rehabilitation programs for adult prisoners and offenders can save the community the costs associated with repeat criminal behaviour. Interventions that tackle a range of problems are more effective than those that tackle a single issue, since offenders often have multiple issues and risk factors. To address as many issues as possible, a program may include learning life skills, basic education (such as literacy and numeracy, oral English language competency and missed secondary school education), VET and community-based work experience.

Successful transition from prison to community requires integration of education, training and support, both in prison and in the community. Ex-prisoners require appropriately supported re-integration programs to find work and housing, to access health care and to reconnect with families. Effective programs were typically found to provide: intensive job-placement services; ongoing monitoring; and, to ensure job retention, support to assist with problems that arise; and an extensive network of employers who have demonstrated their willingness to hire former prisoners.

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The role of VET in recidivism in Australia

Victor Callan and John Gardner

This chapter examines the links between prisoners' participation in the vocational education and training (VET) programs available within the Queensland prison system and their chances of returning to prison. It discusses a recent study¹ which shows that prisoners involved in VET programs before their initial release are much less likely to return to custody. Overall, 32% of prisoners who did not participate in VET before their initial release returned to custody in Queensland within two years, while only 23% of VET participants returned.

Interviews with prisoners and correctional services staff reveal that the adoption of a module-by-module approach to training and dedicated training workshops in correctional centres are assisting prisoners to access VET. On the other hand, the perceived barriers to the successful provision of VET programs include the demands of programs dealing with offending criminal behaviour and the perceived lower importance of vocational education and training. Operational and funding constraints also limit prisoners' access to training opportunities.

Introduction

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL literature on correctional systems shows that prisoners, relative to the general population, are confronted by an extensive range of disadvantages. These include poor health and poor education, accompanied by drug, alcohol and mental health issues, poor social and communication skills, and in many cases, some level of intellectual disability (see Social Extension Unit 2002; Ward 2001). We know that adult offenders in Australia face cumulative social and economic disadvantage relative to the Australian population as a whole. They have an average school age of Year 10 or below, training levels well below the Australian average, higher rates of mental illness and greater rates of unemployment. Reports by the Australian Council for Social Service (2002) and the Australian Government Productivity Commission

¹ In this study, prisoners are considered to be recidivists if they commence a new sentence in Queensland within two years of their date of release from custody for an offence, other than a fine fault. The full project report by Callan and Gardner (2005) is titled *Vocational education and training provision and recidivism in Queensland correctional institutions*. This and supporting documents are available from NCVER's website at <<http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1592.html>>.

(2004) highlight the significant impact of unemployment upon the health of individuals, on opportunities to seek affordable housing, and upon the likelihood of committing crime.

Many strategies at local, state and national levels are being put in place to assist those in prison to improve their chances of successful integration back into their families, the world of work, and their communities. In Australia, *Shaping our future: National strategy for VET 2004–2010* (ANTA 2004) and the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia (ANTA 2001) aim to resolve many of these sources of cumulative disadvantage being experienced by adult offenders.

The report by the Australian Government Productivity Commission (2004) provides a profile of the correctional services of various jurisdictions, including policy developments and performance indicators. This report noted the following.

- ❖ There is a national recidivism rate of 37% of prisoners returning to prison within two years of release, and 47% returning to corrective services (either prison or community-based orders²).
- ❖ There is a growing acknowledgement nationally that the corrective services sector has an active role to play in crime prevention, especially by providing programs and opportunities that address the causes of offending, maximise the chances of successful re-integration in the community, and reduce the risk of re-offending.
- ❖ The correctional system is increasingly recognising the complexity of the circumstances and needs of prisoners, including unresolved drug and alcohol problems, backgrounds of social disadvantage, low educational attainment, poor employment history, significant health problems, and limited family and social skills.
- ❖ Various jurisdictions are developing or expanding upon a ‘throughcare’ strategy (New South Wales), or ‘end-to-end’ strategy (Queensland) or a ‘re-entry coordination service delivery model’ (Western Australia) for the integrated management of offenders throughout the correctional system.

As in most correctional systems in Australia, new prisoners are assessed in terms of their offender risk and needs. This assessment technique (described as Offender Risk Needs Inventory in Queensland) designates certain characteristics as criminogenic (for example, criminal history, illiteracy, substance abuse). The risk assessment assigns a degree of severity of criminogenic factors for each prisoner and places them in a high-, medium- or low-risk category. Related to this is the initial sentence management plan which is determined for each prisoner through interviews conducted by psychologists, education officers and VET officers who, respectively, identify specific offending behaviour and recommend educational and VET programs for each offender. In Queensland centres, a prisoner’s progress and plan are reviewed by the sentence management unit every six months.

2 Community-based orders include non-custodial sanctions (including unpaid community work components, personal development program attendance, or home detention restrictions).

Offending behaviour programs are rehabilitation programs that are targeted towards the psychological, cognitive and behavioural factors believed to be at the core of the individual's behaviour and which led to their imprisonment. These programs are cognitive and behaviour-based and are aimed at reducing the criminogenic factor or factors. They include programs to encourage prisoners to re-think the impact of crime upon their victims and to develop more empathy and become less impulsive, and to develop better decision-making skills (cognitive skills program). Other offending behaviour programs are directed at aggression and anger (anger management program), offending sexual behaviour (sex offenders program) or drug and alcohol awareness (substance abuse program).

In Queensland, correctional centre guidelines assist staff in determining how they will manage the considerable demands of the offending behaviour, education and VET programs, and waiting lists for all programs. In Queensland prisons, offending behaviour programs, literacy and short entry-level VET programs are available to prisoners who are on remand or who are serving sentences of fewer than 12 months. However, sentenced prisoners who are high-risk, female and Indigenous prisoners receive access to mainstream programs even if their sentence is fewer than 12 months. Indigenous-specific programs include literacy and numeracy, work readiness and Murri Art.

Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies were used in this study. The quantitative methods involved a series of cross-tabulations and logistic regression analyses to investigate corrections databases that provided records of prisoner characteristics, VET program attendance, and evidence of re-entry back into the custodial system. The initial sample of former prisoners consisted of 6021 individuals who were released from prisons in Queensland between 1 July 2001 and 30 November 2002. Individuals who had been released to community custody, escaped from custody, and released on the basis of upheld appeals were then excluded. The initial sample of individuals was assessed for evidence of re-offending between the date of their release and the final census date for these analyses, which was 30 November 2004. Evidence of re-offending was drawn from information about returns to custody and/or returns to community supervision during the census period. A 'return to custody' was recorded for those people who returned at least once to a prison sentence during the census period; this definition excluded non-sentenced individuals, people returning from community custody, and those returning from post-prison supervision orders. For this analysis, recidivism was defined as only those individuals who returned to custody during the census period. This group included 1810 individuals (30.1% of the initial sample). Logistic regression tested statistically the links between involvement in VET in prison and recidivism rates for different types of prisoners.

The qualitative methodology included data collection using semi-structured face-to-face interviews with individual respondents. On other occasions, within

the operational constraints of the prison, it was most efficient to complete interviews with small groups of staff (while prisoners were in lock-down or participating in programs), and with small groups of prisoners before or after a training program (groups varied in size from two to eight prisoners).

During September and October 2004, 145 interviews were completed with correctional staff and prisoners across seven correctional institutions in Queensland. The centres were chosen to be representative of the broad range of correctional institutions, including centres that reflected the full range of prisoner classifications, and provided access to both male and female offenders and to offenders of Indigenous backgrounds. Before the interviews, prisoners were informed that they had the right to refuse to be interviewed, that all information was strictly confidential with no names or identifying information attached to the interview notes, and that no person from Queensland Corrections saw any interview notes. The sub-groups of respondents that made up the interviews were:

- ❖ 50 Indigenous male and female offenders who were identified by program staff in the centres as being of Indigenous background and as accessing VET programs currently or in the past
- ❖ 60 non-Indigenous male and female prisoners in the same correctional centres
- ❖ 26 correctional staff (VET training officers, education officers, programs staff, correctional officers, sentence management staff, managers)
- ❖ five Department of Corrective Services staff managing or overseeing the VET programs
- ❖ four public and private registered training organisation staff who were in the centres delivering VET training.

Findings related to recidivism

The aim of the analyses of Queensland corrections databases was to investigate whether characteristics of prison offenders, including their involvement in VET programs, could be used to predict their risk of re-offending after their release from prison. For this analysis, the definition of recidivism included only those individuals who returned to custody in Queensland during the census period.

VET involvement

The characteristics of those who participated in any VET programs were compared with those who did not. Cross-tabulations indicated that VET program participants, relative to non-participants, are:

- ❖ no less likely to return to custody, but less likely to return to community supervision and less likely to return to the corrective system overall
- ❖ more likely to be female
- ❖ less likely to be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent

- ❖ more likely to have committed offences involving robbery and extortion, and less likely to have committed offences against good order
- ❖ more likely to have sentences ranging from one year to ten years and less likely to have shorter or longer sentences
- ❖ more likely to have higher levels of education
- ❖ more likely to be involved in the Post-Release Employment Assistance Program and literacy/numeracy programs
- ❖ younger on average.

Predicting return to custody

A number of factors were investigated in relation to individuals returning to custody. For each variable, the findings regarding significance are statistically controlled for the effect of other variables in the sample. The findings include the following.

- ❖ *Age* is a significant predictor, with older people being *less likely* to return to custody. On average, people who returned to the corrective system were five years younger than those who did not return.
- ❖ *Sex* is a significant predictor, with females being *less likely* to return to custody. Overall, 31% of males returned to custody, but only 26% of females returned.
- ❖ *Indigenous status* is a significant predictor, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being *more likely* to return to custody. Overall, 25% of non-Indigenous offenders returned to custody, while 43% of Indigenous offenders returned.
- ❖ *Most serious offence grouping* is a significant predictor. People convicted of property offences or offences against good order appear more likely to return to custody. People convicted of robbery/extortion offences or drug offences appear less likely to return to custody.
- ❖ *Sentence length grouping* is a significant predictor. People with shorter initial sentences are more likely to return to custody than people with longer initial sentences.
- ❖ *Education grouping* is a significant predictor. In general, people with higher levels of education (especially Year 12 or above) are *less likely* to return to custody than people with lower levels of education. However, very low levels of education (that is, up to Year 7 only) are not associated with higher risk of return to custody.
- ❖ *Total Offender Risk Needs Inventory score* is a significant predictor, with people who score higher being *more likely* to return to custody. Overall, those who returned scored 3.5 points higher on the inventory than those who did not return.
- ❖ *Risk category* is a significant predictor, with people categorised as 'high risk' being *much more likely* to return to custody than those categorised as 'low risk'.

- ❖ *VET before initial release* is a significant predictor, with people involved in VET being *less likely* to return to custody. Overall, 32% of those who did not participate in VET before their initial release returned to custody, while only 23% of VET participants returned.
- ❖ *Literacy/numeracy before initial release* is not a significant predictor, although there is some slight indication that participation in literacy/numeracy programs is associated with lower incidence of return to custody.
- ❖ *Post-Release Employment Assistance Program* is not a significant predictor, although there is some slight indication that involvement in the program is associated with lower incidence of return to custody.

Factors facilitating the provision of VET in prisons

Education programs in correctional institutions focus upon improving literacy and numeracy through to assisting prisoners with access to higher-level qualifications, such as VET diplomas and university degrees. VET programs can be completed within the prison or through distance learning. These programs in Queensland prisons in 2004 included certificates in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual arts, outdoor power tools, business, computer-aided drafting, engineering, first aid, furnishing, hospitality, transport and distribution, and workplace preparation and practices. A number of centres are planning to introduce various certificate III qualifications from 2005 and target computing and hospitality training for female prisoners. This is an indication that the demands of the labour market, as well as those of offenders, are driving developments of VET in prison.

Queensland correctional centres report completion rates of 80% or better for VET modules. A number of specific procedures and action strategies are seen to be behind these high completion rates. The risk assessment and related initial sentence management plan for each prisoner are being used very explicitly to determine offending behaviour and educational and VET program needs of offenders. The six-monthly sentence management reviews provide updates on prisoner progress and, where applicable, reasons for dropping out from programs. Innovative delivery using a module-by-module approach and dedicated training workshops are adopted, and the promotion of employment opportunities available from training is also believed to contribute to the success. Also of significance is the active promotion of prisoner achievements and factors facilitating participation and completion of VET modules by prisoners.

Module-by-module approach

Various industry training packages being used to deliver units of competency were typically taken from certificate I or II qualifications. They were popular among both Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders. However, Indigenous offenders also accessed an accredited program in Indigenous art. Overall, the most frequently accessed units of competency were for first aid, followed by units of competency from certificates in engineering, business, horticulture, and

information technology. Within the centres, prisoners and corrections staff talked about these units as modules. In addition, there was widespread advertising of forthcoming VET modules in the residential and secure units in centres. In one centre, this promotion was tied to an 'education expo' in which registered training organisations and universities offering training gave presentations about VET, traineeships and apprenticeships, and distance learning. Other centres used an education induction program which oriented new prisoners to the purpose and availability of VET and other education programs. Where they had libraries, materials about VET and other programs were also made available. Programs were also being promoted to custodial officers more actively than in the past.

VET modules were especially suited to prisoners' learning styles because they allowed a more hands-on approach to learning, and the benefits were normally immediately recognisable. Prisoners who had successfully completed earlier modules in the qualification were actively followed up, and were advised of forthcoming training programs. Interviews with prisoners were used to check their motivations for wanting to undertake the training, as well as to clarify the centre's expectations. Courses were promoted as being a privilege that needed to be taken seriously, with the implication that dropping out for unjustified reasons would affect their access to other VET courses. In some centres, the prisoners signed a 'psychological contract' in which they indicated that they understood the attendance requirements for completing a specific course. Daily attendance rolls were taken, and prisoners who did not attend were sought out and asked to give reasons for non-attendance. Some VET officers also talked about 'picking the eyes out of the waiting lists' to give preference to those who were coming up for release or parole. This was to give every advantage to prisoners who were coming up for a hearing at the Parole Board.

VET modules were organised in innovative ways and were run to minimise disruption to prison work (for example, laundries, kitchens, and commercial workshops) or attendance at offending behaviour programs (for example, cognitive skills, drug and alcohol addiction, sex offender behaviours, and anger management). Prisoner interest and motivation was maintained by running VET modules compactly (often for three-hour sessions for five days per week). Furthermore, new policies were being applied which allowed prisoners to be absent from prison work for two sessions a week.

Access to training workshops

The establishment of dedicated training workshops by centres was a major facilitator of VET programs. These separate workshops were generally well equipped, and importantly, were not driven by the need to meet production targets and deadlines like the commercial workshops. Like the commercial workshops, however, there were limits to the number of pieces of equipment available for prisoners to use (for example, computers, welding appliances). Prison policy also prescribes limits to the maximum number of prisoners allocated to a workshop or educational area for the safety of prison staff and outside trainers. These policies, in turn, resulted in smaller-size classes than in 'outside' training environments, but unfortunately long waiting lists of two to

four months for a number of the most popular VET programs in the prisons (that is, first aid, computer studies, forklift operator, landscaping, welding, Year 10 studies, and tertiary preparation).

Improved employment opportunities from training

Prisoners believed that VET training had improved their self-confidence and raised levels of self-esteem. In the context of a history of failing to attend and complete their education at school, they were proud to have successfully completed a VET course. Custodial officers, as well as program staff, mentioned that this had resulted in improved prisoner behaviour back in the units.

Prisoners believed that their involvement in VET training would increase the range of jobs they could access upon release. In turn, having a job was critical to their re-integration back into their communities and families. Female prisoners, in particular, talked about the advantages of assisting their children now they knew more about computers, or how the completion of qualifications like small engine or hospitality or kitchen duties would help them to be more confident at home. Asked about the jobs that they would now access, male prisoners who had undertaken VET mentioned most often that they wanted to work as welders, forklift operators, plant operators, construction workers, and in landscaping. The majority of male and female prisoners wanted to be self-employed. They believed that running their own business would allow them to escape the stigma faced by ex-prisoners seeking employment.

As well as gaining useful technical skills, prisoners and staff believed that VET programs developed more generic skills. In the training workshops, prisoners had to learn to interact with prisoners they did not know. Prisoners believed that the training sessions improved their general communication and time management skills, as well as planning, organising and decision-making skills. They also became more aware of the issues involved in working as part of a successful team.

Promotion of offender achievements

The most obvious motivating factor among prisoners was the sense of achievement gained in developing a new skill. In contrast to their many learning experiences at school, they were able to successfully complete their courses. They also felt that they had received a high standard of training from very knowledgeable and accommodating trainers. They were aware that, in undertaking training, they would have to pay for similar training programs on the outside, and that the course was broadening the range of jobs they might be able to access upon release.

Staff in correctional centres, especially VET and education officers, took considerable care in recognising the achievements of students who completed a module or a full qualification. Module completers were provided with the official record of their achievement from the registered training organisation which had been funded to resource the training, and graduation ceremonies were held to recognise the achievements of prisoners who had completed a qualification.

Centres had adopted a policy of keeping copies of this documentation in prisoner education files so that prisoners had replacement copies if required. These files were especially useful for prisoners who re-offended and were re-incarcerated. In these cases, files had copies of certificates that prisoners may have lost after release.

The prisoners undertaking VET programs believed that they were a minority in the prison. The majority of prisoners completed 'offending behaviour' programs only, and they were the only programs seen to increase their chances of parole. These prisoners commented that they were not willing to work with the system. As reported a number of times, many prisoners consider the system which has placed them in prison as unfair, and thus they are unwilling to help the system. VET and education officers who were interviewed had opinions that were very similar to those of the prisoners who were undertaking VET. That is that, the correctional system was more focused upon managing and correcting the offending behaviour than on preparing prisoners for employment upon release.

Positive prisoner perceptions of VET staff and trainers

Trainers were seen to be supportive and not patronising of learners. Other prisoners encouraged their peers in the training workshops. Across the prisons visited, no prisoner was unhappy with the quality of tuition they had received. In particular, they reported being treated with respect by the trainers who were perceived to be very creative and accommodating in setting up tasks for learners at different levels of confidence and skill.

There was a great deal of evidence that VET staff, education staff and outside trainers were communicating well with one another and working together to assist prisoners. For example, a prisoner might enrol in a VET program that demanded a higher level of literacy and numeracy (for example, computing). The VET officer and trainer would soon become aware of these learning problems. In these cases, prisoners could either access a literacy and numeracy class at the same time as the VET program, or seek one-on-one literacy and numeracy tutoring. VET officers reported that the behaviour of individual prisoners with these learning and comprehension difficulties improved considerably once they were able to keep up with other learners. Correctional officers also reported upon the improved behaviour of such prisoners back in the units.

Factors hindering the provision of VET in prisons

The need for prisoners to complete 'offending behaviour programs' and to participate in prison work were key obstacles to their participation and completion of VET programs. In some prisons, traditional concepts of the custodial role of prisons also limited opportunities for prisoners to engage in VET. Other inhibitors included short sentences, transfers, early releases, and limited availability of skilled external trainers.

The need to complete offending behaviour programs

Offending behaviour programs targeted criminogenic needs—psychological, cognitive and behavioural factors at the core of an individual's criminal behaviour. These programs include the cognitive skills programs, drug and alcohol programs and sex offender programs. They are either court-ordered or are determined upon incarceration. The Offender Risk Needs Assessment Inventory is completed in interviews with offenders by psychologists and sentence management staff. Prisoners are very aware that the completion of such programs will be viewed positively by individuals who make key decisions about prisoner progress through the corrections system, including eligibility for parole and reclassification to lower levels of security. Indeed, in many cases offenders choose to repeat such programs, hoping to prove to sentence management and parole boards that they are actively dealing with their offending behaviour.

Involvement in prison work

The next priority for offenders was to work in prison kitchens, laundries, gardens, and farms or commercial workshops. This also reduced training program participation and completion. In Queensland commercial workshops provided opportunities for prisoners to practise a specific set of skills (for example, stainless steel work, woodwork, paint and powder coating, textile cutting, light fabrication and tailoring) and engage in paid work. However, the primary motive for this involvement was to earn money.

In some institutions, training programs and prison work were scheduled at different times of the day. If programs were scheduled in the morning, the afternoon was devoted to prison work. Offending behaviour programs for higher-security prisoners, for example, were also scheduled so as not to conflict with VET programs or prison work. Protection and mainstream prisoners are forbidden from being in the same accommodation areas or on training programs. These issues also have to be taken into account in the planning and management of training sessions. However, not all centres paid the same attention to reducing potential clashes between attendance at VET programs and involvement in workshops and prison work.

The custodial culture versus a training culture

In some centres, there was still the old divide between educators, custodial staff and the traditional custodial officer—where that culture still existed. 'Prisons are for corrections, not for education and training', said one custodial officer. Another also responded, 'I have no idea what VET staff do all day and I don't really care'. Nevertheless, VET was working best in meeting the training needs of prisoners where the old divide between custodial officers and programs staff had long gone. Here staff worked in teams and shared information and insights about the personal, educational and training needs of individual prisoners. While concerns for prisoner and staff safety were still paramount in these

environments, there was a level of tolerance and flexibility shown by custodial officers. This allowed VET and education programs to operate more effectively.

An example of this flexibility can be seen in the way compulsory musters, which occurred during the day, were dealt with in the centres. Traditionally, if the prisoner count is not accurate, it is taken again, and if is still not correct (that is, a prisoner appears to be missing), the prison goes into lock-down. All prisoners return to their cells, and all activities cease. In centres where custodial and programs staff operate as part of a larger team, good communication between custodial officers and training staff allows musters to continue safely and securely, but are also sufficiently flexible to ensure that training workshops are not disrupted for long periods of time. In such institutions, flexible and innovative approaches to the timetabling of programs and competing prison work are supported by good communication between custodial officers and program staff and promote access to and provision of VET.

Transfers or release from prison

The uncertainty of prisoners remaining in the centre providing the training, combined with the inability of training staff to predict prisoner movement, also inhibited the completion of the training qualifications. In many ways, the module-by-module approach being adopted in prisons reflected the reality of being unable to predict prisoner movements. Corrections staff report that the adoption of the module-by-module approach was due to wide range of factors, and in particular, prisoner movements, the nature of the training packages, and the fact that the majority of prisoners are serving short sentences (fewer than 12 months). Prisoners are moved without much warning across centres for a variety of operational reasons. These can include over-crowding, unit closures, security concerns for protected prisoners, prisoner reclassification to lower security levels, and addressing specific personal requirements (for example, to be located closer to family). A decision of the parole board may also mean that prisoners are released early.

Difficulties in accessing skilled external trainers

At present a major challenge for centres is the difficulty in finding staff who are willing to work at the pay levels set by the providers. In an environment characterised by booming housing and construction industries, the contracted casual trainers, who are often employed to provide training for these industry areas in prison, have been lured away to higher-paying work in the private sector. Hourly pay rates for welders, large machine operators, and construction workers are two to three times the rates offered by technical and further education (TAFE) institutes or private providers. In some cases, VET courses are financed by non-VET funds to secure the services of private operators who are qualified operators and trainers. Two trainers are required to be present to conduct workplace assessments. One is required to supervise prisoners, as the other works with individual prisoners completing assessment tasks. In other

cases, where the cost or lack of a suitable trainer prevented prisoners from accessing face-to-face training, the VET officer arranged for the VET provider to deliver programs via distance learning.

Conclusions

There is growing evidence that, across Australia, correctional systems are building a 'throughcare' philosophy in which an integrated program of rehabilitation, education and training is emerging. The significant evidence to emerge from our analyses to support a more integrated program which develops employment skills is that offenders involved in VET were less likely to return to the corrective system. On average, being involved in VET before initial release was associated with a decrease in the chance of returning to custody (overall, a reduction from 32% to 23% in the recidivism rate). These findings are very significant and approximate the findings of the United States *Three-state recidivism study* (Steurer, Smith & Tracy 2001), which is regarded as the most comprehensive and scientific study made on correctional education and training to date.

The more obvious developments towards an integrated program of rehabilitation, education and training in this Queensland study included the provision of pre-release/transition and employment programs, the opportunity for prisoners to be involved in meaningful prison work, the expansion of vocational training into new areas, and more access to advice about health services, education, training and housing, prior to release.

The availability of and access to dedicated training workshops in correctional centres, as well as to outside trainers and tutors who were highly professional and respectful of prisoner needs, further supports the emergence of a 'throughcare' approach to prisoner management. In this research, we found highly motivated offenders engaging in and completing multiple VET programs, which were providing them with technical skills and which also improved their confidence and self-esteem and contributed to broader sets of generic skills. Importantly, the majority of male and female prisoners expressed a desire to be self-employed in order to escape the stigma faced by ex-prisoners when seeking employment.

Staff in correctional centres, especially VET and education officers, took considerable care to recognise the achievements of students who completed a module or a full qualification. Interviewed prisoners were very positive about the role that prison staff and trainers were playing in assisting them to develop skills to help them to re-integrate into the community upon release.

Prisoners are faced with managing the demands and constraints of two systems—the corrective services system and the system of vocational education and training—which have similar, but also different objectives. Prisoners are attempting to meet their educational and training needs within corrective systems that are still geared primarily, and understandably, to the safe and

humane management of offenders while in correctional facilities. Fewer people and financial resources are focused upon the transition management of prisoners on release back into the community.

Such barriers need to be identified and resolved. In particular, correctional institutions need to be funded not only to achieve custodial objectives and provide advice to sentencing and releasing authorities, but also according to their achievements in the area of rehabilitation, adjustment and employment upon release. This will require patience, time and planning, as well as continued cultural and structural change. The introduction of better systems and evaluation mechanisms is also required.

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Ex-prisoners and ex-offenders and the employment connection: Assistance plus acceptance

Joe Graffam and Lesley Hardcastle

This chapter reports on two studies that focus on the employment of ex-prisoners and ex-offenders¹ (also referred to as 'people with criminal histories'). One study evaluated the impact of an employment assistance program for prisoners and offenders in Victoria (2002–05). The outcomes included significantly lower rates of re-offending for those in the program. Rates of re-offending, type of re-offence and number of different kinds of offence were used as measures of recidivism. The second study investigated the perceptions that four stakeholder groups—employers, corrections services personnel, employment service providers and prisoners and offenders—have towards the employability of people with criminal histories. This study found that, of a number of disadvantaged job-seeker groups, people with a criminal history were rated as having less chance of getting and keeping a job than were those with a chronic illness, with a physical and sensory disability, or with a communication disability. However, ex-prisoners with pre-release training were regarded more highly on employability than those with other criminal histories. The study also found that, although ex-prisoners and ex-offenders were perceived as being less likely to possess employment-related skills and characteristics than were members of the general workforce, the differences were not extreme, with ex-prisoners and ex-offenders being rated as 'fairly likely' to have such skills. Both studies contributed to the conclusion that education, training and employment assistance, as well as stakeholder perceptions, are important to success in employment for ex-prisoners and ex-offenders and thus for their re-integration into the community and desistance from crime.

Introduction

THIS CHAPTER REPORTS ON TWO STUDIES. Together, they add to our knowledge about recidivism and the employment of people with criminal histories. One study measured the effects of employment assistance, including provision of education and training, on recidivism. The other investigated stakeholder perceptions of the employability of ex-offenders with a variety of backgrounds, including those with pre-release training.

¹ Ex-prisoners have completed a custodial sentence, usually in a prison, while ex-offenders have completed a community-based order.

The need to address the causes of recidivism is clear. In Australia in 2002, approximately 58% of individuals incarcerated had previously been in prison (ABS 2003). At least 31 of every 100 prisoners released from Victorian prisons in 2000–01 returned to prison within two years, while nearly 40 of every 100 returned to corrective services as a whole, to prison or community corrections (Productivity Commission 2003). In the United States, it has been estimated that 62% of prisoners released from state prisons were re-arrested within three years of their release (Burke 2001).

The financial and social costs to the community of recidivism are extensive. Mayhew and Glenda (2003) have estimated the total cost of crime in Australia to be over \$30 billion per year when costs of the justice system are added to the material losses incurred by crime. There has been a dramatic increase in corrections expenditure over the last 20 years. In the United States, spending on corrections increased from \$9 billion in 1982 to \$44 billion in 1997 (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2001). Comparable increases in funding for corrective services are noted in Australia as well, with the system-wide recurrent expenditure increasing from \$1064 million in 1997–98 to \$1.7 billion in 2002–03 (Productivity Commission 2003). The social consequences of criminal lives include the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities and consequent pressures on health and welfare resources.

Breaking the pattern of re-offending and being able to establish a life within the community requires both getting assistance with the process and acceptance from the community. Employment plays an important part in successful community re-integration. For employment to be successful, offenders need preparation and assistance. Receptivity to their entry into the workforce is also important. That receptivity is especially important from employers, employment assistance program staff, corrections workers, and offenders themselves. In this chapter, two studies are summarised which explain these two important and complementary elements of success in employment.

The first study was an evaluation of an employment assistance program for prisoners and offenders in Victoria, Australia, conducted during the period July 2002 through to October 2004. The program participants, from both prison and community corrections sectors, were eligible to receive assistance for 12 months, with prisoner clients able to register prior to their release. Assistance included work preparation and placement into employment, as well as life skills and personal support. The program's goals were sustained employment and reduced re-offending.

The second study investigated the perceptions that people have about the employability of ex-prisoners and ex-offenders. The participants in this study came from four stakeholder groups: employers; employment service providers; corrective services personnel; and prisoners and offenders, in both Victoria and Queensland. In one part of the study, employability comparisons were made with other disadvantaged groups. In the second, judgements were made of the relative likelihood that ex-prisoners and ex-offenders would demonstrate 21 different employability skills and characteristics.

The literature reviewed for these studies indicates evidence for a strong relationship between recidivism and unemployment. It also finds that there is a complex web of barriers to the employment of offenders. One identified barrier is the attitude of people in the community, employers in particular. Ex-prisoners and ex-offenders are also noted to have reservations about their own employability.

Literature

Unemployment and recidivism

Knowledge about the relationship between crime and work provides the background to the literature on re-offending and unemployment. Much of the research into causes of crime has centred on notions of poverty and inequality. Although analysis shows that it is simplistic to suggest that more crime occurs in times of economic downturn, this often appears to be the case. However, the literature investigating relationships between the economy and crime rates is inconsistent (Chamlin & Cochran 2000; Chapman et al. 2002). The findings have been complicated by differences in levels of data (that is, neighbourhood or national aggregates), and the fact that national unemployment figures have been designed and collected for purposes other than for the specific research. Other problems include the nature of crimes, the fact that people commit crimes while employed, and the various definitions of employment, as unemployment rates include only people looking for work, excluding those who are 'underemployed' or in low-wage, unsatisfactory jobs. Despite these methodological problems, research consistently shows a strong relationship between unemployment and crime.

In contrast, the research on recidivism has produced clearer conclusions. Recidivism, the failure to desist from crime, can be measured. It is typically quantified by an ex-offender's re-arrest, re-conviction (which may or may not result in a prison sentence), or their return to prison (for example, Blumstein et al. 1986; Langan & Levin 2002). Studies that have used recidivism as the critical outcome measure generally seek to understand the correlates of a return to prison. Unemployment is one of these correlates (Davis 1980; Soothill & Holmes 1981; Fry 1987; Simon & Corbet 1996; Rahill-Beuler & Kretzer 1997; Finn 1998; Uggen 2000; Gillis 2001; Scanlon 2001). When Farrington et al. (1986) compared the self-reported job history and official criminal records of the 411 young males followed up in the Cambridge Delinquency Study, they found that the rate of offending during periods of unemployment was significantly higher than during periods of employment. Later Farrington (2003) in his report on the Cambridge study found that ex-offenders with a reasonably stable record of employment were less likely to re-offend than those without such a record. Consistent with these findings, Corrections Victoria has estimated that approximately 60–70% of people who re-offend are unemployed at the time that they re-offend (Victorian Government 2000).

The research has identified a number of other factors affecting recidivism, such as family stability, race, age and accommodation (Steurer, Smith & Tracy

2001; Langan & Levin 2002; Social Exclusion Unit 2002). An individual's personal situation prior to conviction may also be predictive of recidivism. Personal factors associated with recidivism include employment history, substance use, social support, physical health and mental health. Gendreau, Little, and Goggin (1996) provided a meta-analysis of the recidivism literature relating to adult offenders. While most of the predictors of recidivism were modest, the strongest predictors included criminal background, prison misconduct, identifying or having a close relationship with their criminal peers, anti-social personality, displaying attitudes supportive of a criminal lifestyle, and lack of education or employment skills. Employment status remains a constant consequence of all these factors.

It is not employment *per se* that appears to make a difference between desistance and re-offending; the quality of the job itself is a factor. In an attempt to find out the extent to which job quality rather than a job in itself affected criminal behaviour, Uggen (1999) used a satisfaction-based measure of job quality with a sample of high-risk offenders. Uggen found a high job-quality effect, with 'good jobs' and 'meaningful work' reducing the likelihood of criminal behaviour, both economic and non-economic crimes. Bossler, Fleisher and Krienert (2000), also suggested that ex-offenders with few of the skills required for good jobs are more likely to engage in crimes instead of, or in addition to, low-paying low-quality jobs, whereas individuals in better jobs and earning high incomes are likely to avoid high-risk criminal behaviour.

Recidivism and offender programs

Programs for offenders typically range from behavioural, often referred to as 'treatment programs', to education and training programs, including those that are designed to meet specific criminogenic needs, and accredited programs available to the general community. A number of researchers have focused on offender programs and their impact on employment (Soothill 1981; Soothill & Holmes 1981; Soothill et al. 1996; Soothill, Francis & Ackerley 1997; Soothill, Francis & Escarela 1999; Uggen 1999, 2000; Steurer, Smith & Stacy 2001; Sung 2001; Uggen & Staff 2001). Research has generally provided support for the efficacy of prison-based and community-based treatment programs in reducing recidivism (Andrews et al. 1990; Lipsey 1995; Losel 1995; Dowden & Andrews 1999; Wilson, Gallagher & Mackenzie 2000). Reduced recidivism has been associated with program participation in prison, including those aimed at improving employment prospects and job skills, developing cognitive skills, and reducing substance abuse (Inciardi et al. 1997; Cullen et al. 2002; Lawrence et al. 2002; Gaes & Kendig 2003).

The findings from several early large-scale meta-analytic reviews of programs (for example, Lipsey 1995; Losel 1995) identified the most effective elements of programs, for example, a cognitive behavioural focus, a high degree of structure, and being community-based. Andrews et al. (1990) identified the principles of effective programs, based on their meta-analysis of correctional programs. They identified these as considerations of risk, need, responsivity, professional discretion and program integrity. McGuire (2002) combined the 18 meta-analytic

reviews conducted between 1985 and 2000 in order to provide a 'review of the reviews'. This analysis comprised over 2000 independent outcomes relating to various types of prison-based and community-based treatment programs. The bulk of these reviews and the studies included for analysis originated from North America and focused largely on young offenders. Some of the individual studies included adult offenders and the majority related to the outcomes of male offenders. Results of the meta-analytic reviews indicate a reduction in recidivism of between five and ten per cent, although some individual studies produced larger-effect sizes, indicating that some interventions are more effective at reducing recidivism than others. Howells and Day (1999) reviewed the international literature and found strong connections between participation in offender programs and rehabilitation. They found a reduction in recidivism rates of 10–36% in the United Kingdom, and 50–86% in the United States.

While the results of the meta-analytic studies on prison-based treatment programs indicate that correctional programs are effective in reducing recidivism, it is important to note that little attention has been paid to the external validity of the studies and the extent to which the results can be generalised to the wider inmate population (Gaes & Kendig 2002). The participant pool in the literature on program effectiveness is comprised largely of volunteers who stand to benefit from the interventions. Selection bias in correctional programs contributes to the difficulty in identifying positive effects related to programs and to the characteristics of the participants, such as their motivation, behaviour, background, and so forth (Lawrence et al. 2002). Other methodological problems identified are the lack of control groups and the difficulties in tracking participants over a long period of time (Wilson et al. 2000; Lawrence et al. 2002).

However, recent research has attempted to avoid these methodological problems. For example, the *Three-state recidivism study* (Steurer, Smith & Tracy 2001) was a large-scale longitudinal (over three years) study, which included a meta-analysis of the literature, data from a large number of sources (including over 3000 prisoners) and analytical strategies designed to address specific issues. These included selection bias, multiple factors influencing recidivism, variation in recidivism measures, and length of follow-up. The study found that correctional education programs reduced recidivism, resulted in higher wages for those who had participated, and other positive outcomes, such as family stability.

Individual studies have also indicated that lower recidivism rates are associated with the attainment of higher levels of education during incarceration (Harer 1994), with recidivism rates estimated to be in the range of 16–62% (Bearing Point 2003). A number of studies in the United States have reported that recidivism rates are lower for prisoners who have gained college degrees in prison compared with those who did not participate in prison education (Cure 2002, cited in Bearing Point 2003). While not strictly focused on research about recidivism, Australian prisoner statistics support the relationship between re-offending and low education, with prisoners with one prison sentence having typically higher levels of education than those with two or more periods of incarceration (Rawnsley 2003). Recently in Queensland, Callan and Gardner (2005) found

that participation in a vocational education and training (VET) program before release was a predictor of desistance, with 32% of those who did not participate in vocational education and training before their initial release returned to custody within two years, while only 23% of VET participants returned.

Post-release support

Participation in correctional programs may not be sufficient in itself. The personal and social characteristics of offenders create the need for targeted post-release support. These needs relate to physical and mental health, drug and alcohol use, accommodation, financial support, family counselling and job-seeking support. Finn (1998) reported on a program based in New York City designed to assist ex-prisoners to prepare for, find, and remain in jobs. The program provided intensive job-placement services at an early and critical stage of their re-integration and for at least six months following placement into employment. The program reported high job-retention rates. Cox (2002) reported on the evaluation of a Queensland post-release employment assistance program in 2000–01, indicating positive outcomes in relation to stakeholder response to the program and employment outcomes.

In Victoria, the Bridging the Gap program provides post-release support to offenders with high support needs and substance abuse problems. The program includes assistance with employment and training, accommodation, education, health, and access to drug and alcohol treatment. Results of an evaluation of the first two years of the program indicate some success in reducing re-offending by participants, as well as slowing their return to prison, although in the longer-term, these positive effects diminished. In addition, those individuals involved in the program had higher participation rates in drug treatment programs, and improved post-release outcomes when drug dependence was reduced (Melbourne Criminology Research and Evaluation Unit 2003).

The Apex programs in the United Kingdom provide similar support to ex-offenders. Much of Ken Soothill's work reported on the success of these programs from the 1970s to the late 1990s. For example, Soothill et al. (1996), in their investigation of Apex's long-term success in preventing reconviction found that 64% of the individuals on the program had not re-offended (resulting in conviction) after 20 years. Thirty per cent of those who were successfully placed were reconvicted, compared with 42% of individuals who were not successfully placed. In a later refinement of the 1996 study, Soothill, Francis and Escarlea (1999) found that continuing contact with the support organisation, irrespective of whether a suitable job was found, benefited those with four to 12 convictions. In an early study, Soothill and Holmes (1981) found that none of the men who worked for at least a year was reconvicted. They concluded that finding suitable work, 'suitable' being jobs that were commensurate with the offender's skills, may be particularly beneficial for offenders assessed as 'medium risk'.

Barriers to employment of ex-offenders

Employment has a positive effect on desistance from further crime for ex-offenders and their consequent re-integration. Employment for this group is problematic, however, due to a number of interrelated impediments. These impediments, for example, family support, accommodation, and ethnicity, are closely related and complicate the research on recidivism.

Compared with the general population, ex-offenders experience numerous barriers to finding and maintaining employment. The literature suggests that the barriers to re-integration exist in a number of domains, that is, personal, social, physical, attitudinal, and systemic (May 1999; Rolfe 2001; Webster et al. 2001). The personal domain includes an individual's physical and mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, level of education, life skills, self-esteem and financial resources. The social environment includes family, friends, workforce participation and training, and social networks. The physical domain relates to place (rural, metropolitan) and access to appropriate and secure housing, and to transport. The systemic context involves the criminal justice system (courts, police, correctional services, solicitors), local government and other authorities. Additional difficulties related to gaining sustainable employment for ex-offenders include a lack of equal opportunity policy among employers, a lack of appropriate recruitment procedures, and the problem of meeting the key skill requirements of employers (Employment Support Unit 2000). In addition, laws that enable employers to access a prisoner's criminal record (in some cases) may impact negatively on employment outcomes (Mukamal 2001). Corporate policy restrictions on employing ex-offenders add to the difficulties of this group in re-entering the workforce (Taxman, Young & Byrne 2002). These formal and informal restrictions can also make it extremely difficult for the provision of employment assistance and support to ex-prisoners and ex-offenders, as they are exclusive to these populations and not easily dealt with by mainstream employment services.

Overriding these domains, and interacting with each to compound the barriers, are the attitudes of people in the community, their perceptions of people with a criminal record and the extent of their understanding of the culture of crime and criminal justice (Heinrich 2000; Fletcher & Taylor 2001). A significant factor is the attitude of employers toward employing ex-offenders. Studies of attitude and stigma in relation to this group have found relatively negative attitudes on the part of both employers and members of the general population. Albright and Denq (1996) surveyed employers' attitudes toward hiring ex-offenders. They found an initial unwillingness among employers to hire ex-offenders. However, employer willingness to hire an ex-offender increased when factors such as level of education, government incentives and relationship of the crime to the job were considered. As the level of ex-offenders' education increased, employers were more willing to hire, with willingness rising from 12% to 32% for those with college degree, 30% for those with vocational trade, and 38% for those who had completed two training programs.

In a British study Fletcher and Taylor (2001) identified employer discrimination as the most common labour market disadvantage, followed by prisoners' lack of educational and/or vocational qualifications, and low self-esteem. To a less extent, drug and/or alcohol-related problems, health problems, poor work discipline, and low pay were identified as barriers to employment. Problems in adjusting to the routine of work have also been reported as a potential barrier to employment (Visher & Travis 2003). Clearly, these barriers to employment are complex and make it extremely difficult for mainstream employment services to meet the numerous and varied needs of ex-prisoners and ex-offenders.

The attitudes of employers, rather than those of any other group, have dominated the research and there is very little known about the attitudes of others working with ex-offenders, such as workers in employment services and correctional services. As for prisoners and offenders themselves, they appear to have negative attitudes toward their own employability, attributing poor prospects to the negative attitudes of employers and others in the community.

To summarise this review of relevant literature, there is evidence that employment preparation provided within a corrective services context, together with direct assistance in procuring employment, does work, but that the perceived employability of ex-prisoners and ex-offenders is low. Although little is known about the perceptions of other stakeholder groups, employers and offenders themselves appear to consider employment prospects to be poor and employability skills and experience to be low. The two studies described in this chapter provide more specific insights into these two important elements of the employment process, itself an essential ingredient of success in community re-integration.

Study 1: Employment and recidivism outcomes of an employment assistance program for prisoners and offenders

The Corrections Services Employment Pilot Program commenced in 2002 as part of Corrections Victoria's commitment to reducing re-offending through investment in rehabilitation and prison diversion programs. The program provides direct employment assistance as well as referring clients into other relevant support services through a case management model. The program design recognised the need for long-term support; the likelihood of slow and intermittent progress; the need for basic skill development and pre-employment preparation; and the need for other services such as housing, health services, and personal support. The intended outcomes were employment and reduced recidivism. Both outcomes were achieved to varying degrees, with a demonstrated relationship between the two. The findings for recidivism are reported here.

Method

Program records provided the data for both employment and recidivism outcomes. For employment outcomes there were two points of data collection and analysis; the first included the first two years of the program, the second, the first four months of the third year. The measures were the number of referrals, registrations, placements and employment outcomes (regarded as 13 weeks of employment). The analysis was also able to include the proportion of registrations that were converted to employment placements, giving an indication of the effectiveness of the employment preparation.

In relation to recidivism, the analysis was based on the total program client population. The total number of registered clients for the period of the investigation was 3034. There were 2525 males (83.2%) and 509 females (16.8%). Of the total registered clients, 55.1% were prisoner clients and 44.9% were offender (community corrections) clients. These proportions differ somewhat from the proportions in the Victorian criminal justice system, with approximately 35% prisoners and 65% offenders in the corrections system.

Data for the analyses of recidivism comprised two sets of randomly selected files: the files of 600 employment program prisoner clients; and 600 non-program prisoner clients. Program records were obtained from the Prisoner Information Management System through the provider organisations and through the Department of Justice. Although used for comparison, the two samples differed significantly in terms of time since release, given that the program population from which that sample was drawn comprised relatively recently released prisoner clients, while the non-program population from which that sample was drawn had a much greater range of time since release. This is important because time since release is known to be a reliable predictor of re-offending. For this reason, we treated the results of the additional analyses as suggestive. It is also worth noting that the Prisoner Information Management System records a person's activity through the prison system and thus is only a partial record of criminal activity. The management system does not capture information about those offences where there is a non-custodial sentence involved, or which go undetected.

Analysis

Analyses of recidivism included simple frequency and percentage of re-offending among registered clients, as well as analyses of variance. Rates of re-offending for registered clients, those clients placed in employment and clients registered but not placed in employment, were calculated and analysed further to determine overall program recidivism rates, and whether there were differences related to gender and prisoner/offender client status.

More advanced analyses of recidivism were also conducted, based on the sample of 600 program client files and 600 non-program client files. For the more complex analysis, three measures of recidivism were used:

- ❖ 'rate of re-offending' — the number of re-offences per day, calculated by tallying the number of Prisoner Management Information System offence

entries for each client, divided by the number of days between first and most recent offence

- ❖ ‘seriousness of re-offending’ – the score of each client’s most serious re-offence, using a five-point scale where 5 = ‘very serious’ (for example, manslaughter, murder, attempted murder) and 1 = ‘minimally serious’ (for example, parking fines, minor road infringements or breaches of parole)
- ❖ ‘poly-recidivism’ – the total number of different kinds of re-offences recorded.

Results and discussion

Number and percentage of program clients re-offending

The most basic measurement of recidivism was the rate of re-offending among the program client population as a whole, distinguishing between clients placed into employment and those not placed. Table 1 presents the results in relation to gender, registration as a prisoner or community corrections client, and total program outcomes. It is important to note that the timeframe for program involvement (12 months) is shorter than the two-year timeframe used in many studies of re-offending. However, it is also clear from the research literature that a high proportion of re-offending occurs within three to six months of a prison release.

Table 1 Re-offending rates of program clients (percentages)

	Overall	Placed	Unplaced	Prisoners	Offenders
Males	8.38	7.61	8.66	5.82	11.50
Females	5.97	2.56	6.65	5.21	7.69
Prisoners	5.69	4.59	5.87	–	–
Offenders	10.98	8.22	12.74	–	–
Total	7.46	6.40	7.73	–	–

Overall, the rate of re-offending by registered program clients (7.46%) was well below re-offending rates reported in the literature. It is low both for clients placed in employment (6.4%) and those not placed (7.73%), suggesting a positive program effect in addition to any employment outcomes that may have been achieved. The re-offending rate was lower for clients placed in employment. It shows a relationship between employment and reduced recidivism. There were differences between male and female clients in terms of rates of re-offending. Females had an overall lower re-offending rate compared with males, regardless of whether they had been placed into employment. However, for both males and females, employment placement had a positive effect on the re-offending rate.

Prisoners had slightly more than half the re-offending rate of offenders overall, irrespective of whether the prisoners were placed in employment or not. Male prisoners in particular had a low re-offending rate compared with male offender clients. This difference may be confounded somewhat by location

differences in service provision. It is important to note that prisoners, upon release, may relocate to any one of the community corrections locations. In any case, for both prisoner clients and offender clients, employment placement had a positive effect on re-offending rate.

The effect of employment placement on recidivism was much greater for offender clients than for prisoner clients, but unplaced prisoner clients had a very low rate of re-offending—a lower rate than offender clients who were placed into employment. This result indicates that the program worked very well for prisoner clients, and that there was an overall ‘program effect’ in addition to the positive effect of employment on re-offending. It has also obviously worked well for offender clients, in that their rates of re-offending were also very low, well below non-program statistics within the corrections system and reported in the literature.

Recidivism of program versus non-program clients

Additional analyses of recidivism were conducted to investigate more fully the program effects on re-offending. The measures of recidivism included ‘rate of recidivism’, ‘seriousness of re-offending’, and ‘poly-recidivism’. Table 2 presents those results, showing differences between the program client sample and the non-program client sample on those three measures.

Table 2 Re-offending rates of program clients and non-program clients

	Program clients	Non-program clients
Number of offences per day	0.0065	0.0089
Rated severity of offences	2.78	3.29
Number of different offence types	2.32	2.49

Number of offences per day, although small, is a useful measure because it allows the unit of time to be standardised. Program clients committed fewer offences per day than non-program clients. The difference between program clients and non-program clients was found to be statistically significant, $F(1, 1508) = 5.98, p < .05$.

The relative seriousness of re-offending was calculated by ranking recorded re-offences with a number, from 1 to 5, where 1 = ‘minimally serious’ (for example, minor road infringements, breaches of parole) and 5 = ‘very serious’ (that is, involving death or serious harm to other people). Results revealed that the average seriousness of program client offences was 2.78, just below ‘moderately serious’ (for example, robberies, burglaries, intention to harm). The average for non-program clients was 3.29, somewhat greater than ‘moderately serious’. The difference between program clients and non-program clients in relation to seriousness of re-offending was also found to be statistically significant, $F(1, 1508) = 23.69, p < .001$.

Of the program clients in the sample who had re-offended, the average for different kinds of offences was 2.32, while re-offending non-program clients

averaged 2.49 for different kinds of offences. The difference in relation to this poly-recidivism was also statistically significant, $F(1, 1508) = 7.31, p = 0.01$.

Recidivism of program clients pre- and post-registration

In addition to comparisons between program clients and non-program clients, we also investigated pre- and post-registration offending within the program client sample. Table 3 presents the results of the three recidivism measures: number of offences per day; rated severity of offences; and number of different offence types.

Table 3 Re-offending by program clients pre- and post-registration

	Pre-program	Post-registration
Number of offences per day	0.011	0.002
Rated severity of offences	4.35	1.21
Number of different offence types	3.87	0.77

There was a reduction in number of offences for the sample of program clients following their registration in the program. The difference in number of offences per day before and after program registration was statistically significant, $F(1, 586) = 61.10, p < .001$, indicating that the difference could not be a 'chance' result. The decline in the number of offences per day equals a decline of 82% in offending ($.002/.011 = .18$).

There was also a reduction in seriousness of re-offending following program registration. That difference too was statistically significant, $F(1, 586) = 594, p < .001$, indicating that the difference could not be a chance result. The decline in seriousness of offences equals a decline of 72% in offending ($1.21/4.35 = .28$).

For poly-recidivism (the number of different types of offences committed), there was also a reduction in offending by the sample of program clients following their registration in the program, and that difference too was statistically significant, $F(1, 586) = 1156, p \leq 0.01$. The decline in number of offences per day equals a decline of 80% in the range of offences ($.77/3.87 = .20$).

The results support other findings that programs supporting ex-offenders in employment, in development of work skills, job-seeking skills and placement, can increase rates of employment and encourage desistance from crime.

Study 2: Receptivity and perceptions of the employability of ex-prisoners and ex-offenders

This study, supported by the Criminological Research Council, surveyed four stakeholder groups in Victoria and Queensland, to gauge their perceptions of the employability of a number of disadvantaged job seekers, including those with a criminal history. The survey also asked respondents about the importance

of employment-related skills and characteristics, and the likelihood that ex-offenders and ex-prisoners would possess these.

Method

The 1181 participants in the study were employers (596), employment services providers and Centrelink² staff (234), correctional/corrective services workers (176), and prisoners and offenders (175). A stratified random sampling procedure was used to select prospective participants from Victoria and Queensland, who were sent reply paid questionnaires. The response rate was 21% overall (employers 18.8%, employment service providers 32.2%, corrections 24.6%, and prisoners and offenders 17.5%).

The four-part questionnaire had identical items for each response group, with the exception of the items eliciting bio-demographic and background information, such as age, gender, state of residence, highest level of education completed, whether they had experience of the employment of ex-offenders and what the quality of that experience had been. In addition, there was stakeholder group-specific information. There were two sections relating to the employability of people with criminal histories. One section asked respondents to rate the likelihood of a number of hypothetical disadvantaged job seekers getting and keeping a job. The items referred to five disadvantaged job-seeker groups, those with: intellectual or psychiatric disability; physical or sensory impairment; chronic illness; communication disorder; and a criminal history.

The other section presented 21 employment-related skills and characteristics (for example, good work history, works well without supervision, has appropriate grooming and hygiene, speaks English well, communicates effectively, relates well to the public, honest, eager to learn etc.). There were four ratings required for each item: the importance of that skill to employability; the likelihood that ex-prisoners will have that skill; the likelihood that ex-offenders will have that skill; and the likelihood that members of the general workforce will have that skill. The ratings used a seven-point scale (1–7), ranging from ‘not at all important/likely’ to ‘extremely important/likely’. The distinction between ex-prisoners and ex-offenders was important in the study, and was explained on the questionnaire—ex-prisoners have completed a custodial sentence, usually in a prison, while ex-offenders have completed a community-based order.

Analysis

Results were analysed in terms of whole-group responses and in terms of within-group differences. Means, standard deviations, and analyses of variance were the techniques used. We analysed the data for the effect that the characteristics of the disadvantaged job seekers might have on ratings of employability and for the effect that the stakeholder characteristics might have on their views of the

2 Centrelink is an agency of the Australian Government Department of Human Services and delivers a range of services to the community. Further information is available from <<http://www.centrelink.gov.au>>.

employability of these job seekers. We were also interested in identifying the work-related skills considered important to employability and how participants rated ex-prisoners and ex-offenders on those skills.

Results

The results were analysed for the effects of the characteristics of disadvantaged job seekers on perceptions of employability and then for the effects of the characteristics of the respondents on perceptions of employability.

Ratings of employability of disadvantaged job seeker groups

Respondents as a whole group rated people with chronic illness highest on employability, and people with psychiatric or intellectual disability lowest. People with a criminal history were rated second lowest, being seen as having less than a 'fair chance' of getting and keeping a job. The difference was statistically significant, $F(3.48, 4106.39) = 862.73, p < .001$.

When the five items relating to a criminal history were analysed, a prisoner with pre-release training was regarded most favourably, followed by prisoners with single conviction profiles, and then those with multiple conviction profiles. Table 4 presents the ratings for each of the five criminal histories presented.

Table 4 Whole group ratings of employability of criminal history job seekers

Criminal histories	Employability		
	Mean	SD	Rank
Ex-prisoner with pre-release training	4.18	1.08	8th of 25
Single conviction non-violent crime	3.86	1.33	11th of 25
Single conviction heroin possession use	3.71	1.29	12th of 25
Multiple convictions petty theft drug use	2.64	1.22	24th of 25
Multiple convictions burglary	2.57	1.25	25th of 25

An ex-prisoner with pre-release training was rated highest on employability, and as having a better than a 'fair chance' but not 'a good chance' of obtaining and maintaining a job. Such a person was rated higher on employability than was a person with AIDS or a person with a stutter (ranked 9 and 10, respectively). A person with multiple convictions for burglary was rated lowest, followed by a person with multiple convictions for petty theft related to drug use, both of these being rated as having a 'poor chance' of obtaining and maintaining a job. Both these types of job seekers were ranked lower than a person with drug and alcohol-related brain damage and one who has hallucinations (ranked 22 and 23, respectively). The difference between ratings for each criminal history was statistically significant, $F(4.44, 5235.64) = 763.91, p < .001$.

The second part of the analysis related to the importance of employment-related skills and characteristics and the likelihood that ex-prisoners, ex-offenders and general workers would possess these.

Likelihood that ex-offenders and ex-prisoners will have employment-related skills

Respondents rated all of the work-related skills and characteristics as being ‘quite important’ (5+ on the scale) or ‘very important’ (6+ on the scale) for employability. With respect to the likelihood that members of the general workforce, offenders, and ex-prisoners will exhibit those skills and characteristics, ratings were mainly between ‘fairly likely’ (4+ on the scale) and ‘quite likely’ (5+ on the scale). On the whole, members of the general workforce were rated most likely to exhibit the skills and characteristics, followed by ex-offenders, followed by ex-prisoners. With respect to most items, the lower ratings for ex-prisoners and ex-offenders, although not unexpected, were also not very different from those for general workers. Table 5 presents the mean scores for each skill/characteristic for importance and for the likelihood of each group possessing each skill/characteristic.

Table 5 Importance of skills and likelihood of the three groups possessing each skill

Skill/characteristic	Importance		General workers		Ex-offender		Ex-prisoner	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
Punctual	6.42	1st	5.42	1st	4.80	1st	4.73	1st
Honest	6.34	2nd	5.13	7th	3.87	21st	3.69	20th
Willing to work	6.30	3rd	5.28	2nd	4.60	6th	4.57	4th
Takes directions well	5.95	4th	5.13	7th	4.28	13th	4.14	13th
Relates well to public	5.87	5th	5.01	18th	4.07	17th	3.88	18th
Grooming/hygiene	5.86	6th	5.25	3rd	4.65	5th	4.48	6th
Eager to learn	5.84	7th	5.23	4th	4.78	2nd	4.72	2nd
Loyalty to organisation	5.84	7th	4.86	20th	4.11	15th	4.04	15th
Adheres to practice/rules	5.83	9th	5.02	15th	4.10	16th	4.01	16th
Gets along with others	5.83	9th	5.18	6th	4.46	7th	4.28	8th
Skills for the job	5.83	9th	5.02	15th	4.36	10th	4.20	11th
Communicates effectively	5.81	12th	5.04	13th	4.34	11th	4.18	12th
Minimal supervision	5.80	13th	5.06	12th	4.26	14th	4.11	14th
Works efficiently	5.79	14th	5.04	13th	4.45	8th	4.37	7th
Works well in teams	5.78	15th	5.07	10th	4.37	9th	4.21	9th
Task persistent	5.77	16th	5.02	15th	4.33	12th	4.21	9th
Good work history	5.76	17th	5.07	10th	3.94	19th	3.51	21st
Reading/writing skills	5.67	18th	5.23	4th	4.66	4th	4.50	5th
Motivated to excel	5.58	19th	4.88	19th	4.06	18th	3.96	17th
Speaks English well	5.17	20th	5.09	9th	4.74	3rd	4.66	3rd
Healthy lifestyle	5.09	21st	4.70	21st	3.89	20th	3.79	19th

Respondents considered that ex-prisoners would be the least likely to have work-related skills, followed by ex-offenders. Although members of the general workforce were rated only slightly above 'quite likely' to exhibit each employment-related skill, those ratings were statistically significantly better than offender and ex-prisoner ratings. Nevertheless, the differences were not large; ex-prisoners and ex-offenders were rated 'fairly likely' to exhibit the skills and characteristics considered important to employability.³ The rank order of these skills is also presented. The skills that were similarly ranked for importance and likelihood were punctuality, willingness to work, grooming/hygiene, getting along with others and effective communication, requiring minimal supervision, motivation to excel, and having a healthy lifestyle. The skills/characteristics that were ranked high in importance, but much lower in likelihood of being demonstrated by ex-prisoners or ex-offenders were: honesty; takes directions well; relates well to public; loyal to organisation; and adheres to work practices/rules.

There are some implications here for the type of employment preparation and pre-employment training that should be provided within a corrective services context. The results in general suggest that, although rated somewhat below members of the general workforce, ex-prisoners and offenders are considered positively by stakeholders in relation to their skill base and work-relevant characteristics.

The extent of statistically significant differences was investigated. Analyses of variance found the differences between ratings of the likelihood of each group having work-related skills and characteristics to be significant, $F(1.38,1630.55) = 1157.92, p < .001$.

The characteristics of the participants in relation to their perceptions of employability

We also investigated differences in responses related to respondent characteristics. Analyses of variance found significant effects ($p < .01$) for age, state of residence, level of education, stakeholder group and previous experience.

Participants aged 18–30 years rated people with criminal histories higher on employability than the older age groups.

Participants from Queensland rated employability of a person with pre-release training and a person with a single conviction for a non-violent crime higher than did those from Victoria.

Participants with a tertiary level of education rated a person with a single conviction for possession and use of heroin and one with multiple convictions for petty theft related to drug use higher on employability than did participants whose highest level of education was completion of secondary school. This pattern was reversed for the ratings of the likelihood that these groups would

3 Note: Significant differences are easy to find with large samples. The differences are not large, but the results are highly reliable.

have job-related skills. Participants with post-secondary education and tertiary education rated ex-prisoners and ex-offenders as being less likely to have employment-related skills than did those without post-secondary education. Interestingly, those with post-secondary education also rated general workers as being less likely to have employability skills than did those who had not finished secondary school.

In relation to the stakeholder groups, employers rated people with a criminal history lower on employability than employment service providers, corrections personnel, and prisoners and offenders. There were also significant effects for stakeholder group and rating of employability skill likelihood. Here it was employment service providers rather than employers who rated all groups lower on skill likelihood than did the other stakeholder groups.

Participants with previous experience of the employment of people with criminal histories rated them as having a higher probability of employability than did participants without previous experience. In relation to the reported quality of experience, participants who reported a negative experience rated people with criminal histories as having a lower probability of employability than did respondents with a positive experience. In relation to ratings of skill likelihood respondents with positive experience rated all groups as being more likely to have employment-rated skills than did those with negative experiences.

Conclusion

Taken together, several conclusions can be drawn from these two companion studies. The study of employment and recidivism outcomes of an employment assistance program for ex-prisoners and ex-offenders clearly demonstrates that such a program can and does work. Very credible employment placement and retention rates were achieved and extremely low recidivism occurred as well. The study of stakeholder perceptions of the employability of ex-prisoners and ex-offenders indicates that, although rated somewhat below most other disadvantaged groups and members of the general workforce, ex-prisoners and ex-offenders are considered positively by stakeholders in relation to their prospects for getting and keeping a job, as well as their skill base and work-relevant characteristics. Pre-employment education and training, plus employment assistance (using a case-management model) can play an important role in successful re-integration into the community. However, receptivity to the employment of ex-prisoners and ex-offenders is necessary to complete the connection and make employment a reality. Results of the second study suggest that receptivity is fairly high, but community education, more targeted education and promotion aimed at each of the key stakeholder groups, and a strengthening of policies and programs that support the development and preparation of prisoners and offenders are all needed. The ultimate goal is re-integration within the community. Education, training, and employment assistance provide a foundation for success in employment, and employment is very important to successful re-integration. Collaboration among service providers and

development of integrated services that connect pre-employment preparation, education and training with employment assistance is the preferred approach to providing such supports.

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The role of education and training in prison to work transitions

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This chapter is an edited version of a 2004 report entitled *To train or not to train: The role of education and training in prison to work transitions* by Margaret Giles, Anh Tram Le, Maria Allan, Catherine Lees, Ann-Claire Larsen and Lyn Bennett.¹ This project examines education, training and work experience of prisoners before and during their current term of imprisonment in Western Australia. It also identifies the factors affecting prisoners' decisions to undertake education, training or work during their stay in prison. This study is unique in two respects. First, prisoners themselves were asked about their expectations for future employment and earnings. Second, the interview includes a series of attitudinal questions which comprise an optimism index called the 'life orientation test'. Overall, prison work is not seen by prisoners as being entry to a career outside prison, but studying is related to their anticipated post-release labour market futures. Those prisoners undertaking vocational education and training, including apprenticeships and traineeships, expect better work, more enjoyable work and more money after release from prison than those who are undertaking non-vocational education courses or prison work only.

Introduction

IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA prisons have made behaviour management programs, commercial or domestic work and study options available to remand and sentenced inmates. Many prisoners undertake combinations of formal education or training of varying durations and work during their prison sentence. Some prisoners also have to undertake court-mandated courses such as programs for substance abuse, sex offenders or anger management. Most prisoners who choose to undertake education/training have their courses tailored to fit the length of their sentence. The vast majority of units delivered are completed in ten weeks (the length of a term of study) or fewer (short courses).

¹ This chapter has been prepared by Hugh Guthrie, Manager, Teaching and Learning at NCVER. The full project report and supporting documents are available from NCVER's website at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1532.html>.

Prisoners are able to upgrade their education, including completing schooling, basic adult education, or undertake further studies up to postgraduate level. Prisoner ‘trainees’ may be undertaking full vocational education and training (VET) courses leading to qualification certification, or modules or subjects which result in attainment of one or more competencies. Most prisoners have access to ‘fee free’ nationally recognised vocational education and training courses, including traineeships, irrespective of the priorities of the Department of Justice (now known as the Department of Corrective Services). Prisoners may also access other educational programs available in the state, elsewhere in Australia, or even overseas. This may be at their own expense if the program is not covered by ‘fee free’ or Higher Education Contribution Scheme type subsidies.

Although the Department of Justice became a registered training organisation in the late 1990s, a review of education and training in Western Australia prisons undertaken in 1997 led to a new operational framework for education and training delivery. The Education and Vocational Training Unit within the Department of Corrective Services became a registered training organisation in 2000 and covers all levels of public prisons—minimum, medium and maximum security. Moreover, the provision of vocational education and training to offenders is expanding into areas where training was not delivered previously—work camps, community work and work experience.

From 2003, adult offenders were offered national accredited training which meant that the training is recognised outside prison and provides portability of educational attainment to a traditionally transient population. Through mutually beneficial partnerships forged with technical and further education (TAFE) colleges to deliver training to offenders, courses facilitate useful education pathways, both between custodial facilities and into the community. The Education and Vocational Training Unit targets skills-based training for likely niches in job markets and establishes links with potential employers. In recent years this targeting has applied to the meat processing, building and construction, and hospitality trades.

Like other education and training providers, the Education and Vocational Training Unit offers a variety of education and training courses, but not all at the same time, and with due attention to cost-effectiveness. It often has to limit the number of places in prison-based courses or not offer a course if minimum enrolments are not reached. Other restrictions on study options, such as access to the internet and telephone, are related to security concerns.

Prisoners may also undertake a variety of work while in prison. Most of the work is tied to maintenance of prisons (for example, cooking, cleaning, laundry, gardening), but some prison work is commercially based such as metals, furniture production, meat processing, building and construction, and warehousing. With most prisoners having no form of other income, the availability of gratuities is a powerful incentive for prisoners to engage in work.

Access to work and study is affected by prison security requirements. Minimum-security prisons tend to have a great deal of activity, both work and

study. These prisons tend to have better behaved prisoners and prisoners who are starting to reconnect with their community. In maximum-security prisons, prisoners in punishment are removed from the general prison population and their access to work and study may be suspended.

Each prisoner has an individual management plan. This covers sentencing and parole requirements, as well as study and/or work choices. On admission to the prison, prison staff discuss with prisoners the current availability of jobs and courses. As soon as practicable, all new prisoners are screened, via an educational history appraisal, to determine their standard of literacy. Decisions about work and education or training made during these discussions are then included in the individual management plan. The plan is reviewed every three to six months.

Methodology

A key feature of the methodology for the present study was 453 interviews with sentenced prisoners at five male and female metropolitan adult prisons in Perth, Western Australia. The information obtained included education and work backgrounds, education and training courses and work undertaken in prison, and labour market expectations. While many of the interview questions were pre-coded, open-ended questions were also used and required the development of code lists during the encoding process. Encoding, logic and validity checks were performed prior to the data analyses. The database was then interrogated to provide descriptive statistics and empirical modelling. The multivariate model was based on choice between education/training and work, as only 13 interviewed prisoners were doing neither at the time of the survey. A logistic regression technique was used to examine the factors affecting the choice between education/training and work in prisons.

This study is unique in two respects. First, prisoners themselves were asked about their expectations for future employment and earnings. Second, the interview included questions from the 'life orientation test' of Scheier and Carver (1985). This test provides a summary measure of optimism, with a higher score indicating a greater propensity for optimism. The inclusion of the life orientation test in the survey instrument was intended to provide, in the analysis, a control for prisoners' labour market expectations.

It should be noted that the project sample does not reflect the profile of the metropolitan prison population in Western Australia for the following reasons:

- ❖ the over-representation of female prisoners in the sample (21% of interviewed prisoners compared with 8% of the adult prison population)
- ❖ the under-representation of Indigenous Australian prisoners (21% compared with 35%)
- ❖ the over-representation of prisoners in the completion of Year 11 and above categories (31% compared with 17%)

- ❖ the lack of any regional prison data being included (27% of the total prison population with 61% being Indigenous Australians)
- ❖ a response rate of only 13% at the only male maximum-security prison.

What the study found

Overall, prison work, even that involving commercial endeavours, is not seen by prisoners as being an entry to a career outside the prison. Studying has more perceived value for prisoners anticipating their post-release labour market futures than prison work. Factors considered to influence prisoner decisions about undertaking prison work and/or education or training include incentives (such as gratuities); type of prison (for example, maximum or minimum security) and length of sentence (fewer than 12 months is 'short-term'; 12 months or more is 'long-term'); previous employment and work experience; prior education attainment level; and study pattern.

An interesting result is that the life orientation test score is not a significant predictor of the expectation of good work prospects after leaving prison. This expectation is based on other factors, especially whether or not they undertake a VET course or traineeship in prison, and is not significantly influenced by a person's tendency to more or less optimistic.

Incentives for study

Prison education or training is more than just a 'time filler'. In metropolitan adult prisons in Western Australia, about half of sampled prisoners report their involvement in studies ranging from short courses to complete industry-recognised qualifications at VET and higher education levels. Prisoners are able to upgrade their education, including completing the schooling they did not receive as children, as well as undertaking further studies up to the postgraduate level. Many see their studies as helping them to exit from low-wage employment, particularly those taking up VET and VET-type training courses. They also value the contacts this education and training brings with people from 'outside'.

Very few of the prisoners interviewed (13 prisoners or 2.9%) are not working or studying. However, one of the factors influencing prisoners choosing between working and education or training is believed to be the difference in the distribution of available gratuities for study and work. Until 2004 involvement in study did not attract any form of gratuity. The gratuities system in Western Australia was overhauled in early 2004 and now applies to *both* study and work, thus removing any relative disincentive to study.

Type of prison, length of sentence and indigeneity

The prison or type of prison makes a statistically significant difference (at the 1% level) to whether or not interviewed prisoners are working and/or studying or doing neither. For example, at the minimum-security male prisons, fewer than 2% are not working or studying. At the maximum-security male prison, over 10%

are not working or studying. Similarly, prior imprisonment makes a difference, (statistically significant at the 1% level), with about 54% of interviewed prisoners who have served prior terms of imprisonment in prison jobs and about 59% undertaking some form of education or training. Those interviewed prisoners with long-term sentences (of more than five years) are more likely to be undertaking education or training (56.5%) than work (41.2%). Those with short-term sentences (of one year or less) are more likely to be in work (53.5%) than in education or training (40.7%). Also those with sentences of a year or less are more likely not to be undertaking education/training or work. These results are statistically significant at the 5% level.

Interviewed prisoners of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent tend to have short-term sentences. This may account, at least in part, for the differences in their education/training participation rate compared with others. Although the differences were not significant, interviewed prisoners who were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent are more likely to be in work (49.5%) than in education/training (45.3%). For interviewed prisoners who are not of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, 46.2% are working and 51.5% are studying. A greater proportion of prisoners of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent were doing neither work nor education/training (5.3%) compared with those who were not of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent (2.2%). About half of Australian-born interviewed prisoners are in prison jobs and half in education/training. Although the difference was not statistically significant, interviewed prisoners born overseas were more likely to be studying than working (56.4% and 41.8%, respectively).

Previous employment and work experience

Almost four-fifths of interviewed prisoners were in employment in the five years prior to their incarceration. Prior to beginning their sentences most of those with jobs worked as manual labourers (40.5%) and many worked in service industries (19.8%), while 12.0% were self-employed or had their own businesses. A small group were managers or supervisors (3.6%). Interestingly, 80% of interviewed prisoners who were in employment in the previous five years had periods of unemployment immediately prior to their current prison sentence or at some point in their working lives.

Interviewed prisoners with some employment in the five years prior to the current prison term were more likely to be in education/training (52.8%) than in work (44.7%). Those not in employment in the five years prior to the current term were more likely to be doing prison work than undertaking education/training (56.0% and 40.0%, respectively). These differences are statistically significant at the 1% level.

Without meaningful employment or further education/training in prison, most ex-prisoners are not considered suitable applicants for most jobs. Hence, interviewers asked prisoners about their job expectations in terms of their opportunities to obtain work, more enjoyable work and better paid work. The Education and Vocational Training Unit is addressing the negative impact of a criminal record (as reported in the chapter by Graffam and Hardcastle) by

approaching prospective employers and industry groups to consider employing ex-prisoners. In fact this process has meant that there are now a number of employers in metropolitan and regional areas who are prepared to employ ex-prisoners with recent skill attainment in areas of high labour demand. At the time of the Giles et al. study in 2003, few employers had reached these sorts of agreements with the unit.

Prior education attainment level and study patterns

The highest level of education of two-thirds of interviewed prisoners was Year 10 or below. This compares with 83.0% of all adult prisoners (Western Australian Department of Justice 2002). This suggests that the sampled prisoners are slightly better educated than the general prison population. However, this could also reflect the bias in the sample toward minimum-security male prisoners. Many interviewed prisoners had post-school qualifications in VET (33.6%) or other educational courses (55.8%). Of those with VET qualifications, about one-quarter had completed these during current or previous prison terms. Examples of these qualifications include meat processor's ticket, cleaning, horticulture and welder's ticket. About 70% of those with other educational qualifications had completed these during the current or previous prison term. Examples of these are first aid, introduction to computing, English and mathematics, cognitive skills and small business management.

About half of interviewed prisoners (n = 233) had begun but not completed educational studies. Of the 167 prisoners who intend to complete their educational studies, two-thirds intend to do so during their current prison sentence and one-third after leaving prison. Females are more likely (75%) to complete their studies within their current prison term compared with males (62.2%). Four interviewed prisoners are not sure whether they will or will not complete their educational studies. A variety of reasons are given by those prisoners who do not intend to complete their studies, including reasons related to course/subject/institution (for example, no available place in the course), personal/family, financial, work-related (for example, conflict between trade training and other education), or simply 'not interested' or 'boring' or 'want to do something else'. Such reasons for not completing are compounded by the additional disincentives of age and criminal record.

Expectations of future work prospects

Prison authorities and criminal justice researchers are concerned about the quality and relevance of employment and education and training opportunities within prisons. In this project, specific attention was paid to obtaining feedback on life expectations of prisoners. This includes reasons relating to the availability of and access to courses, personal problems, or lack of motivation or interest in the programs on offer. In the questionnaire, interviewed prisoners are asked further questions relating to whether they are currently undertaking any work, training or education in prison and, if so, what their employment expectations are. Their labour market futures were then categorised as expectations of no work; work; work and more money; and work, more money and more enjoyable work. For

the purposes of the following multivariate analyses, the last three categories have been aggregated to a single category labelled ‘good work prospects’.

Table 1 summarises the responses. It appears that 79.5% of prisoners who are undertaking training courses, such as traineeships, believe that they have good work prospects. This compares with 26.0% of those in work and 58.2% undertaking other educational courses. This difference is statistically significant at the 5% significance level. There are two reasons for the relative ‘success’ of training courses. First, prisoners undertaking traineeships usually receive visits from ‘outside’ lecturers regularly (fortnightly or five times a year as a minimum) and this interaction and encouragement may assist in the more positive outlook of these prisoners. Second, prisoners know that they are enrolled in the same units and achieving similar competencies as outside trainees.

Table 1 Future work expectations

Prison activity ¹	No work on release	Good work prospects				Total	Total
		Work	Work, more money	Work, more money, more enjoyable work	Total		
Work	148	35	4	13	52	200	
Training	24	55	9	29	93	117	
Education	38	33	10	10	53	91	
Total²	210	123	23	52	198	408	

Notes: 1 As some prisoners were undertaking two or more activities, for the purposes of this analysis, the activities were ordered so that any prisoner undertaking any training course was included under ‘training’; any prisoner undertaking an educational course but no training course was included under ‘education’. In both cases, prisoners might also be working. Any prisoner who was working but not undertaking any training or education courses was included under ‘work’.

2 Excludes 13 prisoners who were not undertaking any work or education at the time of the interview and a further 32 whose expectations were missing.

Summary of analysis

Examination of the multivariate model indicated those factors which made study and good work prospects more or less likely after education or training or work in prison. These factors are summarised below.

Study

The analysis found that prisoners who are *less likely* to be studying:

- ❖ are males
- ❖ are Australian-born
- ❖ attended government secondary schooling and/or
- ❖ have prior prison sentences.

Those prisoners *more likely* to be studying have:

- ❖ children
- ❖ education above Year 10
- ❖ worked in the five years prior to the current prison term
- ❖ already completed a trade qualification and/or completed another educational qualification.

The study suggests that preferences by violent offenders might change as their release dates come closer. For example, about one-third of violent offenders who are within five years of release are studying.

Labour market expectations following education or training

Prisoners *less likely* to expect good work prospects following their current training course in prison:

- ❖ are males
- ❖ are working in prison industries
- ❖ are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent
- ❖ have a level of educational attainment beyond Year 10
- ❖ have attended government secondary schools
- ❖ have been in prison previously and/or
- ❖ had an occupation prior to prison of manager/professional/associate professional.

The most serious current offence for this group involved drugs, money or property.

Expectations of good work prospects following training decrease with age and increase with increasing life orientation test scores and length of current prison term.

Prisoners *less likely* to expect good work prospects following non-vocational education studies:

- ❖ are males
- ❖ are working in prison industries
- ❖ are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent
- ❖ have highest level of educational attainment beyond Year 10
- ❖ have attended government secondary schools and/or
- ❖ have prior occupations of manager/professional/associate professional.

Prisoners *more likely* to expect good work prospects following their non-vocational education studies:

- ❖ have Year 11 or higher educational attainment

- ❖ have the most serious current offence involving drugs, money or property and/or
- ❖ have been in prison before.

In addition, expectations of good work prospects following non-vocational education studies deteriorate with increasing life orientation test scores and improve with age and longer prison terms.

Labour market expectations after working in the prison

Prisoners *less likely* to expect good job prospects as a result of working in the prison:

- ❖ are males
- ❖ are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- ❖ have education above Year 10 and/or
- ❖ have the most serious current offence involving drugs, money or property.

Prisoners *more likely* to expect good job prospects as a result of working in the prison:

- ❖ are those working in prison industries/commercial services
- ❖ have attended government secondary schools
- ❖ have been in prison before and/or
- ❖ have had an occupation in the five years prior to the current prison terms of manager, professional/associate professional.

Moreover, expectations of good work prospects deteriorated with age and increasing life orientation test scores and improved with longer prison terms.

Implications

Over time, with an increased focus on rehabilitation and providing prisoners with the skills to match employment opportunities on release from prison, education and training participation levels will continue to increase in the Western Australian correctional system. The introduction in 2004 of the new gratuity system that aims to reduce the bias towards work in lieu of study should also encourage prisoners' participation in education and training. However, the effects of this change could not be measured in this project.

If non-vocational courses and prison work duties are to provide similar expectations, vocational programs require two things. First, work needs to include skills training more explicitly linked to the outside labour market. At present, all work duties in Western Australian prisons incorporate occupational health and safety as well as literacy and numeracy training. It is entirely feasible that these offerings be expanded to include specific labour market skills. For example, kitchen work could incorporate catering training, as catering is an area of employment growth in Western Australia. Second, non-vocational courses

could include other generic and employability skills training, such as team work, organising and planning, and communication skills. Importantly, prisoners undertaking these courses and/or work duties need to be aware of the value of these endeavours, in terms of labour market opportunities and lifestyle choices.

Many prisoners have poor levels of educational attainment and limited work experience prior to their incarceration. Providing them with tangible, job-focused skills through vocational education and training appears to be appealing to the prisoners themselves. In wanting to upgrade their skills, many prisoners see their study opportunity as helping them to exit from unemployment or precarious employment. They anticipate that employment after release from prison will be at higher wages as well as being more enjoyable. This presages well for the success of such programs.

One of the difficulties faced by ex-prisoners attempting to break free from the cycles of recidivism and poverty is the stigma of a criminal record. Their employment options are limited to those occupations for which a criminal record is not a recruitment barrier. By approaching prospective employers and industry groups, the Educational and Vocational Training Unit has increased the number of employers in metropolitan and regional areas who are now prepared to employ ex-prisoners with recent skill attainment in areas of high labour demand.

There are also the issues of broken employment and homelessness that prevent prisoner success in the labour market. Lack of stability in people's private lives can also affect employment stability, re-entry into employment and health. Many ex-prisoners find that support from family and friends is withdrawn during their period of incarceration and that they commence parole with no fixed abode and fractured or depleted social capital (through loss of networks). As a large proportion of jobs are found through social networks, the lack of these networks further reduces opportunities for employment.

For policy-makers, therefore, the chief questions should not be restricted to: 'What can we do for prisoners during incarceration?' but, just as importantly: 'What can be done for ex-offenders struggling to build meaningful lives in the community?' The answers do not lie with correctional authorities alone. Other government agencies, non-government organisations and private industry should share the responsibility and challenge of building on the beneficial education and training programs undertaken in prisons.

Conclusions

The sample in this study over-represented prisoners who were female or who had higher levels of educational attainment (Year 11 or above), while Indigenous Australian prisoners and those in maximum security prisons were under-represented. In addition, no data were collected from regional prisons. However, the findings suggest that most prisoners in Western Australia now have a choice of prison jobs and/or study options tailored to meet their needs, and those studying vocational education anticipate good future work prospects after release from prison—more enjoyable work and higher wages than prior to their incarceration.

About half of the prisoners interviewed study to complete basic adult education, schooling, short courses or full qualifications in vocational education and training or higher education—including postgraduate study. Most of those who study also work either in jobs related to the maintenance of the prison (for example, cooking, cleaning and gardening) or in commercially based prison work (such as metal work, furniture production, meat processing, building and construction and warehousing). Some prisoners study but do not work, and a few do not study or work.

The differences in work and study patterns result from choices made by prisoners within the constraints of their individual prisoner management plans, prisons jobs, and course availability, and with regard to their previous work and study backgrounds. Since 2004, the gratuity system in Western Australia has applied to participation in study and work rather than work alone. Some offenders view study as a practical means for satisfying requirements for early parole, conjugal visits and child access.

Significantly more prisoners undertaking VET courses, such as traineeships, expect better labour market futures (such as work, more enjoyable work and more money) than those undertaking non-vocational education courses or work only. Prison work on its own, even that involving commercial endeavours, is not seen by prisoners as being an entry to a career outside prison.

Reasons for the relative ‘success’ of training courses may include:

- ❖ regular interaction and encouragement from ‘outside’ lecturers
- ❖ enrolment in the same units and achieving similar competencies as outside trainees
- ❖ links to prospective employers and employment opportunities outside prison
- ❖ links to suitable support networks ‘outside’ prison

Other government agencies, non-government organisations and private industry should share the responsibility and challenge of building on the beneficial education and training programs undertaken in prisons. To break the cycle of poverty and recidivism and to participate as constructive members of the community, ex-offenders require support networks, especially to ensure stable housing, transport, re-entry to employment, new social networks, health and further education support in the community.

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Should education and vocational training be compulsory in corrections¹?

Peter de Graaff

This chapter explores current debates about models for educational delivery in correctional centres, with a view to examining proposals for making it compulsory for prisoners to participate in education. In particular, it compares the 'criminogenic needs' model of prisoner education with the 'opportunities' model of adult education traditionally used in prisons as a way to study how the implementation of the 'criminogenic needs' model has affected curriculum and funding programs. Further, the chapter investigates the impact which the 'criminogenic needs' (or 'prison works') model has had upon sentence management and legislation, particularly in New South Wales, in relation to the coercion of inmate participation in rehabilitation programs. The real question is whether it should be compulsory for the correctional system to guarantee provision of education and vocational training and inmates' rights to access it?

Introduction

THE ISSUE OF law and order is frequently discussed and contested in debate around the world, particularly in democracies where it can be a controversial political topic. Recent trends to make society safer emphasise the removal from 'free society' of criminals or offenders. But sooner or later, almost all offenders return to the community. So while the numbers of adult prisoners increase, the difficulties with rehabilitating them to become law-abiding citizens also increase. This is because prisons are not neutral environments and incarceration itself increases the likelihood of re-offending. Once the judge determines the appropriate sentence, there are many other 'subsidiary judges' as Foucault describes:

Throughout the penal procedure and the implementation of the sentence there swarms a whole series of subsidiary authorities. Small-scale legal systems and parallel judges have multiplied around the principal judgement: psychiatric

1 In Australia, the term 'corrections' is often used to refer to correctional institutions (correctional centres or prisons). Similarly 'corrections education' in Australia refers to prison education.

or psychological experts, magistrates concerned with the implementation of sentences, educationalists, members of the prison service, all fragment the legal power to punish; it might be objected that none of them really shares the right to judge; that some, after sentence is passed, have no other right than to implement the punishment laid down by the court and, above all, that others—the experts—intervene before the sentence not to pass judgement, but to assist judges in their decision. But as soon as the penalties and security measures defined by the court are not absolutely determined, from the moment they may be modified along the way, from the moment one leaves to others than the judges of the offence, the task of deciding whether the condemned man ‘deserves’ to be placed in semi-liberty or conditional, whether they may bring his penal tutelage to an end, one is handing over to them mechanisms of legal punishment to be used at their discretion: subsidiary judges they may be, but they are judges all the same.

(Foucault 1991, p.21)

And so ‘prison works’

The question of whether inmate participation in educational programs while incarcerated should be made compulsory² should be viewed in the context of prevailing debates and perspectives concerning education and learning in correctional environments, access to correctional education, funding, and legislative frameworks. It is the contention of this paper that, while participation in educational programs while incarcerated is generally not compulsory, nor funded on that basis, the expectation that inmates demonstrate progress towards rehabilitation prior to release as part of the administration of their sentence creates an expectation that participation is required and is, in effect, compulsory. Recent legislative changes in New South Wales concerning parole exemplify the increased levels of coercion applied to inmates to participate in rehabilitation programs, including education as a precondition of being granted parole.

In recent years there has been debate concerning the purpose of education within corrections. Much of this debate has been focused upon the trend to implement the Canadian ‘criminogenic needs’ model. In this model, education is restricted to inmates’ participation in cognitive–behavioural programs designed to address the underlying cause of their criminal behaviour (for example, substance abuse and anger management). Duguid (1998) from his experience in Canada has described this trend as the replacement of an opportunities model in adult education, where inmates are assumed to develop responsibility for making decisions in regard to their educational growth, to a ‘medical’ model

2 This chapter is based on the conference paper titled ‘Should education in corrections be publicly required and compulsory?’ and delivered by the author at the Australasian Corrections’ Education Association Conference (ACEA), held in Darwin, October 2005. ‘What is the purpose of prison education—should education in prison be compulsory?’ was also the theme for a Panel Discussion at this conference. The conference papers are available at <<http://www.acea.org.au/Pages/2005%20papers.htm>>.

in which programming for inmates is determined through a 'criminogenic needs' model where there is an underlying assumption that offenders have predispositions towards committing crime that should be addressed.

The opportunities model has been described by Ubah and Robinson (2003) as providing inmates 'with some necessary human capital resources (skills and knowledge) that can help some of them to "go straight" and abandon criminal behaviour when released into free society'. Correctional education programs provide a 'bridge for inmates moving from incarceration to the real world', where learning achievements made on the inside can be built upon on release into the community. Correctional education indicates to inmates the 'right step in the right direction because the programs can promote change in some inmates, improve their psychological well-being and offer them credentials for the labour market'.

Kevin Warner (2005), Coordinator of Education from the Prison Education Services of Ireland, describes the trend toward the criminogenic needs model in English-speaking countries as having produced a narrowing of perspectives, in terms of curriculum offerings and the way in which learners are viewed. He questions the over-reliance which the criminogenic needs model places on courses addressing problems in areas like substance abuse, anger management, thinking skills, preparing for release etc. Rather than these courses being offered in addition to existing curriculum, the resulting narrowing of focus produces the displacement of more general education courses. The criminogenic needs model emphasises inmates as offenders, whereas models of adult education will regard inmates as people, students and learners. More importantly, adult educators identify strengths and weaknesses in order to develop programs to build on individual strengths while addressing problems such as literacy, rather than merely focusing on deficits, which may reinforce the feelings of failure experienced by learners at school.

The trend towards the criminogenic needs model in prioritising the types of programs delivered to inmates has impacted on the adult education principles which have hitherto guided the delivery of education in prisons. Warner (2005) argues that Council of Europe Recommendations in *Education in prison* (1990) are guided by sound adult education principles, and the trend towards the criminogenic needs model has undermined this. In particular the Council of Europe model views inmates as whole people, not just offenders, and considers that courses delivered in correctional settings should, in philosophy, methods, and content, reflect the best practice in adult education. He cites the Recommendations on *Education in Prison* and its consequences to demonstrate this point: 'Education in prison shall aim to develop the whole person bearing in mind his or her social, economic and cultural context'. One implication of such a 'wide concept of education' is that the curriculum offered should be very broad-ranging. As well as the regular 'classroom subjects' and vocational education, 'creative and cultural activities, physical education and sports, social education and library facilities' are seen as essential segments. A recent report on prison education in the Nordic countries similarly asserts that education and training should be 'broadly defined' and 'reflect the ordinary educational system' (Nordic Council of Ministers 2005).

Suggestions that compulsory participation in education will address the poor language, literacy and numeracy skills experienced by a large percentage of the inmate population may negate the capacity of inmates to make decisions and accept responsibility for their own educational growth. Compulsory participation may also reproduce the resistance to education experienced by inmates when at school, due to failing and associated discipline problems.

Warner maintains that:

in many settings nowadays the simplistic assumption is made (though probably more by people outside education) that the sole or over-riding purpose of prison education is rehabilitation or ... addressing recidivism. There are two major problems with this view. The first is that it is very unrealistic, especially in the context of a pattern of much greater and deeper imprisonment in most Western countries. Even in the best of scenarios, education can only be a small part of the totality of impact of the prison on a person incarcerated. What else may be going on in a prison that works against any positives education can provide? The presumption seems to be made that we can measure the impact of programmes because the rest of the prison regime is neutral in its effects. But such a presumption seems naïve in the extreme, for it is clear that prison, far from being neutral, is generally in itself criminogenic – by the very act of imprisoning someone you add to the chances that he or she will commit further crime.

(Warner 2005, p.4)

Findlay (2004) in his discussion on the state of corrective services in Australia observes that ‘prisoner education is recognised as one of the few correctional initiatives which seem to correlate with improved recidivism prospects’. For example, he suggests that improving inmate literacy addresses ‘one of the simplest and yet most significant factors at work against prisoner re-integration’. Findlay argues that funding to provide for such cost-effective programs as improving inmate literacy and numeracy has been undermined by the move away from ‘egalitarian inmate programs in preference for elite cognitive therapies’ and expensive psychological interventions in gaol, based on the criminogenic needs model.

The debate between the opportunities and criminogenic needs models in correctional education reflects a long-established debate in criminology between psychological and social determinism (Findlay 2004). While social determinists would argue that structural conditions in society which are constant (such as poverty) impact upon families and produce marginalisation leading to crime and imprisonment, psychological determinists ‘will either blame criminal genealogies, crime as an intergenerational or genetic feature, or learning patterns within families that promote crime’ (Findlay 2004).

Leading proponents of the criminogenic needs model Andrews and Bonta maintain that: ‘Mainstream sociological criminology proclaimed (as opposed to documented) that three key truths were well-established. These three “truths”, essentially rendered a psychology of criminal conduct, *a priori* and by definition, irrelevant to an understanding of crime’ (Andrews & Bonta 1994,

p.52). Each of these 'truths' is instead labelled by Andrews and Bonta as myths. Their argument is that explanations for crime which stress 'political economy and structural features of the broader social system' are flawed, as the types of concepts used in those analyses such as social class, age, sex, ethnicity and poverty, treat individuals as 'empty biophysical entities' and ignore individual inadequacies and differences. Andrews and Bonta argue that these so-called truths of sociological criminology are false. They believe that the adoption of psychological models for explanation of criminal behaviour which address so-called offender risks and criminogenic needs should be used in the targeting of program funding.

Findlay suggests that:

Psychological determinism has taken hold in contemporary prison rehabilitation thinking. A reason for this may be that it holds out a causal connection between prison programmes and the reduction of recidivism. In a more cynical context, it also allows prison administrators to rationalise and restrict programme entry on the basis of risk. (Findlay 2004, p.46)

The promotion of the criminogenic needs model in a number of jurisdictions has been based on the prediction that cognitive-skills-type programs would be able to reduce recidivism, particularly amongst high-risk groups. As result of this prediction, educational delivery based on the opportunities model in many jurisdictions, particularly Canada, has been displaced. Robinson in a review of the effectiveness of cognitive skills programs in Canada conducted by the Correctional Service of Canada found that:

The effects associated with risk of recidivism provided important information about offenders who need more than Cognitive Skills Training for successful release. While it was expected that high-risk offenders would gain most from completing Cognitive Skills, the data did not support the assumptions for offenders who receive the programme in institutional settings. On the other hand, low risk offenders appeared to benefit from the programme regardless of whether they received it in institutional or community sites. Generally, programme assignment is based on the principle that offenders who are at high risk of recidivism should be given priority for treatment. It is assumed that allocation of services to low risk offenders is wasteful because the latter group recidivate at rates which are too low to be affected by interventions. (Robinson 1995, pp.50-1)

Findlay argues that 'when criminogenic needs programmes themselves are unpacked they seem to contain little which is different from the teaching methodologies employed by prison teachers in general curricula' (2004). It has been argued elsewhere that the adoption of the criminogenic needs model to significantly reduce recidivism through programming of cognitive skills promoting behavioural change is merely the appropriation of teaching methodologies incorporated in the broader curriculum delivered by teachers working in correctional settings (de Graaff 2001).

In recent years correctional education programs have at times struggled to maintain real levels of funding and have been justified in terms of reducing

recidivism and contributing to addressing offending behaviour as part of an integrated approach to sentence management.

Indicative of the shift in public policy expectations of the function of correctional education is the intervention by Noonan (2004) in this debate, who argues that its provision should not be justified in terms of equity or social justice. He suggests that a social justice approach would justify correctional education on the basis of 'redressing injustice and disadvantage to overcome inequality and barriers to learning. Many individual prisoners have experienced substantial social, economic and educational disadvantage' (Noonan 2004, p.181). Consistent with the criminogenic needs theorists who ignore that social and economic disadvantage may have contributed to offending behaviour, Noonan maintains that specific criminal behaviour should not be used as a rationale for government intervention in terms of a social justice framework and funding for correctional education programs. Rather that correctional education should be justified in terms of contributing to sentence management.

Debate over opportunities versus criminogenic needs models, over social versus psychological explanations for crime, is symptomatic of broader public expectations of incarceration and correction, and perceptions of correctional education programs. Although participation in correctional education by inmates in most Australian jurisdictions is a privilege, notwithstanding Victoria where there is a legislative guarantee that inmates have a right to education (see section 47, *Corrections Act 1986* [Vic.]), the question of whether education should be made compulsory is in a sense a moot one. There is no doubt that some educators may welcome correctional education being made compulsory, if there were a prospect that this would assure real levels of funding tied to meeting the actual numbers of inmates currently incarcerated and their educational needs. It would not even be unreasonable to suggest, given the educational disadvantage and needs of many inmates, that the broader public may support real increases to funding levels for correctional education. Unfortunately, due to political and community concern over law and order, the criminogenic needs model and sentence management approach link funding to addressing offending behaviour. Particularly in New South Wales, rather than make education compulsory, coercion is applied to inmates to participate as a result of expectations that they gain parole.

Since the mid-1990s there has been an almost 50% increase in the size of the inmate population across Australia (ABS 2003). To accommodate this growth many new correctional centres have been built. Currently in New South Wales there are over 9000 inmates and plans have been announced to expand the system to accommodate another 1000 beds. Increases in the size of the inmate population arose, as politicians, media and subsequently the community demanded 'truth in sentencing', changes to bail laws (including removing the presumption in favour of bail for repeat offenders), and imprisonment of criminals based on the belief that crime would be reduced while offenders were in custody (that is, incapacitation). Concomitant with these beliefs have arisen notions which question the release of offenders to parole on the grounds of public safety, unless it can be demonstrated that the cause of the initial offending

behaviour has been addressed, and that there is a reduced or little likelihood of re-offending behaviour.

The change from a 'desserts' based approach to sentencing where the 'time fits the crime' to a criminogenic needs model of addressing offending behaviour can be seen in changes, for example, to the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services Mission Statement. It now describes its primary function as addressing offending and re-offending behaviour rather than secure containment of those deprived of liberty.

Warner observes that the European prison rules specify that 'Imprisonment is by the deprivation of liberty a punishment in itself'. He argues that:

Central to this thinking is the presumption, once again, that imprisonment greatly damages people: suffering is 'inherent' to 'the deprivation of liberty'; the 'detrimental effects of imprisonment' are presumed to occur, especially through a loss of 'self-respect or sense of personal responsibility' due to incarceration. It is from this awareness that the idea that prison should be 'a last resort', and the Scandinavian idea that there should be 'the least possible intervention' in people's lives, derive ... The problem with much current thinking about prisons, especially by those advocating its increased use and asserting that 'prison works', is that this detrimental nature of the prison is denied. (Warner 2005, p.7)

He suggests that the current emphasis on rehabilitation and addressing offending behaviour in English-speaking countries conceals the new punitiveness and denies the detrimental impact of prison by focusing on the offender. This is unlike Scandinavia where these trends have been resisted and emphasis is placed on recognising the person and treating him/her with dignity.

This 'prison works' perspective which emphasises rehabilitation and reducing recidivism can be seen at work in the sentence management approach being used in New South Wales. Here the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999* which replaced the *Prisons and Correctional Centres Acts* has again been further amended in regard to the functions of the Parole Authority concerning offenders. The relevant sections of the Act are Section 135: General duty of Parole Authority and Section 135A: Preparation of reports by Probation and Parole Service, shown in detail in box 1 (see p.90). It is interesting to note that that the granting of parole must meet a range of requirements, including 'maintaining public confidence in the administration of justice' and 'the likelihood of being able to adapt to normal lawful community life' (section 135: 2b & 2f). If the correctional system is in itself criminogenic and does not recognise it, and the net effect is to negate any rehabilitative effect over the aggregate population (Chan 1995), it could be argued that, if maintaining public confidence is a priority and greater concern is placed on lawful adaptation rather than resettlement, then the number of inmates being denied parole/liberty on the basis of incapacitation is likely to increase.

Although the Act requires inmates to demonstrate progress towards rehabilitation in seeking parole as outlined above, the Act elsewhere only refers to the provision of education and vocational training in the following terms—Section 79: 'The Regulations may make provision for or with respect to the following matters: ... (o) the acquisition by inmates of education and vocational training'.

Education, vocational training, libraries and a range of other rehabilitation services is provided for in the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulations 2001 as amended at Section 60: Inmate Services and Programs. The range of provision outlined in the section such as literacy and numeracy programs, education and vocational training programs, including the provision of libraries, pre-release and post release programs, and the requirement that 'special attention is given to the needs of inmates who have low literacy and numeracy' is, however, limited due to the wording of the Regulation. Amendments were made following lobbying by the New South Wales Teachers' Federation and the Corrective Services' Teachers Association.

It should be noted that, at Section 60 (1) of the Regulations, provision is limited to what the 'Commissioner may provide' for, rather than what the Commissioner shall provide for. There is currently no legislative guarantee for the provision of education and vocational training courses, and the provision of libraries to inmates, even though the Act requires offenders to demonstrate, in the context of the functions of the Parole Board and Serious Offenders Review Council, a willingness to participate in rehabilitation and developmental programs and demonstrate success or otherwise in those programs. Although participation is not compulsory, the Act coerces inmate involvement. As Foucault (1991, p.21) noted, once the initial sentence has been passed, there are a multitude of experts, including educators, who judge the inmate and make determinations on whether liberty should be granted. It is this power to judge, contained in reports for parole on inmates' willingness to address offending behaviour in the Act that compels participation in programs.

Should education in corrections be compulsory?

Prior to the 2003 state election the New South Wales Labor Government announced an additional \$11 million 'over four years for targeted rehabilitation programs in prisons including literacy, numeracy and work skills training' (this was reported by Totaro 2003). In a press release concerning the targeting of repeat offenders, the then Premier, Mr Carr said, 'It is extremely difficult to reduce re-offending. Often by the time offenders are sentenced to adult imprisonment, their attitudes and behaviour are deeply entrenched. It is therefore important to expand access to rehabilitation programs.'

Although the provision of additional funds was welcomed, unfortunately, neither the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act* nor Regulations guarantee that education and vocational training will be provided to inmates in New South Wales. The Regulations outline a range of delivery but, as we have seen, they state that provision is limited to what the Commissioner 'may' provide for, rather than what the Commissioner 'shall' or 'must' provide for in the way of education and vocational training programs. While inmates are required to demonstrate attitudinal change and participate in programs, the provision of such programs is not guaranteed. It should be noted that funding for educational programs is justified in the context of risk, particularly in response to literacy and numeracy skills deficits, rather than as a guarantee of an entitlement to participate in a broad range of educational courses.

Within New South Wales there has been ongoing contestation in the Department of Corrective Services around the function of correctional education programs within the context of an opportunities vs a criminogenic needs model. It must also be recognised that the New South Wales Government has shown a commitment to providing funding for a range of rehabilitation programs in its effort to provide offenders with opportunities for re-integration into the community upon release.³

Over the last ten years there have been considerable improvements to the status of education and vocational training within the correctional system. For example, since 2002 teachers working in the Department of Corrective Services have been employed on a permanent basis, thus giving some stability and continuity to education and vocational training provision. From 1995 to 1996 delivery of education and vocational training programs to inmates has been undertaken principally by the Department's Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute which as a registered training organisation delivers courses to inmates that comply with national standards as had been established by the former Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).⁴

Even though commentators external to correctional education such as Noonan suggest that equity and social justice should not be used to justify funding of courses for inmates, in New South Wales the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute is committed to and complies with the New South Wales Charter for Equity in Education and Training. The statement of purpose contained in the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute's *Policy and procedures manual 2005–2006* cites the charter, which states that, 'In the allocation of public resources, priority is given to narrowing those gaps in education and training outcomes that reflect needs and prevailing social inequalities'.

The New South Wales Teachers' Federation and its members in the Corrective Services Teachers' Association have been active over many years in seeking to improve the level of provision, breadth of delivery and access of inmates to quality adult educational courses. The federation has been able to negotiate the inclusion of 'education quality' statements into successive awards covering educators working in correctional centres. The *Crown Employees (Education Employees Department of Corrective Services) Award 2004* states:

8.1 In line with the Department's commitment to reducing re-offending, AEVTI [Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute] is committed to providing adult education programs to inmates and to identified disadvantaged groups within the inmate population.

18.2 The provision of educational courses shall be in the form of nationally accredited training equivalent to that available in the community. This standard will be maintained by the employment of professional educators within the system.

3 Howells et al. (2004) also note that 'lip-service is paid to the goal of rehabilitation' in the sentencing legislation in most jurisdictions in Australia, and argue that affirmations of the rehabilitation purpose in legislation are required.

4 ANTA was abolished in 2005 and its functions assumed by the Department of Education, Science and Training.

18.3 *Education programs aim to contribute to good order of correctional centres and to the overall well-being of inmates.*

18.4 *Education programs aim to assist inmates to develop skills and aptitudes to improve their prospects for post release re-integration into the wider community.*

18.5 *These programs will include classroom subjects, vocational education, creative and cultural activities, physical education and sports, social education and library facilities.*

These provisions have sought to reflect the principles found in internationally recognised standards such as Recommendation No. R (89) 12, that were adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in *Education in prison* (1990).

The *Inmate handbook* published by the Department of Corrective Services (2004, pp.33–4) states concerning education programs and libraries:

Each correctional centre offers a wide range of education and vocational training courses. Basic courses include reading, writing, maths, computers, art and craft. Inmates who are Aboriginal or from a non-English speaking background can undertake courses in culture and English language. Additional vocational education and training is available in a number of work skill areas with support from Corrective Services Industries.

Courses are offered through AEVTI and TAFE and are nationally accredited so you can continue the studies when you are released.

Each centre has a library with a range of fiction, non-fiction and reference books which will include copies of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 and its Regulations as well as relevant departmental procedures. Some centres also have a Law Library to assist inmates research matters related to their case. Other centres provide assistance with legal matters through their library.

Such provision is not however mandatory, and in many correctional centres the opportunity to participate in courses and to access libraries is impacted by lock-downs, or limited by availability of resources. The *Inmate handbook* (p.65) then goes on to state in a section concerning inmate rights and obligations that:

You have a right to expect to participate in education, vocational training and employment, as far as resources are available, and in keeping with your interests, needs and abilities.

You have the obligation to abide by the regulations governing access to such services or activities if you choose to make use of them.

While inmates are required by the Regulations at Section 61 to comply with lawful directions while participating in a program, there is no legislative basis to the claim that inmates have a right to participate in education programs.

Should education in corrections be compulsory? Within New South Wales it has been argued that the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act* requires inmates to demonstrate attitudinal changes and a willingness to participate

in rehabilitation programs, including education and vocational training. To some degree these requirements impose on inmates a coercive requirement to participate in rehabilitation programs, and for program pathways addressing educational needs, such as literacy and numeracy, to be addressed.

The real question is whether the breadth of educational quality and provision outlined in the documents cited above should be guaranteed and whether inmates should have a right to access educational programs while in prison. That is, should the correctional system guarantee provision of education and vocational training and inmates' rights to access it?

The Victorian *Corrections Act 1986* at Section 47 (o) provides, for example, that inmates have 'the right to take part in educational programs in the prison'. Such guarantees are not currently provided by the Act or Regulations in New South Wales. Do the requirements to address offending behaviour through attitudinal change and participation in rehabilitation programs represent the demands made through legislation designed to instil public confidence in the administration of justice rather than genuine principles underlying a model for educational and training delivery and the concomitant funding needed to provide a bridge for inmates back into the community upon release?

The provision of education and vocational training, including the provision of libraries and access to legal research and reference materials needs to be guaranteed by the *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act*. The Act should also be amended to include an inmate right to education, vocational training and libraries. It just is not enough for 'prison works' apologists to argue that rehabilitation addressing offending behaviour will reduce recidivism (Warner 2005). It must also be acknowledged that narrowing the breadth of delivery and removing from inmates the capacity to make their own decisions around their educational growth only increases participation through coercion.

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Box 1

The *Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act* states that:

135 General duty of Parole Authority

- (1) The Parole Authority must not make a parole order for an offender unless it is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the release of the offender is appropriate in the public interest.
- (2) In deciding whether or not the release of an offender is appropriate in the public interest, the Parole Authority must have regard to the following matters:
 - (a) the need to protect the safety of the community,
 - (b) the need to maintain public confidence in the administration of justice,
 - (c) the nature and circumstances of the offence to which the offender's sentence relates,
 - (d) any relevant comments made by the sentencing court,
 - (e) the offender's criminal history,
 - (f) the likelihood of the offender being able to adapt to normal lawful community life,
 - (g) the likely effect on any victim of the offender; and on any such victim's family, of the offender being released on parole,
 - (h) any report in relation to the granting of parole to the offender that has been prepared by or on behalf of the Probation and Parole Service, as referred to in section 135A,
 - (i) any other report in relation to the granting of parole to the offender that has been prepared by or on behalf of the Review Council, the Commissioner or any other authority of the State,
 - (j) such guidelines as are in force under section 185A,
 - (k) such other matters as the Parole Authority considers relevant.
- (3) Except in exceptional circumstances, the Parole Authority must not make a parole order for a serious offender unless the Review Council advises that it is appropriate for the offender to be considered for release on parole.

135A Preparation of reports by Probation and Parole Service

A report prepared by or on behalf of the Probation and Parole Service for the purposes of section 135 must address the following matters:

- (a) the likelihood of the offender being able to adapt to normal lawful community life,
- (b) the risk of the offender re-offending while on release on parole, and the measures to be taken to reduce that risk,
- (c) the measures to be taken to assist the offender while on release on parole, as set out in a post-release plan prepared by the Probation and Parole Service in relation to the offender;
- (d) the offender's attitude to the offence to which his or her sentence relates,
- (e) the offender's willingness to participate in rehabilitation programs, and the success or otherwise of his or her participation in such programs,
- (f) the offender's attitude to any victim of the offence to which his or her sentence relates, and to the family of any such victim,
- (g) any offences committed by the offender while in custody, including in particular any correctional centre offences and any offence involving an escape or attempted escape,
- (h) the likelihood of the offender complying with any conditions to which his or her parole may be made subject.

Part two:
Improving VET for
adult prisoners
and offenders in
Australia

The provision of VET for adult prisoners in Australia

Sian Halliday Wynes¹

Offender management in Australia comes under the jurisdiction of each state and territory government. Since almost all prisoners will return to the community on their release from prison, there has been an increasing focus in the last decade on providing them with appropriate education and training while they are in the correctional services system. At the same time the prison population across Australia has increased by nearly 50%, requiring the establishment of new facilities. The management of some prisons has also been outsourced to private sector operators.

Since the endorsement of the National Strategy for VET for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia (ANTA 2001) by all states and territories, access to vocational education and training (VET) has been considered to be an integral component of the majority of offender management programs. However, the arrangements for the funding and delivery of VET in prisons vary across the jurisdictions. In some jurisdictions, the responsibility for VET for adult prisoners is shared between the various departments of corrective services and education and training, or their equivalents. In other jurisdictions, one or other of these departments has this responsibility.

Background

ALTHOUGH BASIC adult education has been available to prisoners² across Australia at least for the last century, access to and resources for the provision of vocational education and training have varied across the states and territories. In 1996, the Senate Report of the Inquiry into Education and Training in Correctional Facilities (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee 1996) recommended the development of a national VET strategy for offenders which would require ongoing cooperation between the various departments of correctional services and vocational education and training authorities in each state and territory. In 2001, the National Strategy

1 Contributions for this chapter were supplied either jointly or separately by departments of corrective services and education and training, or their equivalents, in the eight states and territories.

2 The term prisoner is used to refer to people in full-time custody under jurisdiction of an adult corrective services agency (including periodic detainees such as weekend custody in NSW and ACT). The term offenders is used to refer to people serving community-based sentences or released from prison, conditional upon good behaviour, prior to the end of the maximum sentence imposed upon that person (Productivity Commission 2007).

for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia (ANTA 2001) was launched. The main aim of the strategy was to facilitate a national approach to the implementation of VET for adult offenders while in custody or serving community-based sentences.³

In the introductory chapter, the government department in each jurisdiction responsible for adult offenders serving their sentences in custody or in the community is noted (see table 1). At 30 June 2006 there were 117 custodial facilities nationally, including 84 government-operated prisons and seven privately operated prisons⁴ (Productivity Commission 2007). The New South Wales Department of Corrective Services is responsible for 35 correctional centres and complexes, Corrections Victoria for 13 prisons, Queensland Corrective Services for 20 correctional facilities, and the South Australian Department for Correctional Services currently manages nine adult prisons. The 13 prisons managed by the Western Australian Department of Corrective Services include six regional prisons across the state. The Tasmanian Department of Justice manages six institutions, while the Northern Territory's Correctional Services operates two correctional centres. Sentenced prisoners in the Australian Capital Territory currently serve their sentence in New South Wales prisons; however, the construction of an adult prison in the Australian Capital Territory is due for completion in 2008.

In the last decade, the management of some prisons in Australia has been outsourced to private sector operators. At 30 June 2006, Queensland and Victoria each had two privately managed prisons and New South Wales, South Australia, and Western Australia each had one. The GEO Group Australia⁵ manages three of these prisons (one in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria), GSL Custodial Services Pty Ltd manages two (one in Victoria and South Australia), Management and Training Corporation (MTC) manages one in Queensland and Serco Australia⁶ manages one in Western Australia.

Over the last decade, the prison population across Australia has increased by nearly 50% (ABS 2004). In particular, the female prisoner population increased by 110% (Heggie 2005), although female prisoners are only 7% of the total prisoner population in 2006 (ABS 2006). This has resulted in the need to build new correctional facilities.

3 Offenders may be required to serve out their sentence under a community-based order. All jurisdictions have community correctional services units which are responsible for a range of community-based orders such as non-custodial sanctions, including unpaid community work components, personal development program attendance, or home detention restrictions (Productivity Commission 2007).

4 For further information on correctional facilities in Australia, see the Australian Government Australian Institute of Criminology website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.aic.gov.au/research/corrections/facilities/>>.

5 The GEO Group Australia Inc. website, viewed 11 May 2006, <<http://www.thegeogroupinc.com.au/Fulham.htm>>.

6 Serco Australia was awarded a five-year contract commencing in May 2006. Previously the contract was held by the Australian Integrated Management Services Corporation. See Department of Corrective Services Annual report 2006, viewed February 2007, <http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/reports/DCS/annual_report/pages/report_corporate.htm>.

Delivery of VET in prisons

The arrangements for the delivery of VET in prisons vary across the jurisdictions (see table 1).

Funding VET in prison

The funding for VET in prisons in Australia varies according to the jurisdiction (see table 2). For example, the governments of New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory provide the funding for VET for prisoners directly to the Department of Corrective Services, the Department of Correctional Services⁷ and Correctional Services, respectively. These agencies, in turn, make an allocation from their total budgets for the support of VET for prisoners.

Table 1 VET provision for prisoners by state and territory^a, 2006

State/territory	VET providers	Arrangements
New South Wales	Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute (AEVTI); also delivery by TAFE NSW institutes and other registered training organisations	NSW Department of Corrective Services' registered training organisation, the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute, has overall responsibility for the delivery of VET to adult prisoners and offenders in NSW. Programs and services delivered by its teaching staff are complemented by those provided by NSW TAFE institutes under a memorandum of understanding. This training is supplemented by distance education provided by a range of registered training providers and training sourced through other Commonwealth and state government-funded programs.
Victoria	Local technical and further education (TAFE) campus inside individual prisons ⁸	The Office of Training and Tertiary Education funds education and training in Victorian prisons. ⁹ For the public prisons, the office enters into triennial funding and service agreements with TAFE providers. For the private prisons, the office enters into a contractual arrangement with the prison provider who then sub-contracts to the TAFE provider for services.

7 In 2005–06, the SA Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology was responsible for the delivery of education programs for Indigenous prisoners in that state. In January 2007, the Department of Correctional Services became responsible for the delivery to this group of prisoners as a result of a memorandum of administration between the two agencies.

8 That is, Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE (Loddon and Tarrengower correctional centres [CC]); East Gippsland Institute of TAFE (Fulham CC and Marngoneet CC, which opened in March 2006; also Junee CC in NSW); Gordon Institute of TAFE (Barwon CC); Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE (Beechworth and Dhurringile CCs); Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE (Port Phillip, The Metropolitan Remand Centre, Melbourne Assessment Prisons and Dame Phyllis Frost CCs); University of Ballarat TAFE Division (Ararat and Langi Kal Kal CCs).

9 Victorian correctional education is funded by the Office of Training and Tertiary Education in the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development. The funding model is industry-driven, based on the needs of both particular industries and regional training needs. Correctional education does not sit comfortably in this model and consequently funding for prisoner education has not grown commensurately with prisoner numbers. Furthermore, funding moves directly to designated TAFE providers, so Corrections Victoria has moved to improve collaboration with both the Office of Training and Tertiary Education and the individual TAFE providers.

State/territory	VET providers	Arrangements
Queensland	TAFE institutes and private registered training organisations	Since 1995 nationally accredited VET has been delivered to prisoners in all Queensland correctional centres through a partnership between Queensland Corrective Services and the Department of Employment and Training.
South Australia	Offenders Education Services Unit is a registered training organisation ¹⁰	The Department of Correctional Services, Offenders Education Services Unit has responsibility for delivery and assessment of prisoner and offender education and training services (except in the privately operated Mt Gambier Prison). The Transition Centre purchases fee-for-service training places in the community.
Western Australia	Education and Vocational Training Unit is a registered training organisation ¹¹ but also contracts other providers	The Department of Corrective Services' Education and Vocational Training Unit is a registered training organisation and has formal relationships with TAFE colleges through a memorandum of understanding (in which TAFE WA staff deliver an allocated number of hours to prisoners) and uses private providers.
Tasmania	Prisoner Education and Training Unit ¹² is a registered training organisation but also uses TAFE and community partners	The Prisoner Education and Training Unit is not limited to its scope of registration but also brokers services from other providers, including TAFE Tasmania, Bay Training Facility, Rosny College, participating universities, Colony 47 ¹³ and Employment Plus. ¹⁴ It also utilises Australian Apprenticeship Scheme User Choice funding and competitive bids to offset costs.
Northern Territory	Northern Territory Correctional Services is a registered training organisation and uses community partnerships	Northern Territory Correctional Services is funded directly from the territory government to deliver education and training. It works closely with the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, which has a network of campus sites and annexes in many remote communities, as well as in Bachelor and Alice Springs.

Note: a The Australian Capital Territory's first adult prison is due to open in 2008.

The New South Wales Department of Corrective Services has a memorandum of understanding with NSW TAFE as preferred provider. TAFE NSW institutes receive funding from the Department of Corrective Services to deliver a specified number of teaching hours annually.

In other states, the funding for VET in prisons may be included in the VET allocation to the equivalent department of education and training. The Department of Corrective Services in Western Australia has a memorandum of understanding with the Western Australian Department of Education and Training. Queensland Corrective Services has a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Employment and Training¹⁵ for the provision of VET. The Department of Employment and Training funds public (TAFE institutes)

10 Vocational Training and Education Centres of SA is the trading name.

11 Auswest Specialist Education and Training Services (ASETS) is the trading name.

12 Corrective Services-Prisoner Education and Training (PEaT) is the trading name.

13 Colony 47 is a community-based organisation catering for young people who were disadvantaged socially, economically, educationally and culturally. Further information available from website, viewed November 2006, <<http://www.colony47.com.au>>.

14 The Salvation Army Employment Plus is a not-for-profit employment agency, viewed November 2006, <<http://www.employmentplus.com.au> or www.salvos.org.au>.

15 In 2007, it is with the Department of Education, Training and the Arts.

and private registered training organisations to provide nationally accredited training to prisoners in all Queensland correctional centres. Similarly, in Victoria, the Office of Training and Tertiary Education funds training in Victorian prisons through its triennial funding and service agreements with TAFE providers, and enters into contracts with private prisons (who then sub-contract services from the TAFE provider). In Tasmania, VET for prisoners is also funded by the Department of Education.

Table 2 Main sources of funding for VET in prisons by state and territory^a, 2006

NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA ^b	Tas. ^b	NT
Department of Corrective Services		Queensland Corrective Services	Department for Correctional Services	Department of Corrective Services	Department of Justice	Correctional Services
	The Office of Training and Tertiary Education	Department of Employment and Training		Department of Education and Training	Department of Education	

Notes: a The Australian Capital Territory's first adult prison is due to open in 2008.
 b With additional funding from the Australian Government's Department of Employment and Workplace Relations for the Indigenous Employment and Training Program and for Western Australia's Building and Construction Project (including bricklaying traineeships). They also use funding supplied to the states and territories for the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme and for the off-the-job training provided for apprentices/trainees.

Access to VET in prison

With the exception of South Australia, all states and territories experienced increased prisoner populations over the last decade (Heggie 2005). While the focus of the jurisdictions is generally on improving access to VET for adult prisoners and offenders, an increase in prisoner numbers has caused extra demand for education and training programs. This has resulted in significant limitations in access to education and training programs right across the prison system. VET opportunities may be restricted, especially for adults on remand and offenders on short-term sentences (see table 3). In addition, popular short courses and those requiring substantial equipment and resources may have considerable waiting times for access.

Table 3 Availability of VET in prisons by sentence category and by state and territory^{a,b}, 2006

Category of offender	NSW ^c	Vic. ^d	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT
Long-term (12 months or longer)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Short-term (3 months but less than 12 months)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^e	Yes	Yes
Short short-term (less than 3 months)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^f	Yes ^e	Yes	No
Adults on remand	Yes	Yes	Yes ^g	No ^f	Yes	No	No

- Notes:
- a The Australian Capital Territory's first adult prison is due to open in 2008.
 - b Privately managed prisons are not included in this table.
 - c There are logistical issues which make it more difficult to deliver programs to people on remand and short sentences.
 - d There have been significant limitations in access to programs right across the prison system due to an increase in prison population but without a growth in funding. However, access is now a focus for improvements. Access to education and training for adults on remand is limited to training required for the smooth operation of the prison.
 - e WA only has adults coming into prison for fewer than 6 months for fine defaults, breaches of parole or supervision and not a sentence straight from court (abolished in May 2004).
 - f SA provides the Introduction to Vocational Education Certificate program with a focus on employability units such as preparing a resume or presenting for interview or job search skills, all of which assist in the development of literacy skills.
 - g Adults on remand, but may be restricted to short, entry-level training and literacy assessments and training.

Availability of apprenticeships and traineeships¹⁶

Nationally in 2005–06, 77% of the eligible¹⁷ population of prisoners was working (Productivity Commission 2007). Most prisoners (45%) were working in prison services or commercial prison industries (31%). Only a small percentage (1%) was on work release in 2005–06, although a quarter of prisoners were held in open or low-security prisons where day release for work is possible (75% of prisoners were in medium- or high-security prisons). Overall the number of prisoner apprentices and trainees is low. Explanations for the lack of availability of apprenticeships and traineeships in most jurisdictions include: the fairly recent acceptance of structured training leading to a qualification; difficulties in providing appropriate workplaces, workplace assessment and workplace assessors; and existing legislation¹⁸ in some states, which impedes the establishment of traineeships for offenders in custody. Day release for unpaid work experience is possible for prisoners held in open prisons or in transition from prison to community.

16 Apprenticeships and traineeships are contracts of training which involve a training agreement between the individual, the employer who provides on-the-job experience, training and supervision for the individual, and the registered training organisation that provides off-the-job training and assesses workplace competencies.

17 There is a significant difference between jurisdictions in the proportion of prisoners considered eligible for education (private conversation with Ian Fraser, SA Department of Correctional Services March 2007), and it is likely that jurisdictional differences may also apply to eligibility to work.

18 Most jurisdictions are constrained by the requirement that apprentices/trainees be paid at the National Training Award rate. Prisoners working in prison industries are paid a gratuity (less than \$10 a day) and, with the exception of a few work release prisons or transition centres, there is no provision for prisoners to be paid wages at such a level.

While commercial prison industries are able to provide meaningful work experience for some prisoners, other programs have established community partnerships with employers to train prisoners to fill skill shortages upon their release from prison (see next chapter by Laird, Chavez & Zan). Despite the perceived difficulties, three jurisdictions (New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania) are providing opportunities for traineeships in prison (see table 4). Because ex-offenders have difficulty in finding employment in the community (see Graffam & Hardcastle’s chapter), meaningful work experience obtained through traineeships is appreciated by offenders (see chapter by Giles et al.).

Table 4 Availability of apprenticeships and traineeships in prison by state and territory, 2005–06^a

State or territory	Number of apprentices or trainees 2005–06	Arrangements
New South Wales	65	Traineeships are delivered in general construction, horticulture, transport and distribution, hospitality, food processing, engineering production and furniture. Approximately 100 offenders are expected to participate in traineeships at 11 correctional centres across the state in 2007.
Western Australia	246	The WA Department of Education and Training provides and funds 400 traineeship places for the Department of Corrective Services. Traineeships are provided by both public (TAFE WA) and private registered training organisations. The program is in the ninth year of operation. Traineeships involve one year of training for 30 hours per week in the workshop, mainly at certificate II, or entry level, with some opportunity for certificate III, but not in the recognised trades.
Tasmania	52	17 trainees doing certificate II or III in forestry and furniture, and 35 trainees doing Certificate II in Laundry Operations under user choice funded by Office of Post Compulsory Education and Training (OPCET), Department of Education.

Note: a Privately managed prisons are not included in this table.

VET courses and qualifications

VET courses ranging from certificates I to IV may be available through the prison education centre. Most jurisdictions offer a broad range of fields of education, with lower-level VET qualifications and short courses being most common (see table 5). Culturally appropriate courses beneficial to Indigenous people are delivered by some jurisdictions (see Miller’s chapter).

For example, Western Australia has a comprehensive program of VET delivery covering over 16 different industry areas (see also Laird, Chavez & Zan’s chapter). Partnership arrangements with TAFE colleges and private registered training organisations complement the scope of delivery of the Education and Vocational Training Unit of the Department of Corrective Services. This includes individualised career counselling and pro-social and life skills education courses comprising group and student decision-making and evaluation processes,

peer group support and training, independent study skills, self-empowerment, tolerance and self-directed learning.

As noted in the introductory chapter, the majority of prisoners in Australia are on short-term sentences (fewer than 12 months).¹⁹ Their individual needs are assessed initially to identify appropriate short courses to assist their rehabilitation and post-release employment opportunities or pathways to further study. However, there is limited time for these men and women to participate in VET programs.²⁰ Consequently the Western Australian approach (see also Laird, Chavez & Zan's chapter) is to provide prisoners with an individualised program which integrates work and life skills with vocational education and training. The Western Australian program addresses as many issues as possible in the limited time available with each student. It is increasingly also including community-based work experience.

Table 5 VET provision by field of education in prisons by state and territory^a, 2006

VET fields of education	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT
Information technology	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Engineering & related technologies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Agriculture, environmental & related studies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^c
Commerce—business studies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Food, hospitality & personal services ^b	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^d
General construction (building, painting etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Light manufacturing (furnishing, carpentry, or sewing)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Metal & automotive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Transport & distribution	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Creative arts	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No ^e	Yes
Literacy & numeracy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

- Notes:
- a The Australian Capital Territory's first adult prison is due to open in 2008.
 - b Includes hairdressing, fitness, laundry and cleaning.
 - c Northern Territory Correctional Services in partnership with the Seafood and Maritime Industry Training offered the Deckhand's course which was a short course of 6 units from the Certificate II in Seafood Industry—Fishing Operations. In conjunction with the Internal College of Advanced Education and Noonamah Crocodile Farm they also have a pilot program for aquaculture operations—crocodile handling and farming.
 - d Northern Territory Correctional Services in partnership with Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreting Service offered the Diploma in Interpreting—Indigenous Languages to some prisoners (see also Miller's chapter).
 - e A few prisoners learn music in medium-security prisons and a few in minimum-security learn art through open learning.

¹⁹ Since 60% of the prison population in Western Australia is serving a prison sentence fewer than 12 months (Ferrante et al. 2004), we assume that the majority of prisoners in Australia are serving short-term sentences.

²⁰ Taking into account prison work duties, court-mandated programs (such as treatment programs for substance abuse, violent offenders and sex offenders), legal visits, family visits, court appearances, prison regime duties, health appointments (offenders are generally in poor health), depression and sickness etc.

In New South Wales Corrective Services staff deliver vocational courses in a limited number of industry areas, namely information technology, construction, horticulture, small business management, visual arts and contemporary craft, and music. This is in addition to basic education and employability skills courses. A memorandum of understanding between NSW Corrective Services and TAFE NSW provides resources for TAFE NSW teachers to deliver courses in a range of industry areas, as well as courses in occupational health and safety and first aid, and courses in Aboriginal arts and cultural practices to address the culturally specific learning needs of Indigenous inmates. In addition, NSW Corrective Services accesses traineeships and pre-vocational and vocational training for offenders in custody delivered by TAFE NSW and other registered training organisations through the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Training Program and other pre-vocational training through the Strategic Skills Program.

Prisoners who undertake VET receive money

The only source of income for most prisoners is the gratuity provided for undertaking prison work. In New South Wales, Corrective Services Industries has an inmate wages system which provides for uniform and equitable wages across all correctional centres, based on a working and other program week of a minimum of 30 hours. An inmate's wage varies according to the nature of the work, and bonuses apply, based on performance. The size of the gratuity received varies from state to state, as well as by industry participation, the amount of time spent in prison work or education, and the standard of prisoner behaviour and hygiene. Since the endorsement of the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia (ANTA 2001), the jurisdictions have agreed that prisoners who undertake education and training should continue to receive their usual gratuity.²¹ Before this time prisoners risked being penalised for time away from prison work to undertake courses designed to improve their post-release employment opportunities. Hence, in most jurisdictions, prisoners who are engaged in prison work continue to receive their usual gratuity even when they are undertaking VET courses. However, prisoners who do not have a prison job continue on the unemployed gratuity level while undertaking part-time VET courses.²² In all jurisdictions, full-time VET students are paid a gratuity.

Implementation of the national VET strategy

The vision of the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia (ANTA 2001), which was endorsed

²¹ In the strategy, under Objective 1—To improve access to VET for adult prisoners and offenders: 1.1 Improve pathways to vocational education and training, is the following statement: Reduce and where possible remove disincentives to the participation of offenders in vocational education and training (ANTA 2001).

²² In WA where a prison does not have full employment opportunities for all prisoners, those prisoners who are unemployed and attend education and training receive a gratuity one level above the unemployment level.

by all state and territory government departments for VET and for correctional services, is:

To provide adult prisoners and offenders with educational and vocational pathways which will support their productive contribution to the economic and social life of the community. (ANTA 2001, p.3)

The strategy requires VET to be an integral component of sentence management for all adult offenders. It also requires the application of adequate resources, skills and knowledge to support their training needs. Also planned are national initiatives aimed at collecting nationally consistent data on VET in prisons and post-release employment and destinations of those who have participated in VET.

The national strategy has four objectives. These are to:

- 1 improve access to vocational education and training for adult prisoners and offenders
- 2 support successful participation and attainment across a range of fields of study and levels of vocational education and training
- 3 contribute to the employment and learning pathways which can support the successful re-integration of offenders in the community
- 4 create an accountable system that provides equitable vocational education and training outcomes for offenders.

These four objectives are considered to be critical to the continuing development of and support for vocational education and training of offenders. For this chapter, the jurisdictions were asked to describe how the four objectives were being implemented. The national implementation plan, *Rebuilding lives: VET for adult prisoners and offenders* (Corrective Services Administrators' Committee 2006), was drafted in 2005 by the NSW TAFE-sponsored national project team of correctional education and state training provider representatives responsible for VET for offenders and was endorsed in late 2006.

Objective 1: Improving access to VET

This objective aims to improve pathways to VET by establishing cooperation between prisons, community correctional services, pre- and post-release services (including employment assistance, career counselling and training support agencies). It recognises the need to provide VET providers and correctional services personnel with information, advice and strategies to enable them to promote VET as an integral part of the case management of offenders. Table 6 summarises strategies implemented across jurisdictions to improve the access of offenders to vocational education and training.

New South Wales

The New South Wales Department of Corrective Services has developed the *NSW Throughcare Strategy 2002–2005* (see Banfield, Barlow & Gould's chapter). This strategy underscores the need for ongoing support for VET from remand

through to post-release stages. A whole-of-government approach has been required to meet offenders' needs for health services, education, housing and meaningful employment to facilitate successful and lawful integration with their community.

TAFE NSW receives funding from the Department of Corrective Services under the memorandum of understanding arrangement to provide a specified number of course/face-to-face teaching hours. The Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute's senior correctional education officers at each correctional centre are then allocated a number of TAFE teaching hours by the institute's state manager for VET. The senior correctional education officer decides what training is needed at their centre and liaises with the TAFE institute correctional centre liaison officer in their area, who then arranges for the course to be delivered to inmates.

The Departments of Corrective Services and Education and Training have collaboratively developed an implementation plan for TAFE NSW provision for Indigenous Australian prisoners (see Miller's chapter). Regional TAFE and Corrective Services staff committees oversee the implementation; in 2004 and 2005, joint staff conferences were held to review progress against the plan.

Table 6 Strategies implemented to improve access to VET for prisoners by state and territory^a, 2006

Provision	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT
Access to education and training is an integral component of sentence management for all adult prisoners—including education assessment, considering skills and knowledge, risk management, abilities and needs). For example, individual management plan/education sentence plans (or educational profile interviews) are conducted and reviewed regularly.	Yes	No ^b	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Address basic literacy and numeracy skills needs (as the highest priority); also employability skills, such as resume-writing and job-search skills	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Address special needs of students (women, Indigenous, non-English speaking background, substance and alcohol abuse, intellectual and physical disabilities)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Address barriers to learning (learning disabilities, low self-esteem, past education experiences etc.)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^c
Adequate resources on site including functional workshops and qualified staff (education officers, VET advisors etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Offer VET courses which address interests of prisoners and maximise their chances of successful re-entry into their community	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^c
Ongoing monitoring and assessment (assessment of prisoners' perception of themselves, education and employment history)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Provision	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT
Improved data collection on individual students—record of all education and training participation in personal education file e.g. WA 'Registrar' accessible to all its staff.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No ^d	Yes
Flexibility in delivery (and training pathways) for prisoners moving between prisons (including prisoner's personal education and training file being updated and transferred within the prison system).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vocational education and training integrated with prison work and correctional services industries	Yes	Yes	Yes	^e	Yes	Yes	Yes
Appropriate induction to the workplace, including appropriate occupational health and safety according to the inmates' work environments	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Access to apprenticeships and traineeships (promoting ownership and responsibility for outcome for inmates and enabling access to User Choice apprenticeship funding for registered training organisation)	Yes	No	No	No ^d	Yes	Yes	No
Prison education and training representative on VET committees where access issues are identified and discussed e.g. the Vocational Education and Training Equity Advisory Committee and the State Vocational Education and Training Women's Reference Group.	No	Yes	No ^f	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

- Notes:
- a The Australian Capital Territory's first adult prison is due to open in 2008.
 - b Prisoner's 'skills plans' are being trialled in Victoria in 2008.
 - c The Collins Report (1999) highlighted the learning problems that face Indigenous youth in the Northern Territory. The report highlighted the harshness of the remote environment, with cultural and family obligations being major obstacles to education and training. Prison education offers the next best opportunity for re-entering education opportunities and is a critical partner in rehabilitation and resettlement.
 - d When the structured day is fully implemented, the new electronic database system will have prisoners' education and training records accessible to all staff.
 - e SA has had limited success to date with integrating VET with prisons industries.
 - f No committee, but engage directly with communities.

Victoria

Corrections Victoria has developed the Framework for Education and Training in Victorian Prisons, which is informed by the findings and recommendations of the 2003 Review into Education and Training Provision in Victorian Prisons (known as the Bearing Point Review 2003) commissioned as a joint initiative of the Departments of Justice and Education and Training. The broad objective of the framework is to contribute to reducing re-offending and to facilitate re-integration and employment post-release by equipping prisoners with basic and work-related skills. Three of the four goals of the framework address improving access to VET.

The framework includes a statement of purpose for education and training in Victorian prisons and outlines initiatives to achieve strategic objectives. As a result of the Bearing Point Review there has been a commitment by both the government agencies funding correctional education (the Office of Training and

Tertiary Education and Corrections Victoria) to improving planning, monitoring and delivery, at both the systemic and local prison level.

All prisoners in Victoria are given access to voluntary participation in education and training programs which have state or national accreditation. While the range of vocational programs offered varies between individual prisons, all programs are structured to facilitate prisoners continuing their training as they move through the prison system.

The focus of VET in prisons is to assist prisoners gain employment and thereby to reduce the likelihood of their re-offending. Integration of education and training with other areas of prison activities²³, particularly prison industries²⁴, is a key element of this approach.

Corrections Victoria has commenced a project to develop, trial and implement an assessment tool for language, literacy and numeracy skills that will improve access to VET (and adult basic education) for prisoners with the greatest educational needs. This instrument, together with a system-wide database to record VET outcomes, will achieve a quantum leap in the correctional system's ability to prioritise access according to educational need.

Queensland

An 'integrated offender management' system was introduced in Queensland Corrective Services in 1999. It is designed to be a continuous approach to the management of all offenders across the correctional system (from secure custody through to community supervision). Accredited VET is integrated with employment in the prison industries. Trade instructors must have the relevant trade qualifications and, as a minimum, the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. This is a requirement of the Australian Quality Training Framework for registered training organisations. Thus, trade instructors not only manage the on-the-job training of prisoners employed in the workshops, but also participate in the delivery of some off-the-job accredited training directly related to the specific industry.

Queensland Corrective Services has implemented a 'structured day' system at a number of correctional centres to enable prisoners to work for half of the day and to pursue VET and other programs during the other half. The structured day system ensures that prisoners who work are not excluded from VET. Training workshops have also been provided in all recently commissioned correctional centres, allowing prisoners to participate in accredited VET in formal and well-established vocational training workshops. A key element for increasing access to VET is to develop appropriate training pathways to enable continuity of access to education and training.

In Queensland, training delivered in the correctional centres is determined through meetings between Corrective Services and the Department of Employment and Training in consultation with managers of offender

23 Such as prison services including kitchen, laundry, estate maintenance.

24 Prison industries include furnishing, commercial sewing, building, horticulture.

development, education officers and vocational training officers. This ensures availability of appropriate training delivery and continuity of training when offenders move to another facility. Community and prisoner needs are taken into account when training is selected for a particular location. The training focuses on the acquisition of vocational skills that lead to employment upon release. All training comes from relevant national training packages.

South Australia

In 2003–04, following a review of its literacy program, the South Australian Offender Education Services Unit adopted a model of short courses for units of competency within the South Australian-developed Certificate I in Employability Skills. This program aims to help prisoners to develop literacy skills through job-searching activities. It had immediate appeal to prisoners with a history of unemployment and failure in education and training programs.

Each prison employs an education coordinator who has responsibility for on-site delivery of an agreed and planned education and training program. The coordinator manages education staff who, in the main, deliver literacy and numeracy and business services training programs, utilising the prisoner education computer networks. Other VET programs (for example, in hospitality, horticulture, engineering and metals, commercial sewing and construction) are delivered by some prison industry and prison services staff. All staff involved in VET delivery and assessment hold qualifications including Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment. Once prisoners successfully complete the required units of competency, national VET qualifications are issued through the central registered training organisation. All assessments of units are subject to random audits to ensure compliance with the Australian Training Qualifications Framework.

The Correctional Services Offender Education Services Unit has sought to utilise the skills and facilities of prison industry and prison services areas to ensure effective delivery of VET. This has had mixed results, but where the imperative to generate income from production has been removed, there has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of prisoners both participating and achieving success in VET.

The South Australian Department of Correctional Services 2005–06 business plan outlines how the national VET strategy will be implemented in South Australia. The department has upgraded the existing computer network to a standard where commercial VET resources, such as Toolboxes for national training packages, can be accessed via prison education networks.

Western Australia

The Western Australian Department of Corrective Services has implemented the 'individual management plan' to describe the activities to be undertaken during each offender's term of imprisonment (see also Laird, Chavez & Zan's chapter). The plan is compiled by an interdisciplinary team that includes qualified teachers, prison staff and psychologists or other health or behaviour-management specialists. An education assessment process, which involves

detailed interviews with prisoners within the first 28 days of sentencing, aims to ensure that decisions take into account all aspects which may affect the training experience of prisoners. The assessment process comprises tests of literacy and numeracy, discussions of vocational and work histories and setting of goals. An education and training induction and career counselling session is also provided.

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Department of Justice's Prisoner Education and Training Unit became a registered training organisation in 2002. Through preparation for registration and further training of staff, the flexibility and scope of training provision within prison work and industries²⁵ was increased. Two specialist literacy and numeracy teachers assist with underpinning skills and conduct the assessment of each prisoner's needs. The results of a learning needs analysis are used to develop an individual learning plan. The prison education staff provide prospective students with information on VET pathways, enrolment and course content. This helps in the development of 'educational sentence plans' aimed at tailoring learning to individual needs so that it is relevant and meaningful. The educational sentence plan provides appropriate timelines and establishes goals for release into the community. A vocational access program helps inmates to improve their language, literacy and numeracy skills and enhance other underpinning skills (such as teamwork and time management) across a variety of traineeships within industries.

The Prisoner Education and Training Unit has attempted over many years to integrate VET into all aspects of prison operations to maximise prisoners' opportunities to gain recognised qualifications. The unit has established a starting point for vocational education which is supported by numeracy and literacy and linked to case management, within an educational setting. This process guarantees prisoners appropriate induction to the workplace, including the relevant occupational health and safety required for work environments. This process has required custodial support and approval and has existed within sometimes inflexible security parameters. The support and approval of industry supervisors has also been required. Prison facilities were not designed for implementation of contemporary rehabilitation models, and safety and security issues still dominate daily routines. Nevertheless, the practicalities of accessing suitable areas for training, providing on-site delivery and assessment, and obtaining appropriate training aids and accessible training packages have been addressed.

Training delivery has also shifted from a sole focus on classroom-based education and training to incorporate both classroom and on-the-job training. This has increased access to training for inmates and provision of vocational education on site. In addition, the unit's status as a registered training organisation has enabled it to access traineeship funding and take up ownership

²⁵ The Tasmania Prison Service runs a number of industries within its maximum-security section, including a commercial laundry, a bakehouse and kitchen, and a woodwork and upholstery workshop. Dairy farming and the processing of fruit and vegetables are undertaken at Hayes Prison Farm, which is a minimum-security facility.

of the entire training process. This means that it is free to recruit inmates, whether or not they are engaged in industry employment.

Training program completion rates have not always been high. This is because many prisoners serve short sentences or face transfer between prisons during their time in prison. The Prisoner Education and Training Unit has addressed this situation by creating training pathways to inform inmates about VET options at each prison site and is adjusting programs to meet individual needs throughout the sentence period. Generic standardised learning materials and assessment tools are used across the prison system in order to help offenders when transferring to other sites. Partnerships with TAFE colleges mean that the training offered to prisoners is no longer strictly prison-based and can be continued after release from prison.

Northern Territory

All offenders in the Northern Territory Correctional Centres in Darwin and Alice Springs are assessed for education and training needs in the first month of their sentences. Up to 85% of prisoners in the Northern Territory are Indigenous adult males and many have extremely poor literacy and numeracy skills levels. Information about available education is provided to small groups or in one-on-one information sessions (see also the last two chapters of this book on literacy, and Indigenous prisoners, respectively).

The Northern Territory Correctional Services is a registered training organisation delivering courses and training packages in the two prisons— Darwin and Alice Springs. It employs teachers in literacy and numeracy, art, music and computer-based courses. It also employs industry trainers in the areas of horticulture, hospitality (kitchen hand), automotive, and community maintenance, constructions and metal trades. There is also the capacity to train in asset management, textiles and stores.

It works closely with the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and delivers culturally appropriate training courses such as Aboriginal Health Worker and Indigenous Alcohol and Other Drugs Worker, both of which lead directly to post-release community employment.

Objective 2: Supporting participation and attainment

Supporting successful participation and attainment across a range of fields of study and levels of vocational education and training requires client-focused training. This means providing professional development for teachers, trainers, assessors and custodial staff in skills and knowledge to support the inclusion of offenders in VET programs.

A number of features have been implemented in prisons to support successful VET outcomes across a range of fields of study and levels of vocational education and training (see table 7).

New South Wales

The New South Wales Department of Corrective Services implements ‘throughcare’ (see Banfield, Barlow & Gould’s chapter) by providing adult prisoners (especially those with low-level educational attainment and literacy and numeracy skills) with training pathways which facilitate access to employment and training in custody and post-release. In order to strengthen these training pathways, the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute recently decided to replace many qualifications in its scope of delivery with a single comprehensive qualification framework developed by TAFE NSW called Access to Employment, Education and Training (AEET).²⁶ Units of competency from this framework can be selected and packaged into courses to meet the needs of learners with varying skills development levels and from different target groups (for example, Aboriginal people, women and people with an intellectual disability). Successful course completion leads to the award of generic qualifications at certificate I, II or III level.

Victoria

Professional development for teachers and trainers is provided by their individual TAFE institution. However, Corrections Victoria has developed and is supporting a community of practice which aims to encourage greater integration of VET with other prison programs.

Table 7 Features implemented to improve participation and attainment in VET for custodial offenders by state and territory^a

Provision	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT
Small class size (8–10 students)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Relevant instruction (VET courses with practical application post-release)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Customised individual learning (additional help for students with learning difficulties)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adaptation of learning materials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Continuing tutorial assistance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Welcoming learning environment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comprehensive program of VET delivery	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Training workshops	No ^b	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Individualised career counselling	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social and life skills education	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gratuity paid to prisoners participating in VET	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Professional development for Corrections Education and VET provider staff working with offenders.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: a The Australian Capital Territory’s first adult prison is due to open in 2008.

b Do have training classroom near industry production workshop.

²⁶ That is AEET certificates 9071, 9072 and 9073.

Queensland

In Queensland, all vocational education and training offered to adult prisoners and offenders is industry-recognised and based on national industry training packages or accredited courses. The training enables inmates to acquire specific competencies only or certificates I to IV qualifications in a variety of vocational areas. It aims to provide prisoners with employability skills training that will equip them with the skills and knowledge to gain employment in a range of vocational areas. Prisoners' progress in VET is planned, monitored and reviewed every six months. Participation in training leading to full qualifications has increased since the implementation of vocational training workshops in the correctional centres.

South Australia

All South Australian inmates undergo an assessment and induction process. For males this occurs at the Yatala Labour Prison and for females at the Adelaide Women's Prison.

The Community Corrections Directorate has responsibility for offenders in the community. In 2003 Community Corrections embarked on a model of integrating community service orders with VET programs. The Community Corrections program operates across metropolitan centres and utilises a work contract to provide on-the-job training opportunities for offenders sentenced to complete community-based orders. Units of competency from the Certificate III in Painting and Decorating from the General Construction Training Package have been undertaken by adult prisoners and offenders.

Western Australia

The Education and Vocational Training Unit of the Western Australian Department of Corrective Services aims to provide prisoners with customised training. This requires the adaptation of learning materials, assessment practices, teaching styles and organisational structures and processes to the needs of prisoners and the prison environment. The students come from diverse and challenging backgrounds—Indigenous people, people with disabilities, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, people in transition from prison to community, and people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as women from all of the above categories.

The unit offers training in small classes of eight to ten students, in order to provide more individualised and effective instruction. The learning materials are used in contexts that have relevance to the individual and maximise their engagement with the learning process. This also ensures that the benefits of ongoing tutorial assistance are not hindered, regardless of whether a student changes their course of study. The unit strives to create a welcoming and non-threatening learning environment in which the prisoners can feel comfortable and motivated.

The Adult Literacy Unit of the Western Australian Department of Education and Training has worked closely with the Adult Basic Education Unit of the Western Australian Department of Corrective Services to improve literacy and

numeracy provision in corrections. This collaboration has resulted in a number of initiatives. For example, the Hands-on Learning Program has been developed to improve the provision of literacy integrated into vocational training in corrections (see Laird, Chavez & Zan's chapter). This is based on the nationally recognised Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills developed in 2000 by the Western Australian Department of Education and Training.

The Corrective Services coordinator of adult basic education leads a regional moderation group within the Department of Education and Training's statewide moderation process for the Certificates in General Education for Adults. Many Corrections Education staff participate in this low-cost professional development for teachers.

Tasmania

The Tasmania Prison Service Prisoner Education and Training Program aims to enhance low-level language literacy and numeracy skills in prisoners by providing access to study materials available for Vocational Access and Open Learning courses. This allows progression through to a Tasmanian Certificate of Education and higher-level qualifications, such as apprenticeships and university studies. These processes are supplemented by pre-release work placement (on-the-job training), which increases the likelihood that prisoners may access post-release study and employment.

The importance of implementing the National Literacy Indicator Tool (an initiative funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training) into the Integrated Offender Management Framework of the Tasmania Prison Service is a high priority for the education staff. A preliminary trial was conducted at the Women's Prison in 2005.

The Tasmanian Department of Education was represented on the VET for Offenders Implementation Project Committee and the Literacy Project for a Common Assessment Tool.

Northern Territory

In the Northern Territory, literacy and numeracy are the immediate focus for prisoners' education and are embedded in all VET. Offenders are engaged in goal setting through sentence planning, which is an integral part of offender management. Appropriate courses are adapted to meet the specific needs of offenders.

A team of professional trainers has been selected for their skills and experience in working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults from both remote and urban backgrounds (for whom English is often the second or third language). Trainers are required to demonstrate an ability to apply and practise the principles of adult learning and take individual learning needs into account when preparing learning resources and delivering education and training. They are also required to demonstrate knowledge of and insight into Indigenous societies and cultures and an understanding of the issues and the diversity of circumstances affecting Indigenous people in contemporary Australian society.

Objective 3: Contributing to employment and lifelong learning pathways

Contributing to employment and lifelong learning pathways which can support the successful re-integration of offenders in the community requires the development of linkages between offender education and training and employment opportunities. This objective also aims to provide assistance for further education and lifelong learning and includes transition and pre- and post-release planning and support programs (see table 8).

New South Wales

The Corrective Service Industries Work Readiness Program is an initiative which aims to develop and measure offenders' skills, behaviour and attitudes in the workplace (see Banfield, Barlow & Gould's chapter). The program focuses on foundation work skills and introduces prisoners to employment services during pre-release planning sessions. A key strategy of the program is the provision of a work referral (with photographic identification) which details work history, vocational training and skill assessments. This assists offenders with re-entry to the community.

Many transitional support strategies are implemented within New South Wales correctional centres through educational programs or with education staff playing a key role (see Banfield, Barlow & Gould's chapter and Halliday Wynes' chapter, 'Improving VET for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia'). For example, occupational health and safety training is delivered in all centres where Corrective Services Industries operates and in most centres inmates can undertake training and assessment which results in the acquisition of the various New South Wales Workcover²⁷ credentials (for example, the Construction Industry Certificate of Competency and the Forklift Truck Certificate of Competency). This helps prisoners to gain employment upon release from prison. In addition, correctional centres conduct 'expos' which enable offenders to gain information on education and employment and to establish links with the relevant services, and, in some cases, employers, prior to release. Inmates are encouraged to ask questions and find out for themselves relevant information in an attempt to foster confidence and break down barriers.

Victoria

Corrections Victoria is developing an integrated training and employment model that links prison-based VET and prison industries to employers and facilitates access to Australian Government employment and training support services and community-based further education and training. A trial of the model will focus on the new Judy Lazarus Transition Centre²⁸ in metropolitan Melbourne. The model under development will provide for pre-release planning, job-search

27 Workcover refers to the Workcover Authority of NSW, which promotes workplace health and safety and provides a worker compensation system for employers and workers of NSW. More information is available from the website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au>>.

28 Judy Lazarus Transition Centre is located in Melbourne's central business district and is expected to open in April 2007.

skills development, training pathways in VET and community-based further education, and links with sympathetic employers.

Queensland

Since 2001, Queensland Corrective Services has implemented a strategy which links the offenders working in various prison industries in correctional centres with related accredited training. Prisoners who participate in this training are not only gaining valuable work skills but also recognition of skills through participation in industry-recognised VET. This training provides them with employability skills that will assist them to be work-ready and obtain employment upon release. The prison industries are well-resourced and include furnishing, bakery, laundry, metal fabrication and textile fabrication.

The 1999 review of VET for prisoners in Queensland correctional centres identified the need for support to be provided to prisoners to assist them to be work-ready and to utilise their vocational skills to gain and sustain long-term employment upon release from prison (Cox & Carlin 1999). Prisoners are now assisted to gain employment upon release through their participation in the Queensland Corrective Services Transitions Program. In addition, the Post-Release Employment Assistance Program is a government-run employment program targeted specifically at prisoners and ex-prisoners. It is funded by the Department of Employment and Training²⁹, administered by Queensland Corrective Services and delivered by contracted service providers—BSIL Southern Edges Training, Career Employment and Training, and the Salvation Army Employment Plus.

Table 8 Features implemented to improve employment and lifelong learning pathways for custodial offenders by state and territory^a, 2006

Provision	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT
Transition programs (release plan)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Linkage to ongoing support in the community	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Life skills training	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Career information through exposure to different industries and employers, and further education and training information	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Assistance with employment and initial post-release support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
State government or community initiatives	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reference with photographic identification	Yes	No ^b	No	No	No ^b	No ^c	No
Target marketing by selecting industries willing to employ ex-prisoners or forming partnerships with employers experiencing VET skills shortages	Yes	No ^b	No ^d	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: a The Australian Capital Territory's first adult prison is due to open in 2008.

b Sometimes but not routinely

c Educational references may be provided for those wishing to study further, mainly to TAFE.

d Service providers contracted to deliver Post-Release Employment Assistance Program (PREAP) target industries with labour shortages and recommend prisoners with skills seek employment with those industries.

²⁹ In 2007 by the Queensland Government Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR).

South Australia

For many years South Australia has had a designated pre-release prison located in the metropolitan area of Adelaide. The entire focus of the pre-release prison is on the re-integration of offenders back into the community. For this reason, this centre does not have an education centre, although it does employ an educational coordinator who assists prisoners to gain access to employment and training opportunities in the community. The centre has developed relationships with a range of public and private training providers with which it enrolls prisoners on a fee-for-service basis. It has also developed employment and training programs in conjunction with other government agencies. One of these resulted in prisoners receiving a statement of attainment from the VET Horticulture Training Package.

The pre-release program is also available to women prisoners and involves the purchasing of places in employment-support programs at introductory and intensive levels. Costs associated with the program restrict the number of prisoners accessing this program. In addition, the Department of Corrective Services' regulations allow prisoners in the pre-release stage of their sentence to undertake paid employment on prison leave programs.

Western Australia

The Community Re-entry Coordination Service agencies operate across Western Australia to provide ex-offenders with support services or refer them to other appropriate community-based agencies. The program seeks to develop and implement transitional services to support offenders' re-entry into the community and may include practical advice and support, finding employment and accommodation, accessing education and training and drug and alcohol services, or re-building social networks.

The Prisoner Traineeship Program is a feature of Western Australia's first systematic and comprehensive plan to ensure that offenders are prepared for successful re-entry into the community. Strategic partnerships have been established between government, non-government, business and community agencies to give prisoners in regional and metropolitan Western Australia a clear pathway from prison to employment through the Australian Apprenticeships scheme. It has also plugged the gaps in service delivery by helping to provide labour in key Western Australian industries short of skilled workers.

The 'throughcare' model ensures that prisoners successfully re-enter the community as job-ready, motivated, prepared and willing to make a real contribution. The Education and Vocational Training Unit has embarked on a series of projects around the state to promote and enhance employment opportunities for prisoners post-release. The projects highlight to all stakeholders (including prison executives, superintendents, prison industry managers, vocational and support officers, education staff and prisoners) what and where opportunities exist to fill labour shortages across regional and metropolitan Western Australia. The unit uses the terminology 'target marketing' to refer to the industries which have demonstrated a willingness to employ ex-offenders in viable, well-paid and sustainable employment positions in certain semi-skilled and skilled areas compatible with their lives as ex-offenders. A key factor for

success is to engage supportive employer groups, including the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Indigenous area consultative committees, Centrelink³⁰ and Community Re-Entry Coordination Service agencies.

The Education and Vocational Training Indigenous Education Program provides education and training to a diverse group of Indigenous offenders who require a wide range of educational and vocational assistance. The program, developed in consultation with metropolitan, regional and remote Indigenous communities, aims to provide training to optimise the capacity of the individual and to meet the skill requirements of the local community. Prisoners contribute to increasing the capacity of their communities by returning with relevant skills upon release from the correctional services system (see also Miller's chapter).

The Western Australian Department of Education and Training funds a career development program called Employment Directions Network, which comprises community-based, non-profit organisations, to provide people with the skills to ensure their future employability. Supported by the Departments of Corrective Services and Education and Training, Outcare³¹, is the job-placement organisation which deals with offenders and ex-offenders. Outcare provides advice and assistance with employment and careers, and completing job applications, resumes, and job searches. It provides offenders with training information and placement services before release from prison, and ongoing support after their release. In addition, Ruah Community Services³² provides social and emotional assistance to offenders and ex-offenders.

Tasmania

Educational sentence plans³³ encompass opportunities for prisoners to upgrade their skills and gain qualifications during their prison sentence. In addition, the Prisoner Education and Training Unit has attempted to link pre-release training with external training providers (including TAFE Tasmania) which have demonstrated their willingness to support offenders gaining a foothold in the labour market upon their release from prison. Prisoners are given the opportunity to attend external VET courses that have an inbuilt on-the-job component. This provides them with work experience and assists the employer to gain the most suitable employee.

A number of initiatives to provide successful re-integration have been implemented, including the Structured Training and Employment Projects

30 Centrelink is an agency of the Australian Government Department of Human Services and delivers a range of services to the community. Further information is available from the website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.centrelink.gov.au>>.

31 Outcare Inc. is a non-government provider of crime prevention services and programs. It was established in the early 1960s and operates in a variety of areas to enhance community stability and safety. Information available from website, viewed December 2006, <<http://members.iinet.com.au/~outcare/home.html>>.

32 Ruah Community Services is a not-for-profit company owned by the Congregation of the Catholic Church and governed by a board of directors—formerly the Daughters of Charity Services (WA) of St Vincent De Paul. Information available from website, viewed March 2007, <<http://www.ruah.com.au>>.

33 The education sentence plan provides appropriate timelines and establishes goals for release into the community.

(STEPS) scheme and the Indigenous Employment and Training Program. The latter is funded by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and places suitable Indigenous Australians in traineeships or work experience programs. It also provides wage assistance to prospective employers for up to 12 months and a mentoring program (contracted to the Colony 47 Inc.³⁴ agency) which provides mentors to work with individuals pre- and post-release to provide advice and assistance with accessing traineeships, employment and housing (see also Miller's chapter).

The Salvation Army³⁵ Prison Support Service (XCELL) was established through the organisation's Employment Plus Career Development Program. The service provides practical assistance and support for prisoners before and after release from prison. The program works with prisoners for between six and eight weeks before release to assist them to prepare a release plan. The program also offers counselling and support pre- and post-release, and provides referrals for employment and assistance with literacy problems.

Northern Territory

In collaboration with Job Network³⁶ members, the interactive prison-based Job Centre is a new initiative to prepare male and female prisoners for re-integration into communities. The Job Centre provides:

- ❖ training in business administration skills
- ❖ training in work-preparation skills
- ❖ training in job-search skills
- ❖ job placement of prisoners on or in preparation for release
- ❖ work opportunities, in collaboration with prison industries, to ensure offenders are working towards skills acquisition that will lead to meaningful employment and ongoing training
- ❖ opportunities for acquiring life skills
- ❖ opportunities for Job Network members to establish relationships for ongoing support of prisoners post-release.

34 Colony 47 Inc is a community-based not-for-profit organisation catering for young people who are disadvantaged socially, economically, educationally and culturally. It provides accommodation, housing outreach support, financial assistance and some material aid, independent living skills training, support and counselling, budgeting, job-search training, employment placement and recreational opportunities. It delivers services from six sites in Southern Tasmania. It employs over 100 people and offers the flexibility to be able to work with clients at these sites, in their homes, at schools or in the community. Information available from the website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.colony47.com.au/>>.

35 See footnote 14.

36 Job Network, an Australian Government initiative, is a national network of private and community organisations dedicated to finding jobs for unemployed people, particularly the long-term unemployed. Further information is available from the website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.jobnetwork.gov.au/>>.

Objective 4: Creating an accountable system

Creating an accountable system that provides equitable vocational and training outcomes for offenders requires VET delivered in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework and the establishment of reporting and evaluation measures for qualitative and quantitative outcomes for offender participation in VET. Table 9 lists features which have been implemented to improve accountability of the systems.

New South Wales

All Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute and TAFE NSW institute teachers are required to complete monthly student progress reports and monthly activity reports. The student progress report describes the monthly progress of enrolled students in each class. The activity report provides data on how many educational profile interviews and literacy and numeracy assessments have been completed, as well as a summary of completed modules and certificates.

Each correctional centre's senior correctional education officer submits a monthly statistical report to the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute Head Officer which summarises the data obtained from all monthly reports completed by correctional education officers and teachers. Data from these reports are downloaded into the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute's central database. Reports on participation and outcomes from education programs are included in the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services annual report. The New South Wales Department of Corrective Services is also responsible for the collection and reporting of data to measure achievement against the National Correctional Indicators. The Productivity Commission publishes these indicators for each jurisdiction in Australia annually.

Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute staff use standardised reports to monitor and review centre-based and registered training organisation-wide data related to module and certificate completions and participation in programs by target group and course type.

Table 9 Features implemented to improve accountability of participation and outcomes of VET for prisoners by state and territory^a, 2006

Provision	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT
AQTF records and reports	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Central database for education and training participation and outcomes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Integrated offender management system including education and training participation	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
External audits	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Benchmarks, monitoring, evaluation and research for future policy directions	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Relationship with community groups and employers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
National Corrections Performance Indicators reported to Productivity Commission annually. For example, the percentage of prisoners participating in education and training programs ^c (Productivity Commission 2007)	35	32	24	50	43	62	89

Notes: a The Australian Capital Territory's first adult prison is due to open in 2008.
 b Collection of data related to education provision is separate from the main offender management data system but redevelopment plans for main data system incorporate education data.
 c The Productivity Commission (2007) reports participation rates for education and training but the data have many sources of variation, including different counting methods—a single day count and a monthly count averaged over the 12-month period (private conversation with Ian Fraser, SA Department of Correctional Services March 2007). Therefore these data are only indicative of participation in VET in prisons.

Victoria

The Corrections Victoria Bearing Point Implementation Committee (Bearing Point 2003) was established to oversee and drive the planning process for education and training provision in the prison system. Developments include:

- ❖ a performance management framework in its conceptual stage, which is anticipated to be trialled in 2008
- ❖ a series of local agreements between individual prisons and their designated TAFE provider.

These local agreements or memoranda of understanding set out the roles and responsibilities of both the prison management and the TAFE provider in ensuring the timely, relevant and quality delivery of VET in each prison. The agreements also set out processes and protocols for VET responses to changing environments in the prison (that is, agreed processes for negotiating changes to delivery within a funding cycle).

Queensland

Nationally accredited VET is available to all prisoners in Queensland correctional centres, including the two privately operated centres. The only restrictions to participation are physical ability, safety and security risks, and the prisoner's desire to participate. Training is delivered by both public (TAFE) and private

providers who gain contracts through a centralised competitive tendering process jointly administered by the Queensland Corrective Services and Department of Employment and Training.

Delivery of VET for prisoners is consistent with the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework standards which address issues of resourcing, benchmarking, reporting and monitoring. An established reporting process exists for training providers through a delivery contract for a strategic purchasing program. Indicators developed for a program review and evaluation are consistent with national and state policy and planning processes and are monitored periodically. The Post-Release Employment Assistance Program is reviewed and evaluated annually and any emerging issues are dealt with by an interdepartmental steering committee.

South Australia

The Department of Correctional Services has a policy directed towards ensuring that, wherever possible, prison and community-based education and training programs will provide offenders with national VET qualifications. Following the recommendations of an external audit of its registered training organisation's activities and to comply with the national strategy, the Department of Correctional Services has put into operation a new database system. The department has been converting existing data to a new system which complies with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard (AVETMISS).

Western Australian

The Education and Vocational Training Unit holds itself accountable for prisoners' education and training and welfare by forging working partnerships with community interest groups and other relevant government and non-government organisations. A special focus is vocational education and training and the welfare of Indigenous prisoners.

Evaluation and research are integral to the practice of the Education and Vocational Training Unit in that it informs initiatives, strategies and innovative projects. Recent client surveys have provided valuable feedback to the unit on prisoner and teacher views of education and training in Western Australian prisons. Ninety per cent of students and teachers surveyed described their prison education experiences as positive (Laird 2005).

The Education and Vocational Training Unit collects data detailing all offender education and vocational training activities across Western Australia. The data are compliant with the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard and articulate to the state VET data capture procedures which contribute to the National VET Collection managed by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). Another measurable outcome relates to student enrolments. In 2004–05 there were 15 000 enrolments for units of competency leading to nationally recognised VET qualifications. They include some 7000 enrolments in adult basic education at certificate I level, the level significant for entry-level training for pre-employment.

For many prisoners this is their first vocational certificate and it may assist them in gaining their first job or re-entry to the labour market.

Western Australia continues to have a high percentage of its prisoner population in VET programs compared with other jurisdictions involved in the National Corrections Advisory Group reporting framework. The Education and Vocational Training Unit has enrolled an average of around 52% of the prison population in education and training over the last five years compared with a national average of about 45%.

A proportion of the Department of Education and Training TAFE college profile funding is allocated each year for the specific purpose of VET for adult prisoners and offenders. These VET enrolments (amounting to 178 000 normal hours in 2004) are included in the state's National Agreement performance claim.

Tasmania

The Prisoner Education and Training Unit is a registered training organisation and continues to maintain all compliance measurements required by the Australian Quality Training Framework. It has implemented and maintains a record management system which is systematic, and able to produce reports for both the Department of Justice and the Department of Education.

The Department of Education and Training convenes the state Vocational Educational and Training Equity Advisory Committee and the state Vocational Education and Training Reference Group, which also has representation from the Tasmania Prison Service Prisoner Education and Training Unit.

Northern Territory

All prisoners in Northern Territory Correctional Services have equity of access to available education and training courses. All training offered is from nationally registered training packages. As a registered training organisation, the Northern Territory Correctional Services agency has to comply with all the standards of the Australian Quality Training Framework. Systems have been developed to record and report against requirements and to deliver nationally recognised qualifications. An electronic database handles all record-keeping and reporting requirements and is to be linked to a new electronic integrated offender management system at present under development. Professional development for staff is also encouraged.

In conclusion

All states and territories are working towards implementing the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia (ANTA 2001). The main features include ensuring that:

- ❖ education and training are integrated into other areas of prison activities, especially prison industries

- ❖ all prisoners undergo an assessment of their education needs at the beginning of their sentence and/or referral to education
- ❖ prisoners with basic skill needs (literacy and numeracy) should have priority access to education and training to enhance their employment opportunities
- ❖ the focus is on enhancing the offender's employment opportunities post-release and thereby reducing the likelihood of re-offending.

Examples of innovative and good-practice programs and initiatives, along with a summary of programs implemented in the jurisdictions, are included in Halliday Wynes' chapter, 'Improving VET for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia'.

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Using research to inform practice: Western Australian correctional education

Christine Laird, Raymond Chavez and Melanie Zan

The Education and Vocational Training Unit of the Department of Corrective Services in Western Australia adapts and integrates knowledge from international and national research reports to assist with rehabilitation of offenders and their successful re-integration into the community. Different approaches are used to increase opportunities for education staff to engage with offenders. This increased interaction can forge productive partnerships to address offenders' learning needs. The current political and economic situation offers correctional educators and the Department of Corrective Services the opportunity to progress the 'throughcare' philosophy of rehabilitation to a degree not previously experienced in the state. This transformation is aided by the use of vocational education and training (VET). VET helps prepare offenders for employment, which is a major factor contributing to successful re-integration into the community.

The correctional education service coordinated by the Education and Vocational Training Unit was recognised when it was awarded the 2004 Access and Equity Award at the Western Australian Department of Education and Training's, Training Excellence awards. It subsequently won the National Australian Training Initiative Award as a model of best practice in the VET sector. In partnership with the federal Department of Education, Science and Training, TAFEWA, the Western Australian Department of Education and Training and private training providers, correctional education delivers accredited training to around 6000 prisoners a year in the state's 12 prisons and six prisoner work camps.

Introduction

IT IS ESSENTIAL to the success of correctional education programs that its practitioners are aware of worldwide trends and issues and which are common to all educators in the field. It is also important for these educators to be aware of how different jurisdictions are approaching common problems and how they go about addressing these situations in a positive manner. A key to successful correctional education programming is the ability to adapt and integrate information from a range of professional areas and locations, and develop that

knowledge into a format that can be implemented into the local correctional environment.

This chapter will demonstrate how the Education and Vocational Training Unit (subsequently referred to as the unit) of the Western Australian Department of Corrective Services uses information from a wide range of sources to continually develop a program that is meeting the needs of the state's disadvantaged offenders. When it became a nationally registered training organisation in 2000, the unit decided that its role must expand into the offender workplace areas located throughout the prison. Subsequently, the unit was recognised in 2004 for the manner in which it successfully provides educational services to offenders when it was presented with three separate awards. The first was the 2004 Access and Equity Award at the Western Australian Department of Education and Training's Training Excellence awards. Subsequently, it won the National Australian Training Initiative Award as a model of best practice in the VET sector (including technical and further education [TAFE] institutes and private training providers) in the National and State Vocational Training Excellence awards and received a High Commendation in the Western Australian Premier's Awards. Most recently its Labour Market Skills Program was a finalist in the 2006 Premier's Award for Jobs and Economic Development¹ for training prisoners specifically in industries where there are skills shortages. Through partnerships with industries, including construction, hospitality and agriculture, employment is secured for prisoners on release from prison.

Presented here is a general outline of the development and organisation of the program. A practical example of the program's implementation at Casuarina prison, located in Perth's outer metropolitan area, is also provided.

Before discussing Casuarina prison, it is worth taking note of some of the factors, organisational details and the philosophical underpinnings of the unit. As Western Australia covers 2.5 million square kilometres (one million square miles), the 'tyranny of distance' plays a definite role in the administration and provision of correctional education services to the state's offenders. Another distinguishing characteristic of the prison system is the high percentage of Indigenous Australian offenders (approximately 40%) from across the state. This population is comprised of people from remote communities, regional centres and metropolitan areas. In addition, there is an increasing number of foreign nationals being incarcerated for illegal entry into Australia. This segment of the prison population is of non-English speaking background, so their needs can significantly impact on service delivery.

The unit is responsible for the provision of adult basic, secondary, tertiary and vocational training education at each of the 12 public prisons in Western Australia. This involves educational delivery in each education centre and the organisation of vocational training in each prison industry area in the state's seven work camps and, increasingly, for community service work parties that are

1 2006 Premier's Awards for excellence in Public Sector Management, Government of Western Australia. Available at <http://www.premiersawards.dpc.wa.gov.au/documents/Profile06_web.pdf>.

comprised of sentenced offenders who are housed in local prisons. It provides these services through its status as a nationally registered training organisation and a participating member of the Australian vocational education and training system. This status ensures that the unit can provide nationally recognised accredited training to offenders and develop an effective network of working partnerships with other registered training organisations, employers and industry bodies that can benefit offenders' opportunities for employment and/or further education post-release.

The decision to become a registered training organisation in 2000 and expand services beyond what was once generally an adult basic education program was made largely to enable greater choice and flexibility in scope of delivery. It also was based on an acknowledgment of the recommendations of a number of research studies that discussed the value of vocational training and the importance of post-release employment. In recent years, these studies have increased in number, with the most comprehensive almost certainly being the American study, the *Report of the Re-entry Policy Council* (Council of State Governments 2005), which highlighted the importance of implementing a holistic program which includes both pre- and post-release support for offenders returning to the community.

The unit consistently reviews and is informed by national and international research studies from different disciplines and professional areas. This is one of the major ways by which the program attempts to implement a policy of continuous improvement. It also reflects the unit's belief that a key to successful correctional education programming is the ability to adapt and integrate information from a range of areas and worldwide locations, and incorporate that knowledge into a format that can meet local conditions.

These influences are combined with a working philosophy that has guided the unit's decision-making in regards to working within the correctional system. The unit adopted the viewpoint that it is more beneficial to pursue program goals and direction as a registered training organisation that provides its services to a correctional system rather than as a part of the correctional system that works as a registered training organisation. This viewpoint is more conducive to embracing change and innovation, a view which has not traditionally been as openly supported by all sections of the correctional system. This position also progresses the unit's attempts to have the correctional system recognise that, as part of the community, it should adopt a more open approach to engaging and developing both internal and external working partnerships.

The Education and Vocational Training Unit's strategic objectives are to provide a systematic, comprehensive, client-centred educational program for its multi-disadvantaged students and contribute to the ongoing cultural and operational reform in the state prisons. The unit aims to 'normalise' as much as possible, both the learning experience for the individual student and the existence of education and training within the prison system itself. The unit is committed to encouraging prisoner engagement with the educational process, increasing participation in further education and training, developing learning

pathways into the community for its students, and optimising their post-release employment prospects.

The unit has implemented and continues to introduce initiatives that provide incentives to prisoners to engage in the educational process and address any educational issues stemming from negative experiences in the mainstream school system. Those initiatives involve identifying systemic barriers to participation and strategically negotiating suitable solutions that expand the opportunities for prisoners to access education and vocational training during their sentence. For example, prisoners are issued with nationally recognised qualifications from training organisations such as TAFE colleges and are therefore not identified as having undertaken their studies within a prison.

The Education and Vocational Training Unit Program

The unit's program is informed and guided by a combination of professional guidelines, standards and principles but the major influences are:

- ❖ the national strategy for vocational education and training for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia
- ❖ the Australian Qualifications Training Framework
- ❖ adult education principles
- ❖ the 'normalisation' concept—as it relates to the criminal justice system, where civil rights are retained
- ❖ National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy
- ❖ organisational management theory.

Program characteristics

- ❖ VET—increasing emphasis on vocational education and training in the curriculum
- ❖ flexible—increasing interaction with offenders where they are employed
- ❖ practical, contextual approach—increasing emphasis on the preferred learning style of most offenders
- ❖ integrated training—combining literacy and numeracy directly to VET
- ❖ post-release focus—emphasising sustainable post-release outcomes
- ❖ expansion of working partnerships—both internally and externally to the Department of Corrective Services
- ❖ program promotion—actively educating the community about the program to rehabilitate offenders and equip them with employment skills and work experience to reduce re-offending.

As may be expected, the more relevant professional sources of information and advice for the unit are necessarily derived from the education profession, especially correctional, vocational, Indigenous and adult basic education.

Importantly, however, management or organisational learning which promotes higher performance, skill development, and program accountability is of significant value, as it provides the tools to ensure the implementation of an effective and verifiable professional practice when working within a sometimes non-supportive environment.

Factors that shape the program

There are currently worldwide trends that see governments attempting to reduce public service expenditure, while at the same time they are experiencing an increase in prisoner populations. This situation has resulted in correctional educators having to assess the role they must undertake in order to be in a position to provide effective programs. Even in Western Australia, where this 'squeeze' has been less severe, the unit reacted by deciding to engage in the active promotion of its program to secure the political and government support necessary for the delivery of correctional education in prisons. This decision is in line with the recommendations made in Gail Spangenburg's study (2004), which highlighted the need for educators to commence 'performing better public relations on the importance of the job that CE [correctional education] was doing for the community' if it were to succeed in achieving its goals.

Adhering to the need for increased program promotion, the unit now takes a more pragmatic view of proposed educational initiatives. The program is guided by adult education principles and a recognition of the importance of a holistic approach and broad interpretation of adult literacy. However, it now also considers the promotional value of any proposed initiative as it relates to publicising the program and supporting the unit's efforts to secure appropriate budget allocations. A prime example of the new program approach was the unit's decision to nominate for the National Training Excellence Awards in 2004. The major factors in the decision were the criteria for the awards themselves, the congruence of the national VET aims and objectives with correctional education guiding principles, and importantly, the fact that nominating for the awards would increase correctional education promotion and educate the wider community (as recommended in Spangenburg's study). *Vis-à-vis* increased government interest in correctional education, today, if it occurs, it is generally related to the cost savings that may potentially be produced for the community by way of reduced re-offending (LoPinto n.d.). Interest therefore can be generated for training initiatives that provide offenders with opportunities for securing sustainable post-release employment and so assist in keeping offenders outside the criminal justice system. The task is to develop holistic programs within this 'training to post-release employment' format that promote a pre- and post-release support structure that will assist offenders to make a successful change in lifestyle.

The focus on employment as a positive factor in successful offender re-integration is a major reason for the unit's move towards a wider acceptance of VET as a vehicle for addressing the educational needs and requirements of offenders. The traditional inclusion of practical learning within VET aligns with the preferred learning style of many offenders, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous. It underscores the premise that 'most people learn best through practical, contextual experience' (Management and Training Organisation Institute 2003a, 2003b) and so supports its applicability to the prison context and the new emphasis on VET that the unit decided to adopt. The decision to accept the veracity of supporting research, in regard to VET and its relevance to the state's prisoners, led to three major developments: the acceptance that education in prisons should necessarily include an increase in emphasis on vocational training; a concerted effort to move into prison offender work areas where many offenders spent the majority of their workday and where, consequently, contextual learning was best provided; and thirdly, the development of the prison workplace-based Hands-on Learning Program (HOLP).

Although the Hands-on Learning Program is delivered in the prison industry area, the aim of the program is not to achieve accredited vocational competence; rather, it is to increase positive interaction with offenders who have traditionally not re-engaged in the educational process. This program uses a team-teaching mode of delivery that provides offenders who have low levels of educational attainment with contextual numeracy and literacy support while participating in vocational skills-based learning. These offenders are generally reticent about attending prison education centres. This program therefore is delivered in selected prison workshop areas or in vocational skills learning centres located in prison industries. In order to attract participants, different vocational learning areas that may be of interest to offenders are utilised. It is the regular interaction with education staff in areas outside the education centres that facilitates an increase in educational involvement by offenders who have traditionally not participated in education and training.

The program does not concentrate solely on adult basic education; instead it is guided by the premise that, for those 'most at risk', it is beneficial for educational re-engagement to be integrated with and taught in the context of vocational training. In this manner, offenders understand how a specific skill is used and have an opportunity to practise it immediately. This approach with the use of meaningful, authentic tasks accelerates learning and improves the ability of students to apply their new knowledge (Imel 2000). This adoption of an integrated contextual learning approach was supported by reports that found effectiveness of training and enhancing of long-term employment prospects would be increased if the programs were multi-modal, well integrated, and helped improve the motivation of offenders to participate (Holzer, Raphael & Stoll 2002). This was subsequently supported by both an American study by Seiter and Kadela (2003) and a Home Office report by Duncan Stewart (2005) that found that literacy and numeracy tuition alone did not significantly impact on reducing recidivism and offenders' prospects for successful re-integration to the community.

This integrated approach to learning is increasingly becoming a defining feature of the unit's program. When combined with the wider scope of delivery, it is now enabling the unit to offer training in 'targeted markets' of community employment—industry areas that have demonstrated a willingness to accept ex-offenders, offer sustainable work opportunities at favourable wages and are compatible with the aspirations of the offenders involved (Home Builders' Institute 1999). Although the unit's responsibility lies with training in prison, its acceptance of the importance of employment placement in targeted areas as a vehicle for successful re-integration has led to an expanded effort into the post-release assessment and support areas. This is reflected in current initiatives, which have been organised so that training participants can secure employment through the industry contacts of the respective vocational training provider. This decision to actively implement initiatives that contain post-release employment placement characterises the unit's determination to ensure it adheres to research findings, while also trying to create the recommended structure and design for program monitoring and evaluation (Urban Institute 2002).

In order to adhere to these recommendations, the unit has undertaken and participated in a review of the Department of Corrective Services model of VET and prison industries in order to assess whether the system adheres to best-practice models (Jury 2003). It has also conducted research with the University of Western Australia in a review of prison-based education and training funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) (Giles et al. 2004), and is negotiating a longitudinal study to review the role that education and training plays in reducing re-offending in Western Australia. Prior to these research initiatives, and in line with recent re-entry research recommendations, the unit developed the concept of Linking Offenders to Services (LOTS), an initiative supported by a committee comprised of representatives from both the Australian Government and state governments and non-government organisations that regularly meets to discuss coordination of offender post-release services.

The emphasis on the importance of post-release employment in research studies comes at a time when this state is situated in a very favourable economic position due to the growth generated by the 'resources boom' and the decision to expand and develop the state's infrastructure. These situations have created well-paying employment opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled workers (Uren & Ord 2005). The unit, due to its earlier decision to expand its scope and to become a participant in the national VET system, is now in a position to facilitate training in areas it has 'target marketed' and which are now identified as experiencing skill shortages. The capacity to assist in employment placement of offenders adds impetus to the case that education and training, if allocated sufficient support, can assist in successfully preparing offenders for life post-release. In being able to achieve this, the unit assists the state with some of its most vexing problems—how to address the high rates of criminal re-offending, which costs taxpayers an unacceptable and increasing amount of tax dollars, and the need to secure labour for the state's growing industries.

Correctional and vocational education and training

Participating as a registered training organisation within the national VET system affords the unit a recognised vehicle for increasing offenders' prospects for post-release success. It also offers access to a large national forum in which to educate the community about the services it provides. This access to the large 'mainstream' education and vocational training network offers correctional education the opportunity to reach a much greater audience than could be achieved by correctional educators if they were restricted to promoting their cause within the criminal justice sector alone.

While the explicit role of correctional educators is to provide educational services to offenders, it also includes an important advocacy role for reform of the criminal justice system itself. Correctional systems are characterised by conflicting and competing interests as they serve different core functions. Rehabilitation, with its focus on the individual offender, post-release welfare and long-term aims and objectives, can be overshadowed within the agenda of large government departments, whose overriding political responsibility lies in maintaining a security apparatus that necessarily has a more 'immediate' and internal focus (Coyle 2004). Criminal justice systems are increasingly acknowledging that international research has identified that appropriately supported rehabilitation of offenders can save the community the costs associated with repeat criminal behaviour. The problem, however, remains with implementation at the local prison level, where the support for rehabilitative programs must be realised in practical terms (Callan & Gardner 2005). The solution to the situation may be in the establishment of new measures of a prison's effectiveness, and an increasing awareness of the programming effect on recidivism. An increasingly informed prison management has the capacity to force a reconsideration of the traditional view that key performance measures for prisons should revolve mainly around the areas of security and containment (Management Training Organisation Institute 2003c).

In line with the *Report of the Re-entry Policy Council* (Council of State Governments 2005) and the Urban Institute's (Kachnowski 2005) *Employment and offender re-entry* that highlight that prison-based programs significantly impact on the post-release lives of offenders, the unit promotes, and is attempting to increase, its provision of accredited community-based work experience programs. The importance of the provision of work experience training is supported by both a Canadian study (John Howard Society 2002), which sees as critical the need for correctional education to be 'focusing on applicable job market skills' and an Australian study by Graffam et al. (2004) that recommends 'targeting employment as one of the key elements to successful lifestyle change'. The importance of specifically targeted employment rather than just general employment placement, the advantage of employment that offers higher wages (Uggen 2000) and the provision of sustainable and legitimate employment opportunities (Bernstein & Houston 2000) are identified as factors that can reduce the chances of re-offending following release from prison. These findings, combined with the benefits provided by work experience, offer the offender the opportunity to commence the mental process of change that will be required

if they are to adopt a non-criminal lifestyle. These factors form the basis of the unit's concerted effort to gather administrative and political support for community-based work experience programs.

The introduction of new VET initiatives, similar to all areas that involve change in prison regimes, is a work in progress, an activity characterised by small changes made over a period of time. The varied responsibilities faced by prison management traditionally have meant that changes are not always openly embraced by all sections of the local institution. In order to address these traditionally conflicting priorities, the unit endeavours to influence criminal justice policy so that it reflects the fact that, in order for the correctional system to optimise rehabilitative potential, there must be a concerted effort for the introduction of a 'normalisation' of prison life. This viewpoint was influenced by discussions on correctional education in Denmark with William Rentzmann, Danish Director of Prisons and Probation, which were held in Perth in 1999.

The 'normalisation principle' itself is a key concept to the management of prisons in Scandinavia. The principle is based on the premise that offenders should retain their civil rights while incarcerated and, since the lives of most of offenders are not much different from those of other members of their community, it is best to include rather than exclude them in normal activities whenever possible (Svensson & Somander 1998). This information helped influence the decision by the unit to become a registered training organisation in 2000. This status not only allowed the unit the capacity to offer offenders the same training as other community-based students, including access to New Apprenticeships (now called Australian Apprenticeships), but it gave the unit itself previously non-existent recognition within both the general education and VET community. Community-based work experience training is the best example of how the normalisation principle is shaping our current training initiatives.

Along with the effort to introduce the European concept of normalisation, the unit also aims to incorporate the 'egalitarianism' traditionally associated with the Australian educational system, where educational participation is open and available to those wishing to participate, regardless of age or mode of study (Karmel 2004). This decision to combine normalisation and equality of access principles in order to better reflect community standards has resulted in the general acceptance of correctional education programs in the wider community. This in turn creates the framework for both the implementation of reform of the correctional system and education and employment pathways from prison to the community.

Casuarina Prison

Casuarina Prison, although a maximum security facility, has been one of the more open prisons in regard to implementing new ideas on multi-site education and the integration of prison industry employment and VET. This is mainly due to the progressive nature of the prison administration and the willingness of prison industry staff to participate in facilitating accredited training as part of their duties. While the reliance on the 'personality factor' has generally worked in favour of education at Casuarina, personality-driven methods of prison

administration have not traditionally worked in such a positive manner for educational programs in the past (Coyle 2002). The unit works to replace this style of personality-driven administration with the introduction of a system of standards, guidelines and measurable outcomes that will heighten accountability and transparency for the entire prison sector.

As previously mentioned, a key to successful correctional education programming is the ability to successfully adapt and integrate information to meet local conditions. The Casuarina training program has been developed with the use of organisational management program principles, VET research studies and international reports in the correctional education field. The *Not exactly rocket science* (McDonald et al. 2005) report with its review of characteristics of good practice, and the Urban Institute's (2002) correctional education work on 'effective correctional programming characteristics' are examples of research that have informed the direction of the program and the manner in which to approach its development and implementation.

At Casuarina, the prison education centre provides learning opportunities in adult basic, Indigenous and vocational education. Included in the curriculum are information technology, literacy and numeracy, and a range of other units of competency that are of interest or may be required by offenders. There is a substantial need and high demand for basic education, as a very high percentage of offenders require literacy and numeracy assistance. Due to the need for individual tuition, classes are kept small and materials are adapted to assist the students to successfully engage in the learning process. Offenders who study the more practical VET subjects but require tuition in the theoretical components of their course also attend the centre.

In regard to the overarching program, Casuarina prison was the site for a Reframing the Future (national VET practitioners capacity-building program) change-management project in 2004. The positive practical training outcomes of that exercise are now being practised and will continue to be implemented in other areas in the future. The project aimed to introduce a multi-level and cross-team decision-making process to the prison in order to develop and implement a coordinated approach to the introduction of education and training into the industry area of the prison. The cooperation and increased communication engendered by the project have paved the way for some of the correctional system's more innovative training initiatives.

The Casuarina program includes a mandatory accredited occupational safety and health program for all offenders at the prison, alongside food safe training for all offenders who handle food as part of their job. Those offenders who work in the designated prison kitchen participate in health and hygiene training through enrolment in the occupational health and safety training unit from the Hospitality Training Package, with most of these workers registered in an Australian Apprenticeship. The prison is piloting a program that requires prison industry workers to complete a set of three core units from the appropriate training package for their designated workplace as a condition of permanent employment in their respective prison workshop area. This initiative provides an opportunity to increase workshop safety and VET training. Importantly, it also

offers an opening to address individual offenders' basic education deficiencies, which can be identified when they are undertaking the three core units required for workshop placement.

Casuarina also has a successful woodwork-based Hands-on Learning Program in the Vocational Skills Training Centre. This program and the other Casuarina training initiatives all serve to increase the interaction between education staff and offenders across the prison site, as they break down barriers that have traditionally precluded an offender from addressing his/her educational needs. Very importantly, this distribution of educators across the prison also assists in the development of positive working relationship with prison industry staff.

In relation to Australian Apprenticeships, Casuarina has benefited from the improved communication resulting from the Reframing the Future project: recently Casuarina has been able to organise the introduction of training in residential construction into two work areas in the prison industries. This training is in response to the skill shortages that exist in this area and that are expected to continue for the foreseeable future. The training provider, with community-based industry support, is providing training to meet specific industry needs and then contacting interested employers, who may offer the participants of the course employment post-release. The project, quite significantly, is proving successful in attracting and retaining Indigenous offenders to the course. The project has gained the support of the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, which is providing funding for an expansion of the program to include offenders residing at selected 'exit' and regional prisons across the state.

Reframing the Future² has also assisted in the development of a partnership between the prison and the unit and involves providing a professional development training program for prison industry-based officers. The unit funds the training, and the prison supplies the workshop replacements while the training is undertaken. The participating officers then assist in the implementation of the offender training initiatives being piloted in prison industries. To date seven officers from the 15 workshops in the prison have completed the training program, while two other officers are still participating in the training.

Integration: The key to success

Part of the entry process for every sentenced prisoner in Western Australia is the development of an 'individual management plan', subsequently referred to as the plan. What makes this model unique in Australia is that the education and training component of a plan is conducted by qualified teachers and is integrated into the justice-based prisoner assessment and case management system. Therefore education and training is integrated into the prisoner management regime.

² Reframing the Future supports professional development programs for the VET sector staff and change-management programs to support the national training system. Further information is available at <<http://www.reframingthefuture.net>>.

The plan is vital to the prisoner's rehabilitation and includes specified and achievable academic and vocational training programs implemented by the unit. Education and training programs are individually tailored to meet prisoners' individual needs. The plans reflect the vocational desires of prisoners and are geared towards developing the skills that will contribute to their successful re-entry into the community. Training pathways exist between the state's prisons to ensure that prisoners are able to continue their studies in accordance with their plan as they move between prisons throughout their sentence.

The prison population is characterised by students with lower levels of educational attainment and includes people with disabilities, Indigenous people from cities, rural and remote communities, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, youth at risk, people from low socioeconomic backgrounds and women in all the above categories. The challenge is increased by the fact that many of the student group have multiple disadvantages. These students have also offended to a level which has warranted a custodial sentence, and many often have aspects to their personal backgrounds which compound the barriers to learning and skills development even further.

Although the unit delivers training in the prison environment, its success is based in large part on the holistic approach that takes into account the transition back into the community. Through its innovative program, the unit has taken on the special responsibility of providing prisoners with the opportunity—previously unattainable—for gaining equality of participation and achievement in the VET system. This is the basis for how the unit manages diversity and administers policies on the provision of education services.

The unit contributes to building stronger communities, both economically and socially, through learning and employment. The assistance given to individual prisoners has obvious and material benefits for the wider community, contributing to sustainable outcomes in that it improves prisoner self-esteem and life skills. Prisoners receive nationally recognised qualifications for skills learned in prison that provide opportunities for new directions in life. With better employment opportunities post-release there is an increased likelihood that prisoners will be more financially self-sufficient, rather than relying on welfare and crime.

Partnerships that underpin our model

The unit relies on strong partnerships with a variety of stakeholders, both within prisons and in the wider community. In 1997, management reviewed operational models for prisoner education and training in other Australian jurisdictions. The findings of this review produced a new model that drew on the best aspects from other jurisdictions across Australia. Key features of the unit include: its becoming a registered training organisation; formalising relationships with TAFE colleges into memoranda of understanding and allocations of profile hours from the state; establishing Australian Apprenticeships within the prison system; accessing federal Indigenous education and training monies; and integrating education and training into prisons' operations statewide.

TAFE delivery in prisons is focused on accrediting training at certificate II or higher. Lower-level training in access and equity courses and certificate I are predominately delivered through the Department of Corrective Services because it is not constrained by class sizes, nominal hours and fees which can hamper innovation and flexible approaches to engagement of the multi-disadvantaged learner.

Delivery by external registered training organisations also takes place across the state. Delivery at certificate II and above is predominately undertaken by these external providers, which enables prisoners to receive qualifications easily recognised by employers and having no link to a prison environment. Wherever possible one provider will provide delivery for a specific industry area across multiple prison sites. This strategy addresses the need for prisoners to be able to move across prisons throughout their sentences and complete nationally recognised qualifications while doing so. Anecdotal evidence shows that this strategy decreases the need for withdrawal because of transfers, assists with unit completions, and establishes links with external providers who have particular content expertise.

Within the prison system

The unit has developed service-level agreements to formalise partnerships between each prison, their respective education centre and the centrally located management of the unit. The service-level agreements outline the proposed delivery of education and vocational training programs at each prison. This 'operational plan for delivery' ensures that program provision is in accordance with a mutually agreed schedule. In return prisons agree to have prisoners, facilities and the necessary supervision structures in place to enable delivery to occur. The education service comprises contract staff, permanent education employees, prison industrial officers, TAFE staff and volunteers. The unit endeavours to provide a comprehensive program at each prison to address the needs of prisoners, while adhering to established training pathways across the prison system that make it possible for a prisoner to transfer and continue their studies at a number of sites.

External agencies

To assist the re-entry of prisoners back into the community the unit has established a networking forum that is attended by external agencies who provide services to prisoners post-release. A number of organisations were identified as having a brief to assist prisoners during the transitional phase of re-entering the community. The 'Linking Offenders To Services' forum, as noted earlier, endeavours to streamline service delivery to prisoners by providing links with services such as accommodation, support groups, further education and financial assistance. This forum provides the framework for the development of a collaborative effort by the Department of Corrective Services, the Department of Education and Training, Centrelink, not-for-profit agencies funded to work with ex-offenders, Job Network agencies, private and public training providers and

other employers across many different industries with the aim of establishing a sustainable future for ex-prisoners returning to the community.

Employer groups

Effective partnership arrangements between employer groups, the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Corrective Services and group training agencies have been established to support prisoner re-entry to the world of work post-release. These agencies provide employment linkages for ex-prisoners who have undertaken traineeships, other training or education in prison. This is achieved by placing and supporting ex-offenders into suitable apprenticeships, traineeships or employment. The unit has partnerships with a small number of employers who are willing to recruit ex-prisoners and who are known to understand the issues facing offenders re-entering the workforce. The unit is planning to meet with employer groups to expand the current service and the number of options prisoners have to access the labour market.

On-the-job training in prison industries

One of the most innovative ways in which the unit has met prisoners' needs is the development of the Hands-on Learning Program. This program, provided in the prison industrial workshop areas, has been very successful, especially with Indigenous students who have not been able to progress in a 'mainstream' educational setting. This program is a strategy to target those prisoners reluctant to engage in work or training in prison and provides them with a positive vehicle for further engagement in education, training and work. As a result of increased self-esteem and skills acquisition, students in this program are better able to take up more complex prison work.

Vocational training has now become more accepted as an integral component of the prison industry workshops. The Department of Corrective Services and industry in the community recognise that prison industries are real places of work. The unit integrates training into these prison workplaces obviating the need for simulated training environments. In providing the prisoners with real work and real training that meets skills shortages, the unit's ability to play a role in shaping the direction of prison industries is demonstrated.

An independent evaluation conducted in 2003 confirmed that accurate alignment between prison industries and industry skills shortages is vital. Subsequently, numerous projects have emerged which work with stakeholders (prison administrators, industry managers, industrial officers, prisoners and external employer groups) to promote the skilling of prisoners for employment placement post-release.

It has been necessary for the unit to form working partnerships with industrial staff and prison administrators to successfully incorporate training into everyday prison work. The unit has provided industrial staff with training for the Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training and in doing so has reinforced their roles as instructors and trainers in addition to their supervisory

duties. Education and TAFE staff also work closely with these industrial officers to complement their trade skills with VET and Australian Quality Training Framework expertise. Challenges arise when the balance between production and training tips in favour of profit. The unit often finds itself negotiating small gains until the circumstances allow for the balance to be restored.

With the assistance of a Reframing the Future project grant, and the support of the executive administration of a local prison, the unit has implemented a strategy to increase the number of prisoners working in those prison industries which introduced vocational education and training as part of the induction process for their workers. The strategy works towards encouraging prisoners to work in areas where VET is openly provided, and learning is part of the working week routine. It is hoped that this situation will create an impetus for the workshop instructors to participate in accredited training activities that are currently provided informally—because prisoners will choose to work where training is available.

An expected outcome from the Reframing the Future project will be the development of a Department of Corrective Services industry training reference group to assist with future decision-making about vocational training, prison industries and the directions taken by local prison administrators. These decisions will be shaped by labour market skills shortages, the desire to achieve positive community outcomes and the maximising of opportunities for training within the prisons across the state.

Traineeships

Another way in which on-the-job training is successful concerns the partnership forged with the Department of Education and Training. This partnership has involved developing procedures and agreements to facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive Australian Apprenticeships program within prisons.

Through this innovative on-the-job training model, prisoners are successfully re-entering the community as skilled, motivated men and women, prepared and willing to make a real contribution to society. A recent survey of prisoners who completed traineeships in a twelve-month period in 2004–05 and who were released on parole, has shown that 71% were employed in the community, with a further 80% of this group employed in the industry area in which they received training (Sheard 2005).

The unit is actively involved in formal research partnerships with a number of tertiary institutions in order to substantiate its claims that the model assists in reducing re-offending. For example, the Department of Corrective Services has formed a partnership with a meat processing company. This off-site work exposes trainees to the real working conditions of a going commercial concern, while, importantly, allowing them to interact with abattoir staff who may become their co-workers in the future. Abattoirs in Western Australia are short of skilled labour but, now, due to the success of the training program, prisons are able to supply a skilled labour force.

The meat processing industry partnerships are a prime example of how the unit targets training and employment opportunities for prisoners in industries that display a willingness to employ ex-prisoners. The 'target-marketing' process is informed by employment research from relevant federal, state and local industry labour market agencies and departments.

Community work projects

The unit has also been successful in integrating training into work activities that occur in a community setting. These activities can include projects carried out in conjunction with local government and not-for-profit organisations. Such activities range from landcare restoration, building and construction projects, and work undertaken for charitable organisations. The projects are of great financial, environmental and social benefit to the local communities in which they are located and they have now become an avenue for vocational training delivery for prisoners. By engaging TAFE in this community-based training delivery, links are established between prisoners, lecturers, TAFE institutes and potential employers. The likelihood of prisoners continuing training with the same provider post-release is increased as a result of the relationships formed.

The unit's training for prisoners based at the Department of Corrective Service's work camps is another highly successful innovation benefiting communities. Prisoner work camps are located in regional areas around the state and involve minimum-security prisoners undertaking community work projects that might otherwise not be done because of a lack of labour. This strategy also promotes equity of participation, particularly for Indigenous prisoners.

A key focus for the unit has been the establishment of stronger links with Indigenous community representatives in order to advise education staff on VET delivery needs in regional areas. Each prison has an Indigenous education and training advisory group which aims to contribute to economic growth and job creation in rural and remote Aboriginal communities. The unit is working with communities to target skills training in prisons to build the capacity of both the individual and the community.

Conclusion

The Education and Vocational Training Unit of the Western Australian Department of Corrective Services is in a favourable position to assist offenders to more fully integrate into Australian society. This is due in no small part to its policy of utilising current international research in its attempts to develop an effective correctional education program. Research has made a valuable contribution to the unit's success. However, the ability of staff to develop constructive working partnerships with local prison administrators and their officers has been equally valuable. The favourable state of the Western Australian labour market, where every individual is required to meet the needs of the growing economy, has opened the door for government consideration of innovative ways in which to better prepare offenders for a contributing role in the community.

The unit has made significant operational improvements in the structure and delivery of education and training in Western Australian prisons. Improvements have been achieved through partnerships with TAFE colleges, enterprises, industry groups and individual communities (particularly in regional Western Australia) to meet the training needs of offenders, particularly as they re-enter the community.

The education program for Western Australian prisons addresses the state's unacceptably high rate of recidivism and re-imprisonment by giving prisoners support throughout the duration of their sentence of imprisonment and establishing a smooth transition to education and training support after re-entry. It takes the concept of prison industries (where prisoners work within industrial workshops inside the prison) and other programs available to prisoners to a new level by acknowledging and addressing the special needs of this group and integrating the work of community agencies, training providers and employers to achieve the standards required for accredited qualifications.

The program acknowledges that there is a strong correlation between education and skills development, which can lead to long-term, satisfying employment and reduced recidivism rates. It also promotes sustainability by working to break down prejudices of employers and to build relationships between the prisons, employers, relevant government agencies and training providers.

Prison industries can provide onsite vocational training opportunities. Adult basic education services are also available for those in need. These activities benefit the prisoner, the employer and, ultimately, the general community.

The success of the unit's program is based on effective partnerships with a number of stakeholders. By communicating more effectively with the appropriate agencies, industry representatives and departments, prisoner training can be tailored to reflect industry needs and focus on those industries suffering from skill shortages. By doing so, duplication of services can be identified and eliminated, and other support can be better timed and targeted.

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Throughcare and VET for adult prisoners and offenders within the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services

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'Throughcare' is a coordinated and integrated approach to reducing re-offending by people who are the responsibility of the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services. Central to the concept of Throughcare is the assessment of offenders' risks and needs and the concomitant provision of appropriate programs that target needs and account for various levels of risk. Throughcare also involves the establishment of links between the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services and other government and non-government agencies that support the successful return of ex-offenders to the community. Education programs support Throughcare by providing offenders with opportunities to develop basic education and the employability and vocational skills needed to gain and maintain employment. The work experience and vocational training provided within Corrective Services Industries further enhance the likelihood that offenders will successfully re-integrate into the community post-release.

The New South Wales Department of Corrective Services also implements a range of pre-release transitional support strategies. Education programs and education staff are integral components of many of these strategies. In addition, community-based programs, such as the New South Wales Corrective Services' Community Offenders Services and the TAFE NSW initiative, the Pathways to Employment, Education and Training Program, enhance Throughcare by supporting offenders to re-engage with training and develop the skills to enter employment and/or vocational training.

Throughcare approach to offender management

THE NEW SOUTH WALES Department of Corrective Services, subsequently referred to as the department, is responsible for managing offenders serving their sentences in both custody and the community. In both these settings, the department aims to reduce re-offending by these offenders in the

community. This process, called 'Throughcare', is the department's primary approach to offender management.

Throughcare is the co-ordinated and integrated approach to reducing re-offending by people who are the responsibility of Corrective Services, from their point of contact with the department to their completion of their legal orders and their transition to law-abiding community living.

(New South Wales Department of Corrective Services 2003a, p.3)

Throughcare enshrines five principles of offender management. These principles aim to:

- ❖ provide assistance and support to offenders in custody or under supervision in the community
- ❖ provide a seamless service to avoid duplication and/or isolated work practices
- ❖ share information between the department and other relevant agencies
- ❖ promote community linkages
- ❖ provide consistent interventions across community and custody which have proved to be effective in reducing recidivism.

Case management

Throughcare involves the gathering, recording and sharing of information on offenders in a timely and effective manner. It involves all staff working at all levels and across all divisions of the department and is assisted by the implementation of electronic case management (e-case management) and offenders' risk and needs assessment. Central to this information is the introduction of an international risk/needs assessment tool, the Level of Service Inventory (Revised). Factors that increase the risk of re-offending, including education deficits, psychological issues, a history of violence, and alcohol and drug addiction, are assessed. This assessment informs decisions about the placement of offenders in programs and the allocation of resources to programs.

Identifying criminogenic needs

According to the risk-needs model, there are static risk factors (for example, an inmate's criminal history) which cannot be altered. However, it is through changing the dynamic risk factors (for example, low education attainment level, poor employment history and substance misuse) that future offending can be reduced (Bonta 1996). There is some evidence to suggest a direct association between some dynamic risk factors and criminal behaviour. Offenders often have multiple problems, and those offenders with many problems are most likely to re-offend (McGuire 2002 cited in Harper & Chitty 2005). As a result, programs or interventions that seek to reduce offending directly target dynamic risk factors or criminogenic needs (Andrews & Bonta 1998). The Level of Service Inventory (Revised) indicates not only an individual's criminogenic needs, but also the type and level of service they require while in the department's care. Interventions are

targeted to the breadth and depth of the individual offender's needs, depending on their risk assessment. Offender management programs target a range of offender issues, including:

- ❖ alcohol and other drugs
- ❖ domestic violence
- ❖ anger management
- ❖ drink driving
- ❖ education deficits.

Throughcare and vocational education and training

In an educational context, Throughcare is implemented by targeting education-specific risk factors (such as low educational attainment and low-level literacy and numeracy skills). It does this by providing pathways facilitating access to in-prison and post-release employment and training, and by establishing links and facilitating the sharing of information with a variety of agencies. In this way an offender's re-integration into the community will be facilitated.

On 30 June 2006, there were 9051 sentenced and remandee offenders in full-time custody in New South Wales correctional centres, including 651 women (New South Wales Department of Corrective Services 2006c). However, 14 760 offenders spent some time in full-time custody throughout the year (New South Wales Department of Corrective Services 2006b, p.16). In 2005–06, 35% of the offenders in full-time custody participated in education and training (New South Wales Department of Corrective Services 2006a).

The education profile interview and education plan

The education profile interview provides the point of entry for each offender's educational pathway while in custody. The interview provides information about the offender's education history, previous training and employment outcomes, learning needs and difficulties, and vocational aspirations and related interests. The data collected through the education profile interview provide the basis for an individual needs analysis. This information also feeds into the course provision requirements of the correction centre and statewide education. The data will also provide baseline information for ongoing research and evaluation of correctional education programs, in terms of their impact on post-release employment and recidivism rates.

An education plan for the inmate is based on the learning needs and vocational aspirations, which are identified in the education profile interview. The education plan lists the recommended courses agreed to by the student and it is placed on the inmate's case file and education file.

Offenders who have low-level literacy and numeracy skills, or who left school before achieving the Year 10 School Certificate, are referred to literacy teachers for placement in the Certificate of General Education for Adults, using a placement tool devised by the New South Wales Department of Corrective

Service's Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute. Inmates from a non-English speaking background are referred to English as a Second Language teachers for placement in the Certificate of Spoken and Written English using the English Language and Literacy Placement Assessment Kit.

An education plan review is conducted at least every six months and prior to the offender's case management team review. The education plan review is an important record as it monitors progress towards course completion and recommends further enrolments where appropriate.

Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute

The department's registered training organisation, the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute, ensures that basic education, employability skills and vocational training programs are integrated into the offender's sentence plan in support of the department's mission to reduce the risk of re-offending. For example, participation in education programs may provide an offender with the literacy skills needed to successfully complete an offence-related program, provide an opportunity for an offender to develop and consolidate employability skills while working in a Corrective Services Industry, or improve an offender's confidence and ability to manage their day-to-day finances. Education staff also play a key role in ensuring that information about an offender's achievements, such as completion of vocational training, is available to those individuals and agencies providing support to offenders after serving their custodial sentence.

The Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute's capacity to support the implementation of Throughcare was strengthened in 2002 when the department moved from a contract to a permanent teaching workforce. Under the teaching award negotiated at that time, teachers could undertake duties other than face-to-face teaching for 15 hours of a full-time teacher's 35-hour week (pro rata for part-time teachers). This enabled education staff in correctional centres to have a greater involvement in case management and to support various Throughcare initiatives.

Located in the head office of the Department of Corrective Services, the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute has a professional support and assurance team of seven staff members: Principal, Deputy Principal, State Manager Adult Basic Education, State Manager Vocational Education and Training, Quality Assurance Officer and two clerical support officers. This team manages the statewide delivery of education programs in correctional centres and works with other New South Wales Department of Corrective Services staff, particularly in Corrective Services Industries and Offender Services and Programs areas, to initiate and support the implementation of Throughcare projects and initiatives. This team also provides professional support and quality assurance to staff in education units located in 30 correctional centres (excluding the privately operated Junee Correctional Centre) in New South Wales.

The education staff in each correctional centre education unit are led by a senior correctional education officer who is responsible for identifying offender training needs and planning and implementing education programs to meet these needs within the context of an offender's whole-of-sentence case plan. These officers primarily source training to meet offenders' needs from the on-site education staff or through TAFE NSW institutes under the memorandum of understanding arrangements. This training is supplemented by accessing distance education through the NSW Open Training and Education Network and other registered training organisations and higher education providers, and through other Australian Government- and state government-funded programs.

Education programs delivered by Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute teachers

The Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute has approximately 200 part-time and full-time teaching positions and 41 correctional education officers. These staff deliver 80% of basic education and VET courses to offenders in custody. All courses are nationally recognised and accredited, and mostly at Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) certificate levels I, II and III.

The Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute has recently reviewed the basic education and employability skills qualifications in terms of its scope of delivery. This review led to a decision to replace many of these qualifications with a single comprehensive qualification framework developed by TAFE NSW called Access to Employment Education and Training (AEET Certificates 9071, 9072 and 9073 [in table 1]). The framework contains units of competency organised in 'skills clusters'. Units of competency can be selected and packaged into courses to meet the needs of learners with varying skills development requirements and from different target groups (for example, Aboriginal people, women and people with an intellectual disability). All target groups can be enrolled in units which meet their particular needs but, on successful course completion, receive the same generic qualifications at certificate I, II or II level.

Delivery of qualifications by TAFE NSW strengthens pathways to the continuation and completion of nationally recognised qualifications for offenders after their release from custody. It also provides offenders with the opportunity to gain qualifications which are widely recognised by New South Wales employers.

In addition to basic education and employability skills courses, the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute teachers also deliver vocational courses in a limited number of industry areas, namely, information technology, construction, horticulture, small business management, visual arts and contemporary craft and music, as shown in table 1.

Table 1 Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute's scope of qualification delivery

Name of qualification	Qualification code
Certificate I in Access to Work and Training	9071NSW
Certificate II in Skills for Work and Training	9072NSW
Certificate III in Employment and Training	9073NSW
Preliminary Certificates I, II & III in Spoken and Written English	90989NSW, 90992NSW, 90993NSW, 90994NSW
Certificate I in Food Skills for Living	90729NSW
Certificate I, II & III in Learning Pathways for Australian Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples	21361VIC, 21362VIC & 21363VIC
Certificate I in Transition Education	2161VIC
Certificates I, II & III in Visual Arts & Contemporary Craft	CUV10103, CUV20101 & CUV30103
Certificate I in Horticulture	RTF10103
Certificate II in Horticulture (Parks & Gardens)	RTF20703
Certificate II in Horticulture (Wholesale Nursery)	RTF20603
Certificates I & II in General Construction	BCG10103, BCG20103
Certificate IV in Business (Small Business Management)	BSB40401
Certificates I & II in Music Industry (Foundation)	CUS10101 & CUS20101
Certificate I, II & III in Information Technology	ICA10101, ICA20199, ICA30299

Memorandum of understanding with TAFE NSW

A memorandum of understanding between the Commissioner of the Department of Corrective Services and the Managing Director of TAFE NSW provides the framework for the provision of vocational education and training by TAFE NSW institutes. Under the memorandum the department allocated \$1.7 million in 2005–06 towards the cost of TAFE NSW vocational education and training provision in correctional centres. This funding includes an allocation to cover travel and security training required to support program delivery.

In addition, the Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate of the Department of Education and Training contributed \$200 000 for the delivery of technical and further education (TAFE) courses to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders. The Department of Corrective Services earmarks an equivalent amount from its total allocation to TAFE NSW for these courses.

TAFE NSW institutes are responsible for the delivery of courses in a range of industry areas, including agriculture, horticulture, business services, general construction, hospitality operations, furniture production, engineering production, hairdressing, small motor maintenance, cleaning operations and food processing, as well as courses in occupational health and safety and first aid.

Courses in Aboriginal arts and cultural practices are also provided to address the culturally specific learning needs of Indigenous inmates.

The memorandum of understanding supports the implementation of the department's Throughcare strategy and ensures that the standard of service provided to offenders in correctional centres is equal to that provided in TAFE institutes. It ensures that VET offerings within correctional centres are consistent with national VET policy, that the VET pathways are accessible, equitable, flexible and relevant, and that appropriate information is shared between the two departments. It aims to support the development of learners, through a variety of pathways—from the pre-vocational and vocational skills they need to enhance their employment prospects, to successful re-integration into the wider community. The department and TAFE NSW recognise that inmates, due to their incarceration, are disadvantaged learners but that they have education rights equal to those of students who enrol from the community at large, subject to the conditions of the correctional environment.

In 2005–06, TAFE NSW teachers provided approximately 20 000 hours of delivery in New South Wales correctional centres under the memorandum funding arrangements. In addition, TAFE NSW institutes deliver the majority of training accessed by the Department of Corrective Services through the Traineeship Program and the Strategic Skills Program (see below).

Corrective Services Industries Work Readiness Program

The department provides work opportunities for 74% of the total inmate population through Corrective Services Industries (New South Wales Department of Corrective Services 2006b).

The Corrective Services Industries' Work Readiness Program is an intensive workplace program which aims to develop and measure offenders' skills, behaviours and attitudes in the workplace. The program contributes directly to the case management of offenders by allowing the identification of existing work skills, and by referring offenders to specific education programs where areas of skill or knowledge deficiency have been identified. It focuses on foundation work skills. The program provides employment opportunities in primary industries, building services, engineering, food services, clerical, printing, upholstery industries and furniture making.

As offenders approach release, the program focus turns toward the transition from custody to community by introducing inmates to employment support services during pre-release planning sessions. A key strategy of the program is the provision of a work referral, which details work history, vocational training and extracts from skill assessments carried out by overseers and supervisors. This referral is accompanied by a photo-identity, which will assist offenders with proof of identity on re-entry into the community.

The John Morony Intensive Learning Centre for Young Adult Offenders

The Intensive Learning Centre was established in July 2004. The centre provides a positive learning environment and a program customised to the needs, interests, skill levels and preferred learning styles of young male offenders. The program is full-time, five hours per day and five days per week, and lasts approximately six months. Groups run concurrently and there are up to 12 students in each group. The program balances classroom-based instruction with practical work-based training in a number of correctional industries. Whole-of-centre support ensures that the program is not disrupted by the lock-downs and changes to routine which occur elsewhere in the gaol.

The program recognises the importance to re-integration of fostering supportive family relations. For this reason family members are invited to discuss the progress of students in the program and special invitations are extended to all family members to attend graduation ceremonies.

Criteria for selection include age (18–24 years), a high to moderately high risk of re-offending (measured by the department's risk assessment tool), at least 12 months sentence left to serve, low literacy and numeracy skills (at AQF certificate I level), poor work skills, and a history of un- or under-employment. Students complete a certificate II basic education course, plus TAFE NSW modules in courses such as horticulture, small business management, small motor maintenance, and occupational health and safety induction. They also rotate through industry workshops, where their workplace communication skills and work ethic are monitored. Students receive a weekly pay commensurate with correctional industry pay rates that incrementally rewards effort and achievement.

In 2005–06, 51 students graduated from programs—an 85% completion rate. (For more information see Halliday Wynes' chapter titled 'Improving VET for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia'.)

Vocational training for inmate library clerks

In 2005, the Department of Corrective Services undertook to provide access to training for selected inmate library clerks who support the operation of many of the 42 libraries in correctional centres across New South Wales. This training not only provides an opportunity to improve the quality of library services available, but also provides inmates with the opportunity to obtain recognised library training and work experience.

A private registered training organisation, the Australian Institute of Workplace Learning, has been engaged to deliver courses from the Museum and Library/Information Services Training Package flexibly which, when completed, can lead to employment as a library assistant. Over 2005–06, 13 inmate library clerks enrolled in Certificate III in Library/Information Services (CUL30104), successfully completing a total of 64 modules; one inmate completed the full Certificate III in Library Services.

Traineeships

A traineeship program has been established by the Department of Corrective Services under a pilot arrangement with the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Directorate of the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. Traineeships as part of Throughcare provide industry-specific VET and work experiences to better re-integrate offenders into the broader employment market at the pre- and post-release stages. Traineeships benefit both the department, as the designated 'employer', and the individual offender, as the designated 'trainee'. The benefits to the department include better trained and hence more interested, skilled, efficient and productive workers. The benefits for inmates include an industry-specific and industry-recognised nationally accredited qualification, formal acknowledgement of the work experiences gained while under the department's care, and the development of a VET Throughcare pathway leading to increased pre- and post-release employment and further education and training opportunities.

Traineeships are currently available in: general construction, horticulture, transport and distribution, hospitality, food processing, engineering production and furniture. Traineeships require trainees to undertake real and paid work. Therefore, trainees in correctional centres must be employed within a Corrective Service Industries business unit, in a service industry or be working on a community project relevant to the vocational area of the traineeship. Completion of a traineeship does not represent the attainment of a full trade qualification, but it represents the attainment of an industry-based entry-level qualification. In 2005–06, 65 inmates undertook traineeships across six correctional centres while working with Corrective Service Industries. Of this group, 80% successfully completed certificate II or III level traineeships. Approximately 100 offenders are expected to participate in traineeships at 11 correctional centres across New South Wales in 2007. (More information on the traineeships program is provided in Halliday Wynes' chapter titled 'Improving VET for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia'.)

The Strategic Skills Program

The Strategic Skills Program is an initiative of the New South Wales Board of Vocational Education and Training with funding allocated by the Australian Government for the development of the New South Wales training system. The program aims to support skill formation in New South Wales in line with priorities for economic development and social policies. Under the program the Department of Education and Training purchases vocational training from an 'approved provider list' of registered training organisations. The registered training organisations deliver training to increase labour force participation for those groups that face barriers entering training and the workforce. Indigenous offenders in custody are identified as a specific target group for Strategic Skills Program-funded training.

The department has accessed training through the program primarily to meet the needs of Aboriginal offenders not being met through Adult Education

and Vocational Training Institute provision or under the hours allocated to TAFE through the TAFE NSW–Department of Corrective Services memorandum of understanding.

The Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute and the department's Aboriginal Support and Planning Unit collaborate in identifying priority areas of need across correctional centres to ensure a coordinated, well-targeted and well-supported implementation of this training.

Over 2006, 25 vocational programs, mainly targeting Aboriginal offenders, were delivered at Broken Hill, Ivanhoe, Mannus and Glen Innes Correctional Centres. For 2007–08 eleven correctional centres have been identified as locations where vocational training can be delivered under this program. Training targets the development of employability skills, occupational health and safety-related knowledge and skills and rural skills. Successful completion of programs leads to the attainment of workcover licences and statements of attainment from training packages, including Certificates I and II in Conservation and Land Management, Certificate II in Building and Construction, Certificate II in Agriculture, and Certificate II in Horticulture.

Transitional support

An important part of Throughcare is support for offenders in their transition from custody into the community. Practical resources and strategies are being produced to assist with this. A pre-release preparation and planning and resource booklet, entitled 'Planning your release', has been developed for use by offenders and staff. This booklet contains a checklist which sets out a sequence of tasks to be undertaken in the six months prior to release from custody. It also contains contact details for key services. Nexus, a pre-release planning program, has been developed to support successful completion of these preparatory tasks.

A program protocol agreement signed between Centrelink¹ and the department in November 2006 has established measures for debt and fraud prevention, as well as streamlined processes to assist inmates with access to monetary benefits on their release, and their re-integration to the community. Similar developments are well underway with housing service providers.

Many transitional support strategies are implemented within correctional centres through educational programs or with education staff playing a key role. A sample of these strategies is detailed below.

'Jobs for the Boys' (Boswell 2003) is a program run in the John Morony Correctional Complex. The program assists students to acquire an understanding of their interests, personal traits, and abilities, and how these might relate to the type of employment that suits them best. It deals with the knowledge

¹ Centrelink is an agency of the Australian Government Department of Human Services and delivers a range of services to the community. Further information is available from <<http://www.centrelink.gov.au>>.

and skills needed for sourcing and gaining employment, including letter- and resume-writing, where to find jobs, interview skills, and overcoming barriers. The program also helps with the knowledge and skills that are needed in the workplace, including conflict resolution, problem-solving, and motivation.

Dillwynia Correctional Centre, a purpose-built women's correctional centre in Western Sydney, has entered into a partnership with Gloria Jean's Coffee to establish a café in the visitors' area of the centre. Training offenders in customer service and drink preparation gives the women a better chance of integrating into the community, as well as improving their self-esteem. By undergoing a formal selection process before employing them in the café, they are also equipped with work-readiness skills.

Inmates can be assessed and accredited in the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority driver knowledge test at seven correctional centres. This opportunity may open up appropriate employment opportunities and therefore assists ex-offenders to more readily access workplaces. Inmates are able to take the knowledge test at a number of centres, using a computer specially provided by the authority, and education staff are able to provide the licence photograph and identity confirmation required by the authority.

Occupational health and safety training is provided at all correctional centres where Corrective Services Industries are located, and most centres support inmates to acquire a range of workcover² issued licences, including the Construction Industry Induction Certificate. These courses provide general and industry-specific occupational health and safety training for inmates, equipping them to work within Corrective Services Industries workplaces while in custody, and providing opportunities to acquire workcover-required skills and knowledge for use in the construction industry. This supports safe work practices while in custody, and facilitates employment acquisition upon release.

At Broken Hill and Ivanhoe correctional centres, which have approximately 80% Indigenous inmates, TAFE NSW's Western Institute has provided a fully equipped welding truck to cater for a wide variety of welding projects, thus enabling welding modules to be completed through TAFE NSW. Inmates also have the opportunity to participate in vocational training in shearing, wool classing, fire fighting, construction earthworks, and chemical applications (applying sprays in orchards), so preparing them to access employment opportunities in the remote areas to which many may return on release from custody.

Brewarrina (Yetta Dhinnakkal) Correctional Centre is situated on a 10 553-hectare property at Brewarrina in north-western New South Wales, 800 km from Sydney. Yetta Dhinnakkal is a minimum-security institution which accommodates approximately 45 young Aboriginal male offenders.

2 WorkCover refers to the Workcover Authority of New South Wales, which promotes workplace health and safety, and provides a workers' compensation system for the employers and workers of New South Wales. More information available from the website <<http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/>>.

Offenders are involved in the management of the property, including activities such as goat grazing, wool and lamb production, vegetation management, land rehabilitation and river care. Offenders are organised into work crews, and an Aboriginal support officer works closely with the senior correctional education officer to identify training needs and source appropriate training to meet the centre's employment needs and provide skills needed for employment in the communities where inmates will return upon release.

At Yetta Dhinnakkal recognition and restoration of the cultural links of young adult offenders with the land and their history is a priority. The cultural-awareness aspects of the program are provided with direct input from Aboriginal Elders and members of the local Indigenous community. While participating in the program, offenders have more access to their families than if they were detained in traditional correctional centres.

Inmates in the Yetta Dhinnakkal Program must agree to be contacted for a period of up to 12 months post-release. This allows the Aboriginal support officer to provide ongoing mentoring to ex-inmates upon release to support their return to the community. In 2005, the Yetta Dhinnakkal Program won the gold award at the New South Wales Premier's Public Sector Awards in the Social Justice category.

Throughcare education and employment 'expos'

Inmates in the last six months of sentence are invited to attend education and employment 'expos' of representatives from key government and community support agencies, such as housing, Medicare, employment agencies, local businesses and banks. Representatives provide information and advice, enabling inmates to establish links prior to release. Expos are conducted at Emu Plains, Berrima, Dillwynia, John Morony, Lithgow, Goulburn and Cessnock Correctional Centres.

At Cessnock staff present a large information expo twice a year, which attracts representatives from 21 community organisations, as well as representatives from Centrelink. Feedback from inmates and community participants concludes that this forum is extremely effective in disseminating information and resolving inmate issues prior to release.

Dillwynia Correctional Centre schedules 'Into Life Expos' twice a year to link offenders to community agencies, volunteer groups and employment networks, thereby facilitating their re-entry into the community and the workforce. Students enrolled in communication skills modules coordinate the Into Life Expos to fulfil requirements for their course.

Since the introduction of Into Life Expos in 2004, staff at Dyllwynia have established successful and ongoing relationships with many local employers and community agencies. Several organisations work with education staff on the delivery of job-seeking skills courses and others have offered students full- or part-time work or voluntary work on release from custody.

The 'Make it on the Outside' Program

'Make it on the Outside' is a re-integration program funded by the federal Attorney General's Department through the National Community Crime Prevention Program for Western Sydney. Under the funding arrangement the Department of Corrective Services makes a contribution towards the program of \$15 000 in cash and a contribution in kind by way of assessment and case consultation by Offender Services and Programs staff.

The program, which commences three months prior to release and continues nine months post-release, targets women offenders who have had a diagnosis of a disability, mainly mental health and/or drug and alcohol addictions. It involves the development of a pre- and post-release support plan, provision of individualised assistance to address complex multiple needs, preparation-for-work training and a mentoring program. It also establishes referral links with other community programs.

It is available to women at Dillwynia Correctional Centre and will be extended to women at Berrima and Emu Plains Correctional Centres.

The Wesley Uniting Employment 180 Plan

The Wesley Uniting Employment and the department undertook a pilot project in the second half of 2006 aimed at supporting the transition of inmates from custody to post-release employment.

Three correctional centres with different profiles were selected as pilot sites: Emu Plains Correctional Centre (a medium-size, minimum-security women's gaol in Western Sydney), Cessnock Correctional Centre (a large, mainly minimum-security gaol in the Hunter Valley Region of New South Wales) and Goulburn Correctional Centre (a large, maximum-security men's gaol in the southern tablelands of New South Wales).

Wesley Uniting Employment provided a single agency contact and support strategy, whereby this organisation engaged with inmates at the three correctional centres 90 days before release and 90 days post-release (hence the name '180 Plan'). The pilot focused on delivering employment assistance to inmates and facilitating their access to the Job Network Program post-release.

Local departmental probation and parole staff, Offenders Services and Programs (including the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute) and Corrective Services Industries staff worked with Wesley Uniting Employment project officers to implement the project. The project officers liaised with correctional centre staff to identify participants, review employment strategies, provide information, give support at release and integrate participants into the Job Network and other services.

Wesley Uniting Employment project officers provided support to over 130 inmates across the three participating correctional centres. Outcomes from the project evaluation will inform decisions by the department about how best to meet the pre- to post-release employment-related transitional needs of offenders across correctional centres in New South Wales.

Employment assistance for work release inmates

In 2005–06 the federal government committed funding over a four-year period to assist offenders on work release programs in all jurisdictions to find employment by making them eligible for Intensive Support Customised Assistance through the Job Network. The initiative is being implemented by the federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

In New South Wales there are currently approximately 80 inmates on a work release program. The majority of these offenders are located at the John Morony Correctional Centre and Silverwater Correctional Centre. Again, departmental staff are working collaboratively with the Department of Employment and Work Relations staff to establish protocols to support pre-release access to Job Network services and employment opportunities. Staff at John Morony and Silverwater correctional centres are developing partnerships with Job Network providers interested in providing services to offenders.

Pathways to Employment, Education and Training Program

The New South Wales Department of Corrective Services' Community and Offender Services and NSW TAFE jointly deliver the Pathways to Employment, Education and Training Program which is funded by the New South Wales Drug Summit. This program is designed to support Community Offender Services clients with a history of drug and/or alcohol issues to develop the skills necessary to gain employment or undertake further training.

The program attempts to assist these offenders to re-engage with training and develop the skills necessary to enter employment and/or further vocational training. Offenders with a history of alcohol and/or drug issues often have literacy and/or numeracy deficits and may have experienced past alienation from educational environments. The program provides a non-threatening learning environment at the local TAFE institute and aims to link them to further appropriate TAFE courses at the institute. Clients assessed as medium-to-high risk of re-offending are targeted for the program. The program assists participants to identify realistic vocational training and employment options and appropriate educational pathways. (For further information on this program see Halliday Wynes' chapter titled 'Improving VET for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia'.)

In summary

The Throughcare approach to offender management in the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services is 'a co-ordinated and integrated approach to reducing reoffending'. It has two central tenets.

- ❖ All information about an offender's management is recorded and is accessible at all stages of their contact with the department, enabling a whole-of-sentence approach to the offender's case management.
- ❖ Offenders access appropriate community services while under the supervision of the department and transitional support on completing their sentences in relation to income, employment, housing, health care and family connections (New South Wales Department of Corrective Services 2005a).

Whole-of-sentence planning and case management based on standard risk and needs assessments were established by the department in 2003–04. Offender management is based on the premise that interventions targeting those at higher risk of re-offending have a greater impact, and that programs motivating offenders to participate are more effective. In 2004–05 the department extended its programs and services across community and custodial operations and established joint operational support structures in the regions in line with the Throughcare philosophy (New South Wales Department of Corrective Services 2005b).

The department's registered training organisation, the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute, contributes to reducing re-offending by ensuring that basic education, employability skills and vocational training programs delivered by its staff, TAFE NSW institutes and other registered training organisations are an integral part of the department's Throughcare strategy.

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Improving VET for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia

*Sian Halliday Wynes*¹

Described in this chapter are key initiatives and innovative programs which are improving vocational education and training (VET) for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia and increasing their employment prospects on release from custody. These examples from the states and territories illustrate good practice in VET for this group of multi-disadvantaged students. These initiatives aim to provide education and training pathways to enhance employment opportunities for offenders and assist their re-integration to the community as positive contributors to the economic and social life of the community.

Introduction

THIS CHAPTER DESCRIBES key initiatives and innovative programs which are improving vocational education and training (VET) for adult prisoners² and offenders in Australia and increasing their employment prospects on release from custody. Attachment A summarises programs implemented to enhance prisoners' post-release employability and access to VET.

New South Wales

The John Morony Intensive Learning Centre for Young Adult Offenders

The Intensive Learning Centre at John Morony Correctional Complex³ was shortlisted for the 2006 NSW Training Initiative Award by the Department

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- 1 Contributions for this chapter were supplied jointly or separately by the departments of corrective services and education and training or their equivalents in the eight states and territories.
 - 2 The term 'prisoners' refers to people in full-time custody under jurisdiction of an adult corrective service agency. The term 'offenders' is used to refer to people serving community work orders or on parole (Productivity Commission 2007).
 - 3 The John Morony Correctional Complex comprises two purpose-built correctional centres for young adult male offenders and is situated near Windsor in NSW. John Morony I is a medium-security centre and conducts stage two of the Specialised Young Adult Offender Program, including the five-day Raising Awareness for Change Program. John Morony II houses predominantly 18 to 25-year-old male offenders, but also a nucleus of older offenders, some of whom are coming to the end of long sentences. Also on the site is the new women's correctional facility, Dillwynia (Boswell 2003).

of Education and Training. Although it did not win this year, VET peers acknowledge it as a model of good practice in the delivery of education and training in correctional centres (Jacks 2006). Opening in July 2004, the focus of the centre is on addressing the educational needs of male offenders aged 18 to 24 years who have not succeeded in the school education system. These students spend time in the learning centre (five hours each day) and in one of the Corrective Services Industries workshops. An appropriate and positive adult teaching style is used by the staff who are mindful that most participants experience anxiety when placed in a learning situation and have low self-esteem about their performance.

Criteria for selection for the program are: medium-to-high risk of re-offending; low literacy and numeracy skill levels; and poor employment histories and prospects. Typically, selected students have Year 7 or 8 as their highest level of schooling. Selection for the program also takes account of the offender's earliest date of release, other offence-related needs, and his interests and aspirations.

The nationally accredited Victorian curriculum in adult basic education (Certificate II of General Education for Adults) is the core of the program. Other modules and options available to the young adult offenders are listed in table 1. For example, the 40-hour module from Small Motor Maintenance—Two Stroke Engine Service and Repair provides students with practical knowledge of motors, such as whipper snippers and lawnmowers, and the technical ability to re-assemble them. Obtaining a 'greencard' particularly enhances employment prospects post-release. A greencard is the required occupational health and safety general induction certificate for work on construction sites in New South Wales and for on-the-job work experience in the six Corrective Service Industries sites.

Table 1 Other modules and options, in addition to Certificate II in General Education for Adults, available for young adult offenders in John Morony Intensive Learning Centre

Modules from Certificate I in Information Technology	Options taken from Certificate II in Communication Skills	Modules delivered by TAFE* teachers under contract with correctional centre	On-the-job work experience in six Corrective Service Industries on site
Word processing operations	Effective oral communication	First aid	Powder coating
Spreadsheet operations	Job-seeking skills	Occupational, health and safety induction Greencard	Bumper repair
	Workplace studies	Responsible service of alcohol	Grounds maintenance
	Explore career options	Small business management	Metal engineering
		Small motor maintenance	Packing shop
			Laundry

Note: *TAFE = technical and further education.

About 12 students a year are selected for this full-time education program and, by the end 2005, four groups (comprising of 40 students) had completed the program, with 85% graduating with a Certificate II in General Education for Adults Certificate and other modules.

Pathways to Employment, Education and Training Program

Drug Summit funding has enabled the Community and Offender Services offices and TAFE NSW to provide the Pathways to Employment, Education and Training (PEET) Program through more than 20 district offices. The program is a TAFE NSW course designed to enable offenders⁴ with drug and alcohol problems to develop the skills necessary to either enter employment or the adult education system, or both. The program is run in TAFE NSW colleges and seeks to help participants acquire a core of basic skills and attitudes (including self-confidence and self-esteem) and to choose realistic education or employment options.

Due to the specific learning needs of this target group, a maximum of 12 offenders is considered the optimum number for a class.⁵ Each course comprises nine weeks of training divided into three modules of equal length. Each module comprises three sessions and each session lasts for four hours. While the first session in the first module is held in the Probation and Parole District Office, all other sessions are held at the relevant TAFE institute. As long as the 36 hours are completed for each course, variations to session lengths can be determined locally in consultation with TAFE colleagues. A strength of this program is its flexibility of design, which allows it to be readily and easily adapted to meet local needs.

2006 AEEMA Award for Excellence in Commitment to Skills and Education

The Corrective Services Industries Technology Business Unit at Long Bay Correctional Complex in Sydney won the 2006 Award for Excellence in Commitment to Skills and Education category of the Australian Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers' Association (AEEMA). In 2002, Black and White Engineering Solutions and Corrective Service Industries formed a joint Business Unit at the Metropolitan Special Programs Centre at Long Bay to cost-effectively refurbish faulty appliances for Australian electrical manufacturers and importers. The main achievement of the program is work-related training and development of electrical servicing skills for appliance and service industries. Outcomes include community environmental benefits through improved behaviour; new skills and employment opportunities for inmates, as well as recycling of product, and hence reduction of waste (New South Wales Department of Corrective Services 2006).

4 The emphasis is on medium- to moderate-to-high risk clients under the supervision of NSW Community and Offender Services.

5 Past experience has indicated that starting with a group of 15 participants makes sense because inevitably there will be a number of participants who will drop out of the course in its early stages.

Victoria

Corrections Victoria and the Office for Training and Tertiary Education

Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program

Consistent with the goals of Corrections Victoria's Corrections Long Term Management Strategy⁶, the Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program (CSEPP) assists prisoners and offenders to re-integrate into the community through employment and therefore reduce re-offending. The program commenced in June 2002 as a two-year pilot program and was subsequently re-funded from July 2004. In 2005, Graffam et al. conducted an evaluation of the program (see Graffam & Hardcastle's chapter) which found that the client group had a significantly lower rate of re-offending than the mainstream group of prisoners exiting prison.

The primary objective of the program was to assist 2500 prisoners and offenders at medium or high risk of re-offending and who had high support needs. The program clients receive individualised assistance for up to six months prior to release and for up to 12 months after release from prison. Offenders who serve community-based orders⁷ were eligible for assistance throughout the term of their order, and may still be referred to the program up to 12 months after completing their order.

The program is provided voluntarily within ten Community Corrections Services locations and seven prisons throughout Victoria. There are two contracted providers: Job Futures⁸ (15 locations) and the Australian Community Support Organisation⁹ (two locations). Service contracts include provision of initial assessment and vocational advice and training. Job search and placement, placement follow-up and support to employers through regular contact visits were also provided.

6 *Corrections long term management strategy: Building a responsive corrections system – the next five years* (2002) is available from the Victorian Department of Justice's website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au>>.

7 Offenders may be required to serve out their sentence under a community-based order. All jurisdictions have community correctional services units which are responsible for a range of community-based orders such as non-custodial sanctions (including unpaid community work components, personal development program attendance, or home detention restrictions). They also deliver post-custodial interventions (such as Adult Parole Board orders) under which prisoners released into the community continue to be subject to corrective services supervision (Productivity Commission 2007).

8 Job Futures is one of the largest not-for-profit employment agencies in Australia with a variety of local partners in each state and territory. Further information is available, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.jobfutures.com.au>>.

9 The Australian Community Support Organisation is a community-based not-for-profit agency that provides a range of accommodation, support, assessment and treatment services for people who are experiencing significant disadvantage, especially those who have been in contact with the criminal justice systems. Further information is available, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.acso.com.au>>.

The targets which in general were met at the end of the two-year trial were to place 450 of the 2500 clients into full-time (minimum 20 hours per week) sustained employment (defined as 13 weeks continuous employment) within a two-year period. It was also expected that a range of non-employment outcomes would be achieved, including that a number of participants would be: placed and supported in part-time or full-time training or education; engaged in work experience placements; placed and supported in life skills or other basic independent living courses or programs; and remain engaged with the program as an active client for a nominated period (Graffam et al. 2005).

This program recognises that former prisoners and offenders continue to be disadvantaged in the job market and require a great deal of support to gain employment. It also recognises that the employment services need to be integrated with housing, education and training, health and personal support services provided by other service agencies.

Café Tarra: VET for women prisoners

In 2005, the Café Operations Training Program at Tarrengower Women's Prison won a Victorian Award in the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in community business partnerships (Angove-Percasky 2005; Award winners 2005). The Café Operations Training Program is a collaboration between three partners: Zonta Club of Kyneton; Coffee Basics Café and Roastery at Castlemaine; and Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE (Victoria Department of Justice 2005). It is designed to give participants the practical employment skills and confidence to approach an employer for work following release from prison. Accredited hospitality training from Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE staff is conducted over a 12-week period and offered throughout the year. The Castlemaine coffee shop, Coffee Basics Café and Roastery, supplies coffee beans to Café Tarra and trains participants in coffee-roasting techniques and café operations. The Zonta Club members, who are local business women, provide ongoing mentoring for women involved in the project and on release from Tarrengower.

Café Tarra is the training café within the education building at Tarrengower Women's Prison. The students participating in the café operations program prepare the food for the café and then proceed to serve customers (prisoners and correctional services staff) food and drinks. The café opens for a period of two hours on Wednesdays and Fridays and is always busy. The students learn first hand about the pressure of working in a busy café, as well as food planning and costing and all the necessary requirements for the busy catering industry. In 2006, the program involved students in catering for prison-related functions.

Offender education and training in an adult and community education initiative

In 2004, a joint initiative between Corrections Victoria and the Adult Community and Further Education Division of the Office of Training and Tertiary Education provided an alternative for all former prisoners (on parole or directly released from prison) and offenders (since only the proactive and confident former offenders currently attend mainstream VET programs). Adult and community education (ACE) providers with experience and interest in engaging and working with people with multiple disadvantages were contracted to operate innovative offender education and training programs for offenders at nominated community correctional services locations. Participants for this initiative were

drawn from a targeted group of offenders. They had been assessed as having a moderate-to-high risk of re-offending and of long-term unemployment through their lack of education, training and meaningful previous employment, but the motivation to undertake and complete the program, if they were given ongoing support and assistance.

The Nalu Youth Adventure Challenge Program

The Nalu Youth Adventure Challenge Program conducted at the Fulham Correctional Centre is a 16-week program for young adult male prisoners between 18 and 26 years of age who are medically fit and have a minimum security rating but have been assessed as medium-to-high risk of re-offending. Nalu integrates an 'adventure challenge' education program with a comprehensive cognitive-behavioural therapy program and life skills training. The Nalu program has been running for close to four years and has recently been evaluated.

The Remand Young Offenders' Program at Port Phillip Prison

The Remand Young Offenders' Program at Port Phillip Prison in Melbourne promotes positive social behaviours and problem-solving techniques to reduce the risk of suicide and self-harm for young male prisoners between the age of 18 and 25 years. The program consists of a number of personal development and recreational components. An individual peer educator prisoner has also been appointed. The components include offending behaviour, communication skills, job-seeking skills, assertiveness training, anger-management skills, consequential thinking, stress-management skills, health and basic hygiene, life skills, relationships, basic English and maths training, basic cooking, budgeting skills, computers, horticulture, recreation and leisure activities and drama.

Integrating training with industry work: Fulham Correctional Centre and TAFE

East Gippsland TAFE delivers VET in a partnership with the GEO Group Australia, which manages the Fulham Correctional Centre.¹⁰ The partnership allows accredited VET programs to be delivered by qualified and industry-experienced teaching staff, while providing opportunities for prisoners to work in a production industry. The programs incorporate a range of adult basic education programs (such as the Certificate in General Education for Adults and the Certificate in Spoken and Written English) and VET programs (including information technology, engineering, furnishing, horticulture, fitness and automotive). Staff at the centre operate in the dual role of 'trainer and production supervisor' (Graham & Middleton 2005). Vocational training is integrated with the productive work in prison industry operations. In collaboration with existing commercial manufacturers, a range of timber products (such as planter tubs, bird feeders, compost bins and fence extenders) are made. With the support of the Furniture Industry Association, prisoners are also involved in the manufacture of furniture components. There is also a metal work program where prisoners make wood-fired pizza ovens, pot-belly stoves and mini spit-roasters, and a nursery that supplies bulk orders of plants for commercial customers. Prisoners are also involved in the manufacture of sporting equipment.

¹⁰ Located near Sale in eastern Victoria, the Fulham Correctional Centre is a 782-bed minimum-to-medium security facility. Further information is available from the Geo Group Australia website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.thegeogroupinc.com.au/Fulham.htm>>.

Queensland

Department of Employment and Training

Correctional Centre Training Initiative

A memorandum of understanding between Queensland's Department of Employment and Training and Queensland Corrective Services (signed in 1996) ensures that relevant vocational education and training is delivered to adult inmates in correctional centres throughout the state. This frames the implementation of the Correctional Centre Training Initiative. This collaborative arrangement is reviewed regularly and specific improvement strategies are applied to manage emerging delivery issues. The initiative contributes to the rehabilitation of prisoners by creating education and training pathways that lead to employment outcomes and assist with re-integration into the community.

Post-Release Employment Assistance Program

The Department of Employment and Training¹¹ funds the delivery of the Post-Release Employment Assistance Program (PREAP). In collaborative arrangements with Queensland Corrective Services, community-based service providers are contracted to assist prisoners immediately prior to release and after their release from prison to become work-ready and to gain and retain sustainable employment (see example in box). This includes help with literacy and numeracy skills, living skills, accredited vocational training, job searching, job placement and post-placement support. This program is described in more detail in the next section detailing initiatives of the Department of Correctional Services.

Efforts are underway to enhance these collaborative arrangements to develop a more integrated model to ensure better outcomes from training and employment programs for prisoners.

Queensland Corrective Services

VET Integrated with Prison Industries and ongoing support

Two programs, the VET Integrated with Prison Industries Program and the Post-Release Employment Assistance Program, work together to support prisoner rehabilitation and re-integration into the community. Since 2001, Queensland Corrective Services has implemented a strategy which links the offenders working in various prison industries to related accredited training. Prisoners who participate in this training are not only gaining valuable work skills but also recognition of skills through participation in industry-recognised VET. This training provides them with employability skills that will assist them to be work-ready and obtain employment after release from prison. The Prison Industries facilities are well resourced and offer work in furnishing, bakery, laundry, metal fabrication and textile fabrication.

¹¹ In 2007, PREAP is funded through the Queensland Government Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR).

Prisoners are also assisted for their release through their participation in Queensland Corrective Services' Transitions Program. This program offers release preparation to all prisoners in correctional centres. It teaches prisoners about planning, setting goals and identifies resources and services available to them in the community; in particular, services related to mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse or for sex offenders. As mentioned earlier, there is also the Post-Release Employment Assistance Program which is a government-run employment program targeted specifically at prisoners and ex-prisoners. Queensland Corrective Services nominates potential candidates six months before their release date to the service provider who then arranges information sessions and appointments. The scheme is particularly aimed at offenders who are labelled as being at risk of long-term unemployment.

As the boxed example demonstrates, the provision of vocational education and training prior to release gives prisoners the opportunity to gain skills that prepare them for employment after release from prison. Callan and Gardner (2005) found that involvement in VET by Queensland prisoners was associated with a lower rate of recidivism (for more detail, see chapter by Callan & Gardner).

Capricornia Correctional Centre, Rockhampton

Jack (not his real name) gained a Certificate I in Engineering through his participation in the VET Integrated with Prison Industries Program available at that centre. As part of that training he gained considerable skills in the fabrication and welding of stainless steel. Prior to his release he participated in the Prisoner Post-release Employment Assistance Program delivered by the Salvation Army's Employment Plus¹² agency. In preparation for employment in the community he participated in Job Search Skills training, the Employment Plus Fast Tracks Program and an Employment Expo conducted at the centre. Assisted by Employment Plus, and prior to his release in August 2005, he applied for and was offered a number of jobs in the metal fabrication industry in the Rockhampton region. Initially Jack gained employment in two of those jobs. He is now self-employed, manufacturing metal products to order, in Chinchilla, Queensland.

Western Australia

Department of Education and Training—Moving Further Forward

Moving Forward, a Swan TAFE and Community Justice Services' community-based project, delivered three eight-week programs between August 2004 and April 2005 to adult offenders on community-based work orders in the south-east metropolitan area of Perth. The Moving Further Forward project, a continuation of the 2004 Moving Forward project, was funded by the Department of Education and Training under the Australians Working Together initiatives. In 2006, the program was refined and delivered in the northern metropolitan area.

These structured education programs are designed to improve offenders' life skills, social awareness, financial management, self-esteem and employment skills, as well as to promote an insight into what TAFE can offer. To ensure its success,

12 Further information is available from the website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.salvationarmy.org.au>>.

the program adopted a client-focused, holistic approach to training. This includes providing the required transport, lunch, childcare and consumables for the course. Community justice officers are responsible for maintaining motivation, reminding participants to attend training and for following up cases of individual absences. Each component of the program is linked to one or more VET courses. Students are informed of potential course pathways during the final session of the program. At this time they are also provided with one-on-one counselling sessions on VET options, with a view to increasing uptake of VET courses. This program has been recognised nationally, winning the Australian Education Program of the Year 2005 at the Adult Learning Australia Awards in November 2005.

In Terms 3 and 4 of 2005, the Moving Further Forward Program was offered at five new locations. The steering committee comprised personnel from the Community Justice Services, Swan TAFE, Department of Corrective Services, Centrelink¹³, Warminda Intensive Intervention Centre, and Department of Education and Training. The project team was composed of officers from the Department of Corrective Services and Swan TAFE.

Feedback from participants in the first three Moving Forward programs was very positive, with 67% of those who began the course finishing it. This was above the anticipated completion rate of 40%. Participants also showed significant interest in pursuing further study and, to date, four participants are known to have enrolled in further training. In addition, no recidivism has occurred amongst the Moving Forward participants.

Showing similar success to its predecessor, Moving Further Forward had 100% of its participants who started a Term 3 or 4 program complete it. Attendance rates were also impressive, with almost all participants attending all but one or two sessions in Term 4. This is despite the fact that only a percentage of the training hours count towards their community-based work orders.

The high attendance and completion rates, positive feedback from participants, lack of recidivism, and progression to further training indicated the value and effectiveness of the Moving Further Forward Program. Clients who participated in the program were required to sign a waiver that allows tracking of their destinations upon course completion. This tracking will enable the assessment of the long-term outcomes of this program.

Department of Corrective Services—Hands-on Learning Program

One of the most innovative ways in which the Education and Vocational Training Unit of the Western Australian Department of Corrective Services has met clients' needs is through the Hands-on Learning Program. The unit held discussions with the authors of the Western Australian Department of Training course, Applied Vocational Study Skills, and subsequently modified the course to meet the requirements and conditions of a prison-based environment.

¹³ Centrelink is an agency of the Australian Government Department of Human Services and delivers a range of services to the community. Further information available from website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.centrelink.gov.au>>.

The Hands-on Learning Program differs from other vocational courses in that students do not have to be enrolled in an accredited course when participating in the program. The target group for this program comprises prisoners with low-level educational attainment who have traditionally chosen to work within the prison rather than undertake education or vocational training. The program has both theoretical and practical components and uses a team-teaching approach. Prisoners who are capable of undertaking both the theory and the practical components enrol in an appropriate unit. The literacy skills of learners who are reluctant to engage in the educational process are addressed in a practical, contextual manner as they participate in the practical component of the unit. The program, provided in prison industrial workshop areas, has been very successful, especially with Indigenous students who have not been able to progress in a 'mainstream' educational setting.

Industry partnerships—Silver Trowel Bricklaying School

The construction industry is currently experiencing severe labour market skills shortages in Western Australia. The Department of Corrective Services is successfully working with a company called Silver Trowel Bricklaying School, which has strong employer links in the residential housing market, to provide traineeships to inmates. There are traineeships operating in two prisons, involving a 12-month bricklaying course.

The Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations provided funding in 2005–06 for a new program to be delivered by Silver Trowel Bricklaying School. This new program (to be completed in a shorter timeframe of eight weeks) covers construction training competencies similar to the traineeship program, but will also include roof tiling. The shorter time period will mean that prisoners who are close to their release dates will be trained and fully prepared for and allocated to designated jobs in the community upon their release from prison. The employment placement aspect of this program (organised by the training provider) separates it from other training programs.

The Education and Vocational Training Unit has 'target marketed' construction training, since it is documented in international research that the construction industry, through its rate of pay, the career possibilities in the residential construction area, the provision of sustainable employment, and the acceptance by the industry of ex-offenders is one of the best areas for offenders to become involved. The skills learned in this program are transportable across the state and this is an important factor in helping ex-offenders to remain law-abiding, since offenders in general are part of a mobile population.

The Education and Vocational Training Unit has acknowledged a shortage of available qualified trainers in the northern regional areas of the state and will therefore re-locate suitably selected prisoners from the Pilbara and Kimberley to the Gascoyne to undertake the eight-week course. Upon returning to their original prison, the prisoners will be linked to employment placement opportunities before their release. These skilled trainees will also increase the skill levels at regional work camps as well as the communities to which they will return.

South Australia

Adelaide Pre-Release Centre: Re-integration into the community

The South Australian Department for Correctional Services is keen to ensure that prisoners, when released from prison, are able to move back into the community with a range of skills, behaviours and attitudes to assist in their successful re-integration. The entire focus of the Adelaide Pre-Release Centre, consisting of purpose-designed cottage-style accommodation, is to re-integrate male prisoners to the community. This dedicated pre-release centre has operated for many years and manages a range of leave programs, including family re-integration leave. Since the focus is on prisoners attending off-centre education and training programs, this centre employs an educational coordinator who assists prisoners to gain access into employment and training opportunities in the outside community. The centre has developed relationships with a range of public and private training providers with whom it enrolls prisoners on a fee-for-service basis.

The pre-release program is also available to women prisoners in the low-security Living Skills Unit in the Adelaide Women's Prison and similarly involves the purchasing of places in employment-support programs at introductory and intensive levels. Costs associated with these programs have previously restricted the number of prisoners (both men and women) accessing them. Recently, however, the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations has provided funding to place pre-release prisoners into job-search programs. While formal research has not been conducted into the effectiveness of the programs in South Australia, anecdotal evidence confirms that prisoners involved in employment prior to release are significantly less likely to re-appear in the criminal justice system.

In South Australia, the Department of Corrective Services regulations allow prisoners in the pre-release stage of their sentence to undertake paid employment in prison leave programs. Prisoners are allowed to accumulate their earnings to assist them with re-integration to the community at the end of their sentence.

Learning to build: A community partnership

Recently, a pilot construction program was established using prisoners to build new prison facilities and obtain training and qualifications in the process. The Cadell Training Centre, a low-security prison farm, needed to replace some old accommodation with new housing-style accommodation. The decision was made to use the contracted building company to train prisoners to assist in this construction project. In a three-way agreement between the prison management, the building company and the registered training organisation (to oversee the assessment process), prisoners were taught a range of skills from the Construction Industry Training Package. A small group of prisoners will receive Certificate I in Construction and several statements of attainment. This pilot project leads the way for a larger group of prisoners to acquire small skill sets that will assist in their employment in the expanding construction industry.

Working in the community

In South Australia, the Community Corrections Directorate of the Department of Corrective Services is responsible for the supervision and provision of services to offenders in the community on probation, parole, bail, community service and home detention. In 2003, Community Corrections embarked on a model of integrating court-ordered community service work with VET programs. The Community Corrections program operates across metropolitan centres and utilises a work contract to provide on-the-job training opportunities for offenders sentenced to complete community-based work orders. Units of competency from the Certificate III in Painting and Decorating from the General Construction Training Package and from the Amenity Horticulture Training Package have been undertaken by adult community-based offenders. Work has included the painting of community facilities, or parks and garden activities. These work activities and the skills of the community corrections officers to provide formal training leading to qualifications have been utilised to improve post-sentence employment opportunities for the offenders. While formal research on the impact of this approach has not been undertaken, it has been reported that offenders who had in the past persistently breached their community service orders, started to regularly attend when formal training was attached to the service order. From the first group of 20 offenders, most of whom were long-term unemployed, it is reported that 15 went on to find employment in the painting and decorating industry, with two setting up their own businesses.

Tasmania

Department of Education

Skills Equip Program

The Department of Education has initiated a new equity-focused training program funded through a competitive tender process called the Skills Equip Program. This program aims to develop or enhance basic work skills but will also provide skills necessary to perform higher-level duties. The delivery of units up to Australian Qualification Framework certificate IV level is possible under this program. It aims to address the needs of those who face barriers to training participation by:

- ❖ promoting innovative training delivery in employment-linked areas
- ❖ increasing awareness of the training needs for the program's target groups.

Skills Equip allows the registered training organisation to select competencies from existing accredited courses that meet the identified needs of their client group, such as adult prisoners and offenders. Thus, Skills Equip is useful for facilitating access to and supporting participation in VET to meet the needs of male and female adult prisoners and offenders.

Department of Justice—Prison Service

Computer access

The need for prisoners to continue their studies away from the classroom is imperative, as prisoners have a great deal of ‘down time’¹⁴ and the majority of their study can be done while the prisoner is in ‘lock-down’. To facilitate this, the Prisoner Education and Training Unit has obtained a number of notebook computers which are lent free of charge to prisoners undertaking accredited courses. The principal advantage of a notebook computer is that its use can be closely monitored; however, it also provides equitable computer access for those prisoners unable to afford their own computers. The provision of notebook computers to prisoners undertaking accredited courses or tertiary study is seen as positive reinforcement and a motivational tool. It has been successful in encouraging higher levels of educational achievement amongst inmates, as well as providing computer skills.

Prisoners enrolled through distance education in tertiary studies now have structured access to the internet, with this access being closely monitored and supervised by the Prisoner Education and Training Unit staff. This access time is a positive step in ensuring that the student is afforded every opportunity for success in his or her chosen field of study. Students have access to resources and also to feedback from external tutors and campus administrators.

Inmates can also book themselves into the computer laboratory where there are eight computers (although not connected to the internet).

User Choice funding for Australian Apprenticeships

The Prisoner Education and Training Unit of Tasmania Prison Service has access to User Choice funding from the Department of Education’s Office of Post-Compulsory Education and Training. This enables the Prisoner Education and Training Unit staff to deliver structured training under the Australian Apprenticeship scheme, leading to a nationally recognised qualification for participants. By 2005–06, there were 52 trainees, all of whom were male. User Choice funds provide additional resources which enable a dedicated trainer and assessor to be employed within prison industries. These funds also provide training resources such as laptops to enable trainees to complete their assignments in their cells. When the Prisoner Education and Training Unit contracts another registered training provider to deliver additional training, the User Choice funds contribute significantly to payment for that service.

Northern Territory Correctional Services

Diploma of Interpreting—Indigenous Languages

Northern Territory Correctional Services has engaged in training that specifically targets employment opportunities. In April 2005, four prisoners received a Diploma of Interpreting—Indigenous Languages from a course delivered in partnership

¹⁴ ‘Down time’ and ‘lock-down’ refer to the periods of time when prisoners are locked in their cells. Additional lock-downs may occur to accommodate required roll call or any disruptions that might occur as part of normal prison routines. It may sometimes occur due to industrial disputes or inadequate staffing in the prison to fulfil all of the basic obligations.

with the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreting Service (AIS). Northern Territory Correctional Services provided the literacy and numeracy support for this program.

There is a chronic shortage of male Indigenous interpreters in the Northern Territory. There are increasing problems with Indigenous male health, and male Indigenous interpreters are vital to improving the level of communication and promotion of health care amongst their countrymen.

The majority of legal and court interpreters in the Northern Territory are women. This precedent often makes it difficult to hear cases, especially in domestic violence cases when the alleged victim is related to the female interpreter. This is further complicated when the interpreter refuses to interpret for the alleged assailant, due to kinship and other loyalties. The interpreters trained at the Darwin Correctional Centre are qualified to interpret in legal matters, in court hearings, in health clinics and hospitals and in many other community service areas.

The Aboriginal Interpreting Service can offer work for these prisoners, both while in prison and post-release. One of the interpreters continued his studies after being released on parole and now works for the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service. He is an *Anindiliagwa* speaker and lives on Groote Eylandt. He regularly reports that he has many interpreting engagements and finds his work enjoyable and rewarding.

This course was designed to train more Indigenous male interpreters and to target specific communities which have particularly high crime rates, low-level English Language oracy and literacy, as well as chronic and increasing health and social problems. The course leads to real job opportunities, lifelong learning, role-modelling for Indigenous people and self-determination for both the individual and their communities.

The Northern Territory Correctional Services, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and the Aboriginal Interpreting Service are planning to deliver the course at both Darwin and Alice Springs Correctional Centres in 2006.

Deckhand's course

The Deckhand's Course was designed to target the shortage in skilled workers in the seafood industry. It exemplifies the good-practice model of forming and using industry partnerships to provide: inclusive and meaningful training; cross-application of skills; real job opportunities; future learning/training pathways; and enterprise building for relevant Indigenous communities.

This course was delivered through a partnership between Seafood and Maritime Industry Training (SMIT) and Northern Territory Correctional Services in consultation with the fishing industry. It was funded by the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training through the Australians

Working Together Grants 2005 Program. The course was designed as a short course of six units from the Certificate II in Seafood Industry—Fishing Operations.

The main focus of the course was to teach rope- and net-mending skills, seafood handling and safe navigation. This was delivered by Seafood and Maritime Industry Training, while Northern Territory Correctional Services provided the necessary literacy and numeracy support. The course was completed on 30 September 2005, and the target was to achieve 12 completions. Fourteen prisoners successfully completed the course.

Deckhand jobs are guaranteed post-release and there is always a shortage of reliable net repairers anywhere in the Northern Territory outside Darwin. All participants have been referred to Seafood and Maritime Industry Training for further training post-release. Communities on the eastern Arnhem Land coast are especially well placed for providing a service with skilled workers.

Aquaculture operations—crocodile handling and farming

The Crocodile Handling and Farming pilot for prisoners is funded by the Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training through the Australians Working Together Grants 2006 Program. **The program** trains Indigenous prisoners in crocodile handling and associated aquaculture with the aim of creating employment for them, and through skills transfer, employment for others when they re-integrate into their home communities. This is expected to lead to enterprise development through more effective and controlled farming of this natural resource. **The harvesting of crocodiles**, primarily for their skins, supports a small industry in the Northern Territory. However, Australia contributes only 2% of the international market for crocodile skins¹⁵ and so there is room for **Australia to grow its share of this market and export more crocodile skins.**

In conjunction with the Darwin-based International College of Advanced Education, Indigenous prisoners learn nationally accredited training in aquaculture from the Seafood Industry Training Package and practical skills on site at the Noonamah Crocodile Farm¹⁶ while receiving contextualised and integrated literacy and numeracy support.

15 See NT Parliamentary Debate Notes 22/08/2006, viewed 8 March 2007, <<http://notes.nt.gov.au/lant/hansard/hansard10.nsf/0/67fafdf100cb4b9d692571fe000cf5ca?OpenDocument>>.

16 Further information at, viewed 8 March 2007, <<http://www.crocfarm.com.au/australia.asp>>.

Northern Territory Correctional Services' partnerships with Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, the Centre for Appropriate Technology and Charles Darwin University

Indigenous people currently represent 30% of the Northern Territory population and are predicted to represent 50% of the Northern Territory population within the next 15 years. The affinity that Indigenous people have with the land results in increased numbers of them living in remote communities and outstations. In time, this will result in greater infrastructure needs within communities as Indigenous economic enterprise is developed. Meanwhile, few employment opportunities exist for offenders returning to their communities. If they choose to stay in town, they often re-offend and find themselves back in the prison system. Elders and communities have stated that they want ex-prisoners to return immediately to their respective communities to resettle and focus on family and community values.

Northern Territory Correctional Services has worked closely with the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education because it has a network of campus sites and annexes, which enables delivery in many remote communities. The Batchelor Institute also maintains residential schools at its main campus at Batchelor in the Northern Territory top end and at Alice Springs in Central Australia. The institute has been involved in many areas of prisoner education, with the aim of delivering culturally appropriate courses and training, as well as developing links for continuing education and training post-release. Batchelor Institute has delivered the courses, Indigenous Alcohol and Other Drugs Worker and Aboriginal Health Worker, both of which lead directly to post-release community employment.

Through a prison-based pre-release program, links are made with service providers to support the offenders in the critical period post-release in relation to housing, money matters, education, employment, health and family connections. Information sessions are provided pre-release and links are established to promote ongoing support in the community to which they return after release from prison.

The Centre for Appropriate Technology and Charles Darwin University offer completely different types of ongoing education. As the only university in the Northern Territory, Charles Darwin University provides on-campus, distance and remote-area VET and tertiary training, while the Centre for Appropriate Technology offers innovative practical training, often specifically designed for remote-area living in Alice Springs and remote centres. The Centre for Appropriate Technology has many specific designs for equipment that is user-friendly and appropriate for remote areas.

Concluding comments

Innovative programs and initiatives from Australian states and territories provide examples of good practice for VET for adult prisoners and offenders. Key features include a registered training organisation within the prison system, VET integrated with Corrective Services industries, access to apprenticeships, traineeship and work experience, and collaborative partnerships with external training providers and other key stakeholders in the community, such as housing, health and employment agencies or employers. The aim is to provide education and training pathways to enhance employment opportunities for offenders and to assist re-integration to the community as law-abiding citizens.

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Attachment A: Summary of programs implemented to enhance prisoners' employability and access to VET, 2006

Table A1 outlines programs implemented in the seven jurisdictions to enhance prisoners' post-release employability and access to VET.

Table A1 Programs implemented to assist prisoners access VET, 2006

State or territory	Program	Description
New South Wales	Corrective Service Industries Work Readiness Program	The Work Readiness Program contributes directly to the case management of offenders, allowing the identification of existing work skills and the development and measurement of skills, behaviour and attitudes for the workplace. The program focuses on practical skills and introduces inmates to employment services during pre-release planning sessions. In particular; the provision of a work reference assists with re-entry into the community.
	Pathways to Employment, Education and Training Program (PEET)	Working through the Community Offender Services ¹⁷ , the NSW Drug Summit and TAFE NSW run this program, which is designed to enable offenders with drug and alcohol issues to develop the skills necessary to enter employment or the adult education system. It aims to identify realistic education or employment options and appropriate pathways, along with the basic skills, self-esteem and self-confidence needed to achieve chosen options. The program is linked to appropriate TAFE courses or to short-term training courses directly connected to the needs of government agencies and local industries.
	Jobs for the Boys	The Salvation Army Employment Plus Career Development Program runs a pre-release employment program for adult offenders called 'Jobs for the Boys'. It deals with the knowledge and skills needed for sourcing and gaining employment (including letter writing, where to find jobs, interview skills, and overcoming barriers to employing ex-prisoners). The program also helps with the knowledge and skills that are needed in the workplace, including conflict resolution, problem-solving and motivation.
	The Yetta Dhinnakkal Program	The Yetta Dhinnakkal Program, run at Brewarrina Correctional Centre, organises inmates (most of whom are first-time Indigenous offenders with no employment history) into work crews, and Aboriginal Support staff work closely with education staff to provide appropriate education and training for the centre's employment needs and for employment opportunities in the communities where inmates will return upon release.

¹⁷ In keeping with the 'Throughcare' principles adopted by the NSW Department of Corrective Services, the Probation and Parole Service was renamed the Community Offender Services Division in 2003. 'The Department takes a whole-of-sentence approach in the secure management of offenders. The collaboration across disciplines and work locations between custodial and community-based Department officers is crucial to achieve the best outcomes for offenders and ultimately the community in general' (NSW Department of Corrective Services, Corporate Plan 2006–2009; Highlights available from website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.dcs.gov.au>>).

State or territory	Program	Description
Victoria	Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program	The Correctional Services Employment Pilot Program clients receive individualised assistance for up to six months prior to release and for up to 12 months after release from prison. Offenders who serve 'community-based orders' are eligible for assistance throughout the term of their order, and may still be referred to the program up to 12 months after completing their order.
	Offender education and training in adult community education initiative	In 2004, Corrections Victoria and the Adult Community and Further Education Division of the Office of Training and Tertiary Education commenced an initiative to contract ACE providers with experience and interest in engaging and working with people with multiple disadvantages to operate innovative education and training programs for offenders at nominated community correctional services locations.
	Café Tarra	Café Tarra is a training café at Tarrengower Women's Prison providing prisoners with experience in café operations. The café is a collaboration between three partners: Zonta Club of Kyneton, Coffee Basics Café and Roastery at Castlemaine and Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE.
	Nalu Youth Adventure Program	Nalu is a program for young adult male prisoners which combines an adventure program with a cognitive-behavioural therapy program and VET and life skills training.
	Port Phillip Youth Unit	The Remand Young Offenders Program for 18 to 25-year-old male prisoners at Port Phillip Prison in Melbourne consists of personal development and recreational components to reduce the risk of suicide and self-harm by promoting positive social behaviours and problem-solving techniques.
Queensland	Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative	Since it was introduced by the Beattie Government in October 1998, the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative has helped create nearly 100 000 jobs for Queenslanders. In 2006, this was replaced by a new, next-generation labour market program, Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which will continue to assist eligible groups of Queenslanders who are disadvantaged in the labour market to achieve sustainable employment outcomes. As a lead agency for training and employment programs, the Department of Employment and Training promotes VET as an integral part of offender programs and has developed cross programs targeting the most vulnerable population groups, including adult offenders on release from prisons.
	Prisoner Post-Release Employment Assistance Program	Six months before their release date potential clients are nominated to the contracted community-based service provider who arranges information sessions, counselling and appointments. The scheme is aimed at offenders who are labelled as being at risk of long-term unemployment after release from prison. This training provides them with employability skills that will assist them to be work-ready and obtain employment upon release. It also provides them with ongoing support to gain and retain sustainable employment.

State or territory	Program	Description
South Australia	Certificate I in Employability (SA only)	Short units of competency-based learning to assist with gaining confidence re-entering the workplace. The Prison Education Unit, following a reconsideration of the current literacy programs opted to adopt a model of short units of competency contained within the Certificate I in Employability Skills. The impact of this program was immediate, with larger numbers of prisoners both attending and experiencing success. Prisoners who had previously avoided the education centre now embraced them. The strength of the program is that it conceptualised literacy development within a construct of employment searching. This had immediate appeal to prisoners, most of whom had a history of failure within the traditional educational and training environments and suffered from long-term unemployment.
	Social Inclusion Unit—Improving housing for ex-prisoners	The Department of Premier and Cabinet established a Social Inclusion Unit in 2002. To facilitate joint responsibility for implementing integrated solutions, an interministerial committee on homelessness was set up and included the Premier and Departments of Social Justice, Housing, Health, Treasury, Aboriginal Affairs and Correctional Services. A partnership between public housing, a community housing organisation and a women's accommodation support service is providing support for women leaving prison in Adelaide.
Western Australia	Prisoner Traineeship Program	Strategic partnerships have been established between government, non-government, business and community organisations to give prisoners in regional and metropolitan Western Australia a clear pathway from prison to employment through the Australian Apprenticeships scheme.
	Hands-on Learning Program	The Hands-on Learning Program is based on the Western Australian Department of Education and Training course, Applied Vocational Study Skills. The target group for this program comprises prisoners with low-level educational attainment who have traditionally chosen to work within the prison rather than undertake education or vocational training. To assist these learners who are reluctant to engage in the educational process, their literacy skills are addressed in a practical, contextual manner while they participate in the practical component of the unit in the prison industrial workshop areas. It differs from other vocational courses in that students do not have to be enrolled in an accredited course when participating in the program.
	Moving Further Forward Program	The Moving Further Forward Program focuses on offenders serving community-based work orders. It was funded by the Department of Education and Training under the Australians Working Together initiative, and run in partnership between the Department of Corrective Services and Swan TAFE. Moving Further Forward is an eight-week structured education program designed to improve offenders' life skills, social awareness, financial management, self-esteem and employability skills, as well as help them to gain an insight into what TAFE can offer.
	Community Re-entry Coordination Services for Prisoners Program	This program has been designed to cut crime by helping offenders re-establish themselves in the community after leaving prison. It includes services to meet their needs for: accommodation; mental health; drug treatment and counselling; family relationships; and education, training and employment. The program relies on establishing and maintaining ongoing partnerships with both government and non-government agencies.
	Outcare program	Supported by both Departments of Corrective Services and Education and Training, Outcare Inc. is the Job Placement Organisation working with offenders and ex-offenders in Western Australia. Outcare provides services such as advice on employment and career; assistance with completing job applications, resumes, and searches, training information and placement before release from prison, as well as ongoing support after release.

State or territory	Program	Description
	First Click and Second Click programs	<p>Funded by the Western Australian Department of Education and Training the First Click grants program was established in 2001 to provide learning materials and community-based grants aimed at assisting people from nominated equity target groups, including people in custody, wanting to take their first steps towards computer literacy. A First Click Learning Resource Package, comprising a CD and print-based materials, is freely available to people who want to experiment with computers and the internet in their own time.</p> <p>The Second Click grants program was introduced in 2005 to allow people with basic computer literacy skills the opportunity to build on these skills through remedial training, extension training or online training. Training through the First Click and Second Click programs is free.</p>
Tasmania	Key Skills for Work and Study	Key Skills for Work and Study, funded by the Department of Education, is targeted at females to assist them to develop skills in personal development, writing resumes, interview skills, workplace communication and demonstration of good work habits.
	Return to Work and Study	The Return to Work and Study program, funded by the Department of Education, offers male prisoners selected business units, including development of resumes, interview skills, workplace communication, and demonstrating good work habits.
	Skills Equip	The Department of Education has initiated a new equity-focused training program, called the Skills Equip Program, funded through a competitive tender process. The program aims to develop or enhance basic work skills and promote awareness of training needs for the designated target group of people disadvantaged in the job market (including adult prisoners and offenders) or requiring additional skills to perform higher level duties.
	Indigenous Employment and Training Program	Funded by Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, the Indigenous Employment and Training Program places suitable Indigenous prisoners in traineeships or work experience ¹⁸ and provides wage assistance to prospective employers for up to 12 months. It also provides a mentoring program contracted to Colony 47 ¹⁹ , which involves intensive mentoring pre- and post-release and includes assistance with accessing traineeship and employment, and housing.
	Structured Training and Employment Projects (STEPS)	Funded by the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Structured Training and Employment Projects ²⁰ provide flexible funding for projects that lead to lasting employment for Indigenous job seekers. Assistance is tailored to business needs and is available for training, apprenticeships, developing an Indigenous employment strategy, mentoring and employment costs.

18 Under the Work Experience Placement Program, the Australian Government pays insurance costs for work experience placement for between five days and a maximum eight weeks.

19 Colony 47 is a community-based organisation catering for young people who are 'disadvantaged socially, economically, educationally and culturally'. It provides accommodation, housing outreach support, financial assistance and some material aid, independent living skills training, support and counselling, budgeting, job-search training, employment placement and recreational opportunities. Further information is available from the website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.colony47.com.au>>.

20 Further information on Structured Training and Employment Projects is available from the department's website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.workplace.gov.au>>.

State or territory	Program	Description
	The Salvation Army Prison Support Service—XCELL	The Salvation Army Prison Support Service (XCELL) was established from the Employment Plus Career Development Program. XCELL provides practical assistance and support to prisoners by working with them for six to eight weeks pre-release to prepare a release plan and by offering counselling and support before and after their release from prison.
Northern Territory	Indigenous Elders Visitation Program	In the Northern Territory Correctional Centres many prisoners have poor literacy and numeracy levels, little or no marketable work experience and limited skills. Many young Indigenous males spend time in prison, and this is so commonplace that it seems to be accepted as inevitable. To interrupt this cycle, Indigenous Elders are working in collaboration with communities and prisoner education staff to focus offenders on the basic skills that are necessary to actively participate in society.
	Industry partnerships	To address skill shortages, two courses were delivered in industry partnerships (i.e. Diploma of Interpreting—Indigenous languages, and Deckhand's course with the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreting Service, and Seafood and Maritime Industry Training, respectively). NT Correctional Services provides the literacy and numeracy support. The aquaculture operations-crocodile handling and farming pilot program is delivered in conjunction with the Darwin-based International College of Advanced Education and Noonamah Crocodile Farm.

Improving literacy for adult prisoners and offenders

Bernard Meatheringham, Pamela Snow, Martine Powell and Michael Fewster

If prisoners are to return to the community rehabilitated, they must have the literacy skills to take part in rehabilitation programs. In this chapter, firstly, Bernard Meatheringham explores the link between prisoners' literacy levels, their ability to meaningfully gain from offence-focused programs and the development of a national literacy indicator tool. He draws on the findings of British research into the link between prisoners' literacy skills and the literacy requirements of offending behaviour programs. He outlines the seven principles that underpin the conduct of literacy assessments in Australian prisons and the use of the National Reporting System's five-level scale. The National Reporting System is a nationally recognised mechanism for reporting outcomes of adult English language, literacy and numeracy programs. Meatheringham concludes with a challenge to further develop the areas of literacy assessments, particularly verbal literacy skill assessment of prisoners, and the need to develop a National Prisoner Literacy Assessment Tool to ensure a national reporting system for prisons.

Secondly, Pamela Snow and Martine Powell discuss their research into oral language deficit in male juvenile offenders and the implications for literacy education in correctional settings.

Thirdly, Michael Fewster, reflects on his experience of using the THRASS®—Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling System—in the Alice Springs Correction Centre. He considers how THRASS® works and the features that make it effective with students whose first languages are oral languages.

Literacy and assessment in prison

Bernard Meatheringham

Literacy standards of prisoners

All prisoners are illiterate and that is why they commit crime.

Illiterate people are likely to commit crime and end up in prison.

THese are two of the stereotypical views of a link between offending behaviour, criminality and literacy levels. As with most stereotypical views, there is very little evidence to support the assertion. However, those assertions are given authoritative weight when well-meaning, but ill-informed

people make the comments. They are given even more credence when social or political power is brought to their commentary.

There is a common view that prisoners, as a group, represent a concentration of low-level literacy skills. That view has been used to shape and direct the nature of prisoner education in many jurisdictions throughout the western world. In many ways the provision of a literacy program is seen as a 'magic bullet'. If we provide literacy programs, it is argued, prisoners will be able to get a job when they are released from prison and they will not commit crime. Literacy programs are seen as the saviour of criminal behaviour and as reducing recidivist activities. These views of the value of literacy programs for prisoners reach back through the centuries to the first models of prisoner education.

Prisoners as a group do exhibit a range of literacy deficits when compared with the broader community, but a study of the range of deficits compared with the socioeconomic group from which they predominantly come will possibly reveal that those literacy deficits are more common in the prisoner's home setting. In other words, the prisoner's lack of reading and writing skills is not necessarily considered a deficit in their own community.

Prisoners, by and large, come from depressed socioeconomic backgrounds. They are often members of communities where welfare dependency is structural and intergenerational. They come from communities where models of schooling often do not address the reality of their lives and do not prepare them for a dominant view of middle-class work and positions in society.

It is not accidental that prisons are filled with the poor, the migrants, the Indigenous, those who are generally classified as socially disadvantaged. The levels of imprisonment of Australia's Indigenous population continue to rise. There is an increasing flow of people from non-English speaking backgrounds into Australian correctional systems. Prisons in the United States have large numbers of African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans. Many of the prisoners in the British system are from former British colonies, have English as a second language, and are predominantly non-Caucasian.

These groups of communities have a level of literacy that meets their immediate needs. They communicate freely with each other and can, in a contextual sense, read the literature of their communities. They do not have a great need to write, other than to compile short lists. They certainly do not need to write lengthy articles or letters. Their literacy is, by and large, an oral literacy.

However, there is also a need to recognise that people in prison are not in that situation purely as a result of their socioeconomic status. Increasingly, the demographic of a prison indicates a significant and increasing number of people with a range of cognitive and behavioural disabilities. Increasing numbers of clients are in prison as a result of drug-related offences and, for a number of these, the loss of cognitive functioning is a result of substance abuse. The literacy needs of this group are considered different when one is addressing future life styles.

Literacy, as defined for educational purposes, is predominantly a reading and writing form of literacy. Using these definitions for assessment purposes, it is

therefore not altogether surprising that prisons systems in Australia report that approximately 62% of prisoners have deficits in their literacy levels to the point of being classified as less than functional.

In general terms prisoners have a level of reading that allows them to engage with written materials that exist within their contextual setting. They can, for example, usually make sense of short reports in newspapers. They can usually understand the transcript of the report of their trial (they were present to hear most of the legal argument). They can understand magazines that address their immediate interests.

However, it may be stated that the evidence of poor levels of literacy amongst offenders in the correctional centres of Australia (and other countries) has been well established through extensive research and reporting. The Australian vocational education and training (VET) system recognises that offenders not only have lower-than-community-accepted rates of literacy but also have multiple problems associated with social, educational, financial and cultural disadvantage.

Literacy assessing in prisons

Initial language, literacy and numeracy screening in correctional services facilities across Australia has historically been the responsibility of each state and territory correctional jurisdiction. Each jurisdiction has developed strategies to identify prisoner risk factors and a range of well-respected risk assessment instruments are currently available across Australia.

Literacy assessment has, to date, been undertaken when a prisoner first enters the prison and is used to identify the type of literacy programs that may be required, or is undertaken on commencement of education and training programs. Rarely has the assessment outcome been used to inform the broader prisoner management system and, in particular, the case management process.

Many of the people sentenced to prison have relatively short sentences, often of months duration rather than decades as per public perception. Consequently, there is a limited window of opportunity to address offending behaviour through a range of criminogenic programs. Programs, such as anger, drug and alcohol, and domestic violence management, and cognitive skills, are usually delivered by prison services staff who do not necessarily come from an education and training background. Teachers, on the other hand, are very cognisant of the level of literacy of prisoners involved in education programs. Indeed in some states, over 50% of the prisoner education budget is used in addressing literacy deficits. However, if one of the functions of imprisonment is to affect recidivism rates, there is a need to ensure that the prisoners' literacy skills are at a standard where they, and ultimately society, can benefit from an involvement in offence-focused programs.

A research exercise conducted in the United Kingdom in 2004 entitled *An evaluation of the literacy demands of general offending behaviour programs* found that '... the literacy demands of the three programs [General offending

behaviour programs: Think First, Enhance Thinking Skills and Reasoning and Rehabilitation] exceed their literacy skills'. There is little reason to expect the situation will be any different in Australia, particularly as many jurisdictions are using these and similar programs. The whole issue of the prisoner's ability to cope with and benefit from the offence-focused programs is in question once the low level of prisoner literacy skills is known.

Prisoner literacies are also an issue for prison management. Processes and procedures based on written documents are often opaque and confusing to prisoners with literacy reading levels below level 3 of the National Reporting System (NRS). This situation can lead to misunderstandings, blocked information flow, or officer time being spent explaining such information verbally. It is important that language, literacy and numeracy courses relate both to the prisoner's everyday life and living skills while in custody and upon release, as well as to any offence-related and rehabilitative programs they are required to attend.

Development of a National Prisoner Literacy Assessment Tool

The National Reporting System is a nationally recognised mechanism for reporting outcomes of adult English language, literacy and numeracy programs in Australia. A new resource to support language, literacy and numeracy program teachers and assessors in interpreting and reporting on the learning strategies in the National Reporting System has been developed under the Adult Literacy National Project (Department of Education, Science and Training 2006). Other resources developed using funds under Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)¹ Adult Literacy National Projects (including Innovative Projects) and/or the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) Programme are also available online.

In 2004 the Correctional Education Administrators group, acting as steering committee on national prisoner education issues, was successful in an application for a Department of Education, Science and Training National Literacy Innovation Project.

The focus of the project was threefold:

- ❖ to develop a literacy assessment instrument that would be used by all correctional jurisdictions to determine the level of literacy skill as reported in the National Reporting System framework
- ❖ to create a professional development network for monitoring, promoting and exchange of resources
- ❖ to report on the findings of research and analysis.

1 ANTA was abolished in 2005 and its functions taken over by the Department of Education, Science and Training.

Research findings

A detailed scoping study identified a range of good-practice models for language, literacy and numeracy assessment in the various states and territories. However, the research also identified many gaps in assessment practices, and in planning vocational pathways and integrating language, literacy and numeracy delivery in vocational education and training. While significant resources have been invested in prison and prisoner management in some jurisdictions, approaches to initial language, literacy and numeracy assessment in correctional settings across Australia have been inconsistent, and in some cases, incoherent.

The research into literacy assessment processes in Australian prisons found that:

There is no consistent model of assessment of offenders to determine their literacy proficiency.

At admission, all prisoners are assessed for risks and needs. This may include an observation by the assessment staff that the offender has problems with literacy. This may be based on information about levels of education achieved, school leaving age, direct information from the offender, or by the difficulties the offender has with filling out forms. This observation is part of a generic assessment, not an assessment of literacy proficiency. As a result of this induction assessment, offenders may be referred to education on the basis of this observation.

The more intensive assessment conducted by education centres is modelled on the national general education curriculum. (Madsen 2004, p.5)

The scoping research was considered and discussed at a meeting of the Correctional Education Administrators and literacy coordinators from states and territories in 2005. While many felt that there were exemplary models of assessment and engagement of prisoners in education and training, it was clear that the funding and operational differences between jurisdictions made it difficult to settle on one assessment tool. Consequently, the group decided on some principles that should be held as important when undertaking literacy assessment in prison settings. After much discussion, consensus was reached on the following key points.

- ❖ An initial language, literacy and numeracy indicator tool should be developed which would be based around the National Reporting System and enable case management staff to identify prisoners with the greatest language, literacy and numeracy needs before individual case plans were determined. Prisoners identified at National Reporting System skill levels 1, 2 or 3 would be referred for more comprehensive language, literacy and numeracy assessment by education staff.
- ❖ The indicator tool should be capable of being used in a variety of ways: as a stand-alone process that could be locally customised to reflect particular prison populations and profiles; incorporated into an already-established, general risk-assessment process; and/or incorporated into a more comprehensive holistic language, literacy and numeracy assessment system. Western Australian managers made it clear that they wanted

to continue with their current approach, but would ensure that their language, literacy and numeracy measurements were mapped to National Reporting System levels for the sake of national consistency.

- ❖ It would be a tiered tool with a common entry point.
- ❖ All prisoners sentenced to six months or greater would be assessed. Prisoners would be asked to complete only as many tasks as they could independently manage. Identification of language, literacy and numeracy needs would result in referral to educators for closer language, literacy and numeracy assessment.
- ❖ As the initial indicator tool was intended for use by a range of employees with limited training, it should be short and easy to use and the manner of data collection should be straightforward.
- ❖ The comprehensive language, literacy and numeracy assessment tools currently in use across the states should be collated in a consistent format organised according to National Reporting System levels. This would provide a bank of detailed assessments which could be used by educators as a follow-on after the indicator tool. This bank would also provide a set of common resources for correctional services in all states to build consistent common practices.
- ❖ The importance of staff training and support for interviewers, interview guidelines and principles of best practice was acknowledged.

The unique nature of the prison environments led the steering group to refer to the tool as providing an indicator of literacy ability. It could not be seen as providing a full diagnostic assessment, and the process requires that, where a full assessment is required, the prisoner should be referred to the education centre where a more detailed assessment could be undertaken. However, some jurisdictions are able to undertake a considerable assessment at the induction phase of a prisoner's sentence and will continue to operate in that manner.

An assessment instrument has been constructed utilising the services of TAFE SA (Adelaide campus) and has been reviewed and commented on by all members of the steering group. In developing the tool, the second outcome of the project has been achieved, with the development of a network of professional prisoner educators. While the Australasian Correctional Education Association also provides this service to prison educators, the literacy assessment tool project has focused the attention of many of the prison-based literacy educators. The assessment instrument will be available through the Department of Education, Science and Training

Where to from here

The indicator tool will identify the levels of prisoners' literacy ability according to the National Reporting System scale. However, it was beyond the scope of the project to develop a national reporting system for prisons. It is in the interests of all state and territory jurisdictions to collect data in nationally consistent ways using the National Reporting System as a framework to describe adult literacy

and numeracy skills. Until nationally consistent approaches are followed, policy development, needs analysis and even intercountry comparisons will be difficult to research.

New policy analyses emerging from the United Kingdom are a direct result of consistent data management in prisons. It is much easier to argue for improved services if needs are comprehensively documented. Similarly, the links between low-level literacy and numeracy skills and recidivism rates can be discussed and researched more readily when prisoner profile information is available.

At a local level, work will need to be done to customise the tool to local populations. Again it was not within the scope of the project to develop separate tools for Indigenous prisoners nor to make the tools gender-specific. However, this work is needed so that a clearer view of the levels of prisoner literacy in Australia is established.

At the beginning of this paper the view was expressed that much of the judgement of prisoners' literacy is based on an assessment of their reading and writing skill, yet many of the people who go into the nation's prisons live in a verbal culture. Considerable work needs to be undertaken to establish sound verbal assessment tools for use in prisons. In this way authorities will be made aware of the significant numbers of male prisoners who predominantly live in a verbal environment.

Oral language competence: A missing link in literacy education

Pamela Snow and Martine Powell

Introduction

'Oral language' refers to the talking and listening skills that humans employ across a range of settings and interactions as they go about the business of everyday life. This section positions oral language competence more centrally in the debate about literacy programs in both adult and juvenile correctional settings—both as a means of better understanding why offenders are likely to have low levels of literacy in the first place, and as a means of rethinking approaches to literacy education with this complex, heterogeneous, but very needy group.

Humans, across many cultural groups, share their experience with others mainly by verbal means of a discourse genre known as 'narrative account'. For other cultural groups, such as traditional Indigenous Australian people, details of past experiences are also commonly transmitted via enactment and drawing (Powell 2000). According to Stein and Glen (1979), a well-developed verbal narrative account comprises up to seven logically sequenced story grammar elements. These elements include a setting, an initiating event, an internal response, a plan of action, an attempt at action, direct consequences of this action, and protagonists' reactions.

For further information on the development of oral language competence, and the factors which interfere with this development, see attachment A at the end of this chapter.

Our research on male juvenile offenders

Over the past five years, we have conducted three studies (Humber & Snow 2001; Snow & Powell 2004a, 2004b, 2005) on the oral language abilities of male juvenile offenders serving community-based orders. We have specifically targeted male juvenile offenders because they embody the notion of 'adolescent risk', in terms of their home environments, their associated difficulties (for example, attention, behaviour, substance misuse), and because they are likely to detach early from school (see Ward & Stewart 2003 for review). We have focused on oral language competence in this group because we believe it is an important protective factor that has been largely overlooked in previous research on high-risk young people. It is widely accepted that academic achievement is a protective factor, but few researchers have considered the role of oral language competence in, first of all, fostering, and, later strengthening and sustaining, academic achievement. While there is agreement that higher rates of school retention are desirable, disappointingly little discussion has occurred around the role of oral language in supporting school success and creating a sense of attachment to and wellbeing at school, both academically and socially.

A key assumption underpinning our research, therefore, has been the notion that the learning (literacy) difficulties displayed by high-risk boys once they reach school may actually be a surrogate indicator for significant levels of underlying, but previously undetected, oral language deficits. Having to learn how to read 'flushes out' these problems but, because they often co-exist with attentional and/or behavioural problems, early intervention efforts may be inadequate and/or misplaced. As Cohen and co-workers (Cohen et al. 1998) observed in their Canadian research, if the key adults in the child's life see the primary handicapping condition as behaviour, then this will determine both the label applied and the types of services offered.

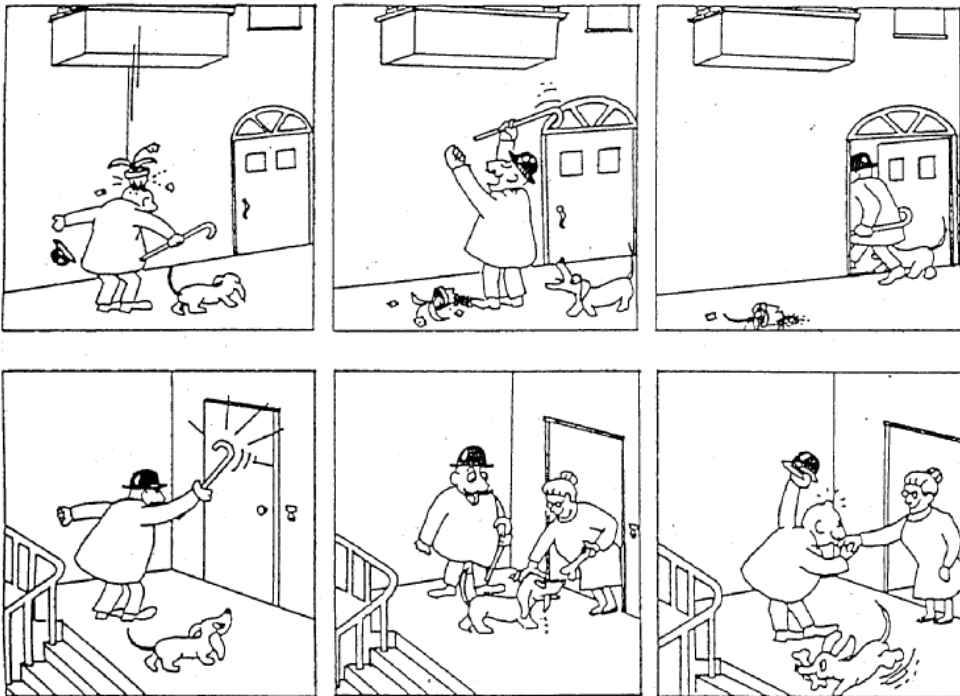
Across our three studies, we have examined the expressive and receptive language skills of nearly 100 young male offenders and have compared these with the performance of non-offending boys attending state government high schools in the same socioeconomic region. Because of their established impact on oral language functioning, we have excluded boys with a known history of hearing impairment, major psychiatric illness (for example, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia), traumatic brain injury involving loss of consciousness, and/or diagnosed intellectual disability. Obviously it has not been possible to comprehensively assess all aspects of oral language functioning, but we have attempted to sample across key competencies, such as the ability to interpret figurative and ambiguous language, the ability to narrate a simple story, and the ability to repeat back sentences of increasing length and complexity. In our most recent study (Snow & Powell 2007, in press), we have also included a comprehensive measure of social skill ability and a measure of non-verbal intelligence.

Our findings have, unfortunately, roundly supported our hypothesis that young offenders are at high risk for undetected oral language deficits. We will deal now with two main lines of enquiry in our research: narrative discourse and figurative language.

The narrative language skills of young offenders

As outlined above, narrative competence is a fundamental component of everyday communication. We also believe that narrative competence has a special significance in forensic settings, as it is the means by which an accused person *tells his or her own story*—a fundamental principle in a justice system which holds that people are innocent until proved guilty. In our studies, we have used a six-frame black-and-white cartoon known as *The flowerpot incident* (see below) to elicit narrative descriptions of a simple story.

Figure 1 The flowerpot incident



Source: (Adapted from 'So En Deckell 22 Bildergeschichtinn für den Sprachunterricht' by H. Kossatz, (1972) Tomus-Verlag, Berlin.) Reproduced with permission.

The scoring system we developed allows us to very simply count the number of story grammar elements (see above), as well as to make qualitative judgements on the adequacy of the information provided. A detailed account of the scoring system is provided elsewhere (Snow & Powell 2005). The young offenders differed significantly from their non-offending peers on some important communication dimensions. Firstly, they achieved poorer overall scores,

indicating that, compared with their peers, they produce less well-developed or detailed narrative accounts. Further, when we considered each element of the narrative separately, we found that young offenders have particular difficulty with the following story parts: the *internal response* (the part of the story that identifies how someone is feeling—in this case, angry/annoyed); the *plan* (the part of the story where it is necessary to infer somebody's intentions from their actions, in this case, a decision to go inside the building and seek out the person responsible); the *direct consequences* (the part of the story that concerns how one person's responses might relate to another person's actions, in this case, the astute actions of the little old lady); and finally, the *resolution* (the part of the story that concerns the conclusion of events, which, as in the story we used, is sometimes different from what might have been predicted at the outset, that is, instead of continuing to be hostile, the old man was charmed).

The young offenders did not differ from the non-offenders, however, when they were dealing with more concrete aspects of the story, that is, the *setting* (a man and his dog walking along the street), the *initiating event* (a flowerpot falls on his head), and the *attempt* (the fact that he went inside the building and banged on the door to express his annoyance). These findings suggest that high-risk young people (and possibly adults too) have difficulty understanding and interpreting the emotional responses and consequent actions of others and linking these together as a coherent narrative. Instead, they tend to simply *list* events, without establishing cause and effect or temporal links between them. When we divided the young offenders into two subgroups, according to whether or not they could be described as having a language impairment, we found that the language-impaired subgroup performed more poorly than the non-language-impaired offenders and, further, that they actually *said less* on this task. This means that, in a forensic setting, such young people will convey even less information than non-language-impaired peers, and are therefore at greater risk for being labelled as rude or uncooperative by authority figures, such as police, lawyers, and magistrates. Setting aside these forensic implications, however, these findings suggest that high-risk boys as a group find it difficult to develop a logical, coherent, and sufficiently detailed narrative to be able to share their experiences with others—a fundamental process by which we establish and maintain interpersonal relationships in everyday life. Our findings should be viewed alongside evidence cited by Cohen (2001) that narrative language deficits have been observed in children who have been abused, children with attention deficit disorder, and children with thought disorders—all of which we can expect to be over-represented in both juvenile and adult correctional settings.

The figurative language skills of young offenders

The subtests of the Test of Language Competence—Expanded (Wiig & Secord 1989) that we employed in our research examine, firstly, the ability to identify two possible meanings for an ambiguous sentence (for example, 'John was looking up the street') and, secondly, the ability to decipher metaphorical language (for example, 'there's rough sailing ahead of us'). As indicated earlier, being able to understand and appropriately use non-literal language is a mark of a competent communicator. Our findings show that young offenders

experience significant difficulties with both types of abstraction—finding two possible meanings for the one sentence and deciphering figurative language. On the ambiguous sentences task, young offenders responded by giving an initial interpretation (for example, ‘He was standing out the front of his house’) and then, instead of finding a different meaning altogether, simply recasting the initial interpretation (for example, ‘He was looking for a friend up the street’). On the figurative language subtest, the young offenders displayed enormous difficulties moving from the literal, surface meaning to the abstract, hidden meaning. For example, when presented with the following scenario: A student talking to his friend about a trip, and asked to explain the expression: ‘It’s still up in the air’, a typical response was ‘Kite, a balloon or a bag or somethin’. Somethin’ about flyin’. He’s afraid of flyin’ or somethin’.

These problems have particular implications for the ability to make judgements about the range of intentions behind another speaker’s communication. It has long been recognised that both juvenile and adult offenders are susceptible to *hostile attribution bias* (Vitale et al. 2005), that is, the tendency, where ambiguity exists, to opt for the more hostile intention behind another’s verbal or non-verbal response. Our findings lend support to the notion that this may be, at least in part, due to the difficulties inherent in the rapid linguistic processing that needs to occur in social settings, in order to make more than one possible interpretation. Children and adolescents who are accustomed to conflict being resolved via physical and/or verbal aggression may experience few opportunities to discuss, understand and re-interpret what others have said. Our findings are consistent with the observation made by Hollin (1996) that ‘... aggressive and violent people search for and perceive fewer social cues ... are more likely to interpret the behaviour of other people in a hostile manner ... [and] generate fewer options for dealing with a social situation’ (p.473).

Notwithstanding the fact that, like all research our studies have some limitations, it should be noted that these language problems (a) cannot be ‘explained away’ as reflecting lower IQs in the offender group, and (b) occurred despite the fact that in each of our studies the young offenders were significantly *older* than the controls—meaning that, on developmental terms alone, they should have easily performed better than the control group. It should also be noted that our findings are derived from a non-stressful communication context so, if anything, we are probably underestimating the true extent of the everyday language problems these young people experience.

Implications for literacy education in correctional settings

Taken along with the existing vast literature on high-risk young people (in particular, boys) our findings give cause for reflection over how literacy programs should be conceived and delivered in correctional settings (both juvenile and adult). At the simplest level, it is fair to ask this question:

If it’s not reasonable to expect 5 to 8-year-olds to master the transition to literacy if they have inadequate oral language skills, what would make us think that it is reasonable to expect adolescents or adults to achieve this transition if they have a lifelong, but undetected oral language deficit?

Let's think for a moment about the context of correctional literacy education for a hypothetical young white Australian offender, whom we'll call Brad. Brad is the oldest child of his single mother Mandy. Mandy also has two other children with her second partner, who does not relate well to Brad. Mandy has a history of depression and substance misuse, in particular tobacco and alcohol. After years of poor school engagement and achievement, early school leaving with minimal, if any, actual formal achievement to show for the school years, and lots of memories of exclusion and suspension (both at a classroom and a school level), at age 18 Brad has finally been formally rejected by society and incarcerated, following a series of property and violent offences. Although he's never been formally assessed by a speech pathologist, Brad actually has significant expressive and receptive language difficulties, but 'gets by' as best he can through his script knowledge and by 'grunting', shoulder-shrugging and other minimal responses. Brad began using tobacco at age 11, progressing quickly to alcohol abuse at age 13, regular cannabis use from 14, and has since experimented with a range of licit and illicit substances, including solvents and amphetamines. Brad has 'dabbled in' various pre-vocational training programs, but has not completed any of these and has no marketable work skills. In the juvenile detention centre, Brad is informed that he will be attending a literacy class. What kind of associations will these have for him? In all probability, associations of frustration, repeated failure, and poor self-esteem. If the factors that promote and sustain these feelings and beliefs are not identified and addressed, it is hardly reasonable to expect that literacy education will have any meaningful impact on Brad's functional capacity to engage in vocational training and thus re-enter society with the types of skills and attitudes necessary to avoid re-offending.

We would like to see the education workforce in correctional settings become more skilled and confident in addressing underlying oral language competence as a means not only of 'back-filling' the subskills necessary for successful literacy, but also as way of making it easier to engage offenders (irrespective of the reason for their deficits) in the highly verbal counselling approaches that are used in such settings. For example, consider cognitive behaviour therapy (Beck 1995). This widely used, evidence-based intervention draws heavily on a range of verbally mediated tasks, such as problem-solving, identifying and responding to negative thoughts, assertiveness training, giving and receiving feedback, and social skills training. Without a reasonable level of verbal competence (both receptively and expressively), it is difficult to imagine such approaches making significant inroads to entrenched patterns of belief—about oneself in particular, and about one's position in a world that must seem unpredictable and hostile much of the time. It is even more concerning to consider the extent to which such approaches may be culturally and linguistically inappropriate for offenders from Indigenous backgrounds who may find such approaches alien and confronting.

We have similar concerns about the implications of poor oral language competence for engagement in restorative justice programs, as these typically rely heavily on verbal skills to establish a sense of empathy between the offender and his/her victim(s). Emphasis in such programs is on discussing and resolving

the offence, as an alternative to being charged and appearing in court (Australian Institute of Criminology 2005). Offenders who lack the skills required for this type of verbal engagement may either decline this offer because of its verbally confronting nature, or be viewed by those in authority as less than committed to its success if they do participate.

THRASS® works

Michael Fewster

This section is adapted from the presentation by Michael Fewster, titled *THRASS works. Now what?*, at the 2005 Australasian Corrections' Education Association conference held in Darwin (available from the Australasian Corrections Education Association website <<http://www.acea.org.au>>).

Background

Education is in a unique position to improve literacy outcomes for offenders and also to contribute positively to the communities from which they come. In the Alice Springs Correctional Centre, almost all students are Aboriginal adult males, with more than half from remote communities and with very limited 'western' education experience, if any at all. Petrol-sniffing and alcohol abuse are significant contributing factors to the matters for which they have been sentenced.

The community Indigenous languages, which are the first language of most students in Alice Springs Correctional Centre, are oral languages. A large number of our students therefore have little conceptual understanding of how a written language operates. This is a significantly different learning situation from that of working in a regular classroom or with most migrant groups learning the English language, where the nature of what the teacher is trying to convey is understood.

This section is written from my experience working at Alice Springs Correctional Centre where a different approach to teaching literacy was tried from 2003 to 2005. THRASS®—Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Skills—is a proprietary, copyrighted product, created and designed by Alan Davies in England in the early 1990s (Davies 1992). If THRASS® works for Aboriginal adult males in Alice Springs Correctional Centre, then it deserves a thorough appraisal. However, at this time, my data are mainly anecdotal.

How THRASS® works

Firstly, the English language uses 26 signs (letters) as symbols for sounds. But the language uses more sounds than this (about 44 discrete sounds, or phonemes to use the technical term). Therefore, some of the letters get combined to make a new sound. Secondly, because English is a mix of languages and has developed over a long period, there can be many ways of writing the symbol (letter, or group of letters) for that sound. Thus, the key problem for English language learners is to

understand the complexities, permutations and combinations to decode or encode English when reading and writing. The numbers of rules, the exceptions to the rules, and the numbers of words seem endless and intimidate learners.

THRASS® focuses on this key problem and sets up a relatively simple system to enable the reader to decode and code words.

- ❖ THRASS® identifies the 44 phonemes (sounds) that we use in English.
- ❖ THRASS® identifies the different graphemes (symbols or letters) we use to write each one of these phonemes.
- ❖ THRASS® ties each grapheme with a key word and picture. The picture gives the student a cue to how to read the word and the phoneme for the particular grapheme demonstrated in that word.

With a limited number of phonemes to learn, the core information can be shown on two charts: vowels and consonants (see THRASS® resources). These charts are the centre of the method, and students learn to use them rapidly. The charts are arranged to group each of the 44 phonemes with the various graphemes used to symbolise each of the phonemes. For example, the phoneme represented by the letter 'e' in 'bed' is the same phoneme as represented by the letters 'ea' in 'bread'. The THRASS® chart shows this phoneme in a block of two words, bed and bread, with an appropriate picture above each word.

The learner knows that every grapheme in the block has the same phoneme. In the initial stage of learning the system, the reader will use the pictures to identify 'bed' and 'bread'. They rapidly learn to remember the pictures and the 'e' and 'ea' with the correct phoneme/grapheme association. Also in the block on the THRASS® chart representing the phoneme 'e' (as the letter is pronounced in the word 'me') there are five words with corresponding pictures: me, beach, tree, key and pony. The pictures enable the students to quickly learn the same phoneme (which they know because the picture has given them a cue to how the grapheme will sound). Thus, the student has also learned that the grapheme 'e' can have two different phonemes.

In my experience most students at Alice Springs Correctional Centre can learn these charts and understand their use after about 40 to 60 hours tuition. A few students have been much faster. Students who suffer from some form of substance impairment are slower, some much slower. But even these students seem to get there. It would appear that damage that once was thought irreparable can be rebuilt and that the THRASS® teaching process assists this to happen. Recent research by Sheree Cairney² at the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin, although not linked to literacy but centred on petrol sniffing and the brain, concludes that abstinence from the substance abuse and some kinds of mental activity can rebuild this type of damage.

2 S Cairney, Senior Research Fellow, Menzies School of Health Research, various articles listed at <http://www.napnt.org/pages/petrol_menzies1.html>.

Why THRASS® works

THRASS® appears to be especially effective with Aboriginal students for four main reasons:

- ❖ The concept of ‘symbols’ is central to the art and culture of Aboriginal students. The core THRASS® approach of teaching graphemes and phonemes as symbols representing sounds is immediately understood.
- ❖ The THRASS® methodology links a limited number of key THRASS® words with pictures. This is very effective with Aboriginal students. Most have excellent visual skills and the picture connection rapidly builds confidence and retention.
- ❖ The ‘THRASSWORDS’ technique means students have a relatively small number of keyword/phonemes/graphemes to learn, after which they feel they are reading and writing. Students feel at the outset that this is achievable. Other methodologies appear open-ended – as though they will stretch on forever. The ability of THRASS® to rapidly teach the basic concepts of literacy is critical in giving students with low literacy success levels the confidence needed to take on learning literacy.
- ❖ Learning the key ‘THRASSWORDS’ and phoneme/graphemes can be achieved with flashcards. This is easily accomplished by students themselves in small groups and increases the feeling that they can do this themselves. It is also a culturally appropriate technique for Aboriginal students, further building their confidence and feeling of being ‘at ease’ with this methodology.

Some of the success is also probably due to the educators’ understandings of the students’ cultural issues. At Alice Springs Correctional Centre, educators were very explicit in discussing cultural differences, the reasons for the differences and the educational implications. For example:

- ❖ the need for students to be able to make mistakes in the classroom, if they are going to make progress, without its being a ‘shame job’
- ❖ the role of argument in western thinking – very different from our students’ perspectives.

In relation to this last point, we teach the need to understand and use techniques of argument in order to participate in ‘western’ life. This explicit teaching is done in a non-judgemental manner.

Once students have established this foundation knowledge, which unlocks the reading and writing process, other methodologies can be used to build vocabulary, sight recognition of words, fluency, grammar and punctuation. The students are excited because they now feel that they are reading and are eager to work on stories and texts accessing written accounts of their own culture or experience. Whole word and frameworking methodologies seem to work well at this point. THRASS® bridges the whole word and phonics camps in the eternal debate on literacy methodology.

THRASS® within a prison system

One of the problems of teaching literacy in a prison is continuity, a consequence of the variable beginning and end times of our students' sentences. But THRASS® is flexible. Because that core collection of phonemes and graphemes can be learnt relatively quickly, illiterate students who are not with us for long can leave feeling that they are in control of the key mystery. Further, it is not too difficult to teach those basic concepts to a beginners' group containing students at many levels. The chart-mastering activities lend themselves to self-directed small group work in which students can assist one another. Most other methodologies for beginning readers are much more dependent on teacher direction and therefore in the context the ever-changing clients in a prison setting harder for teachers to implement.

As prison educators, we have one huge advantage over other providers of Indigenous, especially Indigenous remote, education. We can get our students into a classroom, every day of the week, enthusiastic and ready to learn. Education in correctional services is uniquely able to address adult literacy issues and so improve outcomes for Australia's Indigenous citizens. The prison education system must be our most underused asset. We need a change of mindset. Think of us as a big, multi-campus boarding school with an old-fashioned approach to discipline matters.

But then there are problems. As a registered training organisation, we can only teach accredited courses within our scope. None of the national certificates has literacy modules (or units of competency) that accommodate THRASS®. We torture and twist module outcomes around to align them to THRASS® development steps. But really, they don't.

We need some new certificates, or perhaps modification to modules in existing certificates. The Institute of Aboriginal Development in Alice Springs has come to a similar conclusion based on its experience in trying to find a suitable certificate.

THRASS® in the community

We need to be aware of the opportunities students will have to continue literacy development after they leave prison. There are short-term and long-term students. Methodology is not such an issue with long-term students, as consistency of approach can be provided. For example, after initial literacy tests, teaching can be tailored to fit the needs of long-term students by grading the classes into different literacy levels. For long-term students with higher literacy skills (who have completed at least Year 10 at high school), creative writing provides a great basis for working on English comprehension and sentence structure. And the more they write, the easier reading and writing become (Shilton 2005).

What should be the aim for short-term students, that is, those with sentences less than one year? In the case of virtually illiterate students with sentences of less than three months, there is little that can be done in the time available but to attempt to link them with another agency that can work with them after release. In the case of non-impaired illiterate students with at least three-month

sentences, THRASS® can be used to achieve understanding of the basic concepts of literacy and to gain a measure of independent reading and writing by the end of this time. If the student has substance abuse impairments, at least six months is needed to achieve the same end point. The students therefore have the tools to become truly literate. But will they?

The biggest issue leading to recidivism in the Northern Territory is the reality of life in Indigenous communities. Most communities are located in places that have cultural significance to those that live there. 'Western' communities, by contrast, grow out of an economic need or an opportunity identifying that place as a good place to establish a town. Western cultural attachment to the site then develops over years. If the site ceased to have economic meaning, the town declines or may simply be abandoned.

If the community is located close to a physical feature that has tourism potential, or if it happens to have mining or some other resource, then the community has an opportunity to develop business and income independent of welfare. If the traditional land of the community does not have these sorts of assets, then it is going to be welfare-dependent.

I suggest that, for literacy teaching in correctional services to impact on recidivism, prison educators need to be very aware of the kind of reality to which the students, especially the shorter-term students, will return. We need to know a lot about the communities, specifically the nature and size of industries to which our students will return. With that information and in partnership with the community or employer, students can be trained for real jobs. Then the THRASS® program would have somewhere to go. Vocabulary, manuals and procedures would focus THRASS® to give real point to the literacy learning. Further training back in the community can be designed to build on learning that has been undertaken in the correctional centre.

If the Aboriginal community does not have job opportunities, how can the students continue to develop literacy after their release? Libraries and reading resources rarely exist outside schools and even there they are limited. There is a need for post-release data to be collected so that we know how many return to their communities. That is what most said they intended doing and what would be expected, given the strength of their cultural attachment to their country. Students in prison could be trained to undertake basic tutoring using THRASS®. Subsequently, after release, they could work in local schools in partnership with the schools. Thus, in an environment with access to books, they could be encouraged to continue their own literacy development. They could also be tutors within their own families, which would be doubly effective if the community school is using THRASS®.

Any real reduction in recidivism will require working in partnership with communities. There is no single answer. Any steps we take must be tailored to the realities and opportunities in the individual communities to which the students return. However, establishing partnerships with communities is complex (Hill 2005). The present levels of education staffing are not sufficient for this work, and a community liaison unit of sorts may be required in the prison.

The prison needs communication with communities. Sentence planning and the Aboriginal Elders' visiting programs in Northern Territory prisons are moving down this track. At Alice Springs Correctional Centre contacts have been made with groups who provide educational programs to communities. The intention is for the prison to have a contact point in each community for students returning home. It is envisaged that both the student and the contact would be advised when one of the students is about to return home, so that the two can meet. The hope is that the contact will organise further classes and access to resources for the student.

Seeding a core of interested students in a community rather than having returning students feel that their reading isolates them will help give the student confidence to continue. Furthermore, the community is best placed to define just what skills and vocabulary are most needed in that community.

Establishing and maintaining a unit that interfaces between prison education and the communities may be an expensive exercise. However, if it reduces recidivism, it would, in the long run, be the cheaper option.

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Attachment A: What is oral language competence?

'Oral language' refers to the talking and listening skills that humans employ across a range of settings and interactions as they go about the business of everyday life. Oral communication emerges in early infancy, initially through crying, then through more differentiated 'cooing' and 'babbling', until some time around the child's first birthday, a few recognisable single words emerge. From here on, there is an 'explosion' in vocabulary and early sentence structure, such that by the time children enter school, they can usually use sentences of about six words with correct grammar, express cause-and-effect relationships, describe their ideas and feelings, and follow three-step directions (Speech Pathology Australia).

Receptive language skills are enhanced through the opportunity to interact with others and engage in several everyday tasks, including listening to complex stories, engaging in conversations with others, and through exposure to the instructional and expository discourse style typically employed by teachers. Receptive language is contingent on several subskills, including adequate hearing, attention, and auditory attention and auditory memory abilities.

Narrative discourse: A key marker of oral language competence

Humans, across many cultural groups, share their experiences with others mainly by verbal means of a discourse genre known as a 'narrative account'. For other cultural groups, such as traditional Indigenous Australian people, details of past experiences are also commonly transmitted via enactment and drawing (Powell 2000). According to Stein and Glenn (1979), a well-developed verbal narrative account comprises up to seven logically sequenced story grammar elements. These elements include a setting, an initiating event, an internal response, a plan of action, an attempt at action, direct consequences of this action, and protagonists' reactions.

Narrative development begins to emerge in early childhood through exposure to highly formulaic fairytales (Paul 2001). Children initially learn to relate isolated and salient incidents from a story, and later learn to link more story elements using cohesive devices (such as 'so', 'then', 'because') to mark temporal and cause-effect relationships in the story. During their third year, children begin to narrate personal experiences in the context of conversations with care givers. By five years of age, children can usually provide well-sequenced, chronologically ordered accounts of their past experiences. At six to seven years, children begin to provide contextual information at the beginning of a narrative, recognising that this is where such comments are of greatest value to the listener. At around this age, children's narratives are often judged as complete in terms of story-grammar content (see McCabe 1996).

To be an effective narrator of one's own experience, the speaker must be able to make judgements about what the listener does or does not already know and adjust background detail accordingly. Effective narration also depends on the ability to sequence events in a story in a logical and coherent manner, while doing so in a way that is engaging and interesting to the listener. In

emphasising the developmental importance of the narrative genre, Hedberg and Stoel-Gammon (1986) noted that individuals who lack narrative skills ‘... have difficulty reconstructing their own experiences and sharing them with others’ (p.68). In other words, narrative competence reflects skill in a variety of linguistic, cognitive, social, and cultural domains (Westby 1982).

Spicing up everyday communication: Non-literal language

In English-speaking cultures, speakers are not always meant to be taken literally. Once they reach a certain level of competence in receptive and expressive language, children learn to use creative techniques which create an added level of interest or sophistication to their communication. Common linguistic devices include sarcasm, metaphor, irony, humour, puns, and idioms. Table 1 includes some examples.

Table 1 Examples of some non-literal everyday linguistic devices

Linguistic device	Spoken meaning	Intended meaning	Comment
Sarcasm	Lovely weather we're having	Isn't the weather awful?	Here the speaker says the exact OPPOSITE of what is intended, but it is up to the speaker to use contextual and cultural knowledge to make this inference for him/herself.
Idiom	A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush	You're better off sticking with what you have, rather than risking being worse off by going after more.	This requires the benefit of previous exposure and world knowledge to make a shift from the literal, to the abstract meaning.
Metaphor	He's a dark horse.	It's difficult to work out what he's thinking or feeling.	Like idiom, the ability to 'decode' metaphor requires the benefit of previous exposure and world knowledge to make a shift from the literal, to the abstract meaning.
Puns	Doctor, doctor! I swallowed a bone Are you choking? No, really I did!!		Here the listener must 'straddle' the sound and semantic (meaning) interpretations to understand that there is a play on words (choking/joking) at work.

Further, many jokes require the ability to make a quick linguistic shift from an expected, to an unexpected interpretation. Consider the following joke that would be understood by most children of late primary school age:

A woman was running along the beach with her two small dogs. A man stopped her and asked 'Excuse me, are they Jack Russells'? The woman looked confused. 'No', she replied, 'they're mine'.

In this example, the joke is only understood if the listener has accessed two interpretations at a linguistic level—one, the plural form of the dog breed,

the other pertaining to the possessive (ownership) form. People of all ages who have oral language deficits often miss these shades of meaning, thereby misunderstanding the speaker's joke or actual intent.

The potential detrimental effect of misunderstandings in social situations should not be underestimated. Misunderstanding a speaker's intent can lead to feelings of social exclusion, alienation, hostility and aggression. It is interesting that hostile attribution has been described in many high-risk young people (Vitale et al. 2005), that is, the tendency to interpret others' actions in a hostile or aggressive way if actual intention is open to interpretation in some way. This may reflect underlying linguistic deficits which limit the range of possibilities accessible in the milliseconds in which a response is required in social situations.

Why does oral language competence matter?

In western cultures, oral language competence serves crucial developmental purposes. Firstly, it underpins successful transition to literacy, and secondly, it enables the formation and maintenance of prosocial relationships with others. Each of these is briefly described in turn.

Transition to literacy

Learning to read English was once considered to be a largely visual or perceptual task. Now, however, it is fundamentally conceptualised as a linguistic task. In other words, it draws heavily on a person's knowledge of the sound system in his/her language, of words and word parts, such as syllables and morphemes (described below), and of how words are joined in sentences to express an infinite variety of ideas.

Many experts in English language have emphasised the critical links between oral language competence and transition to literacy in the early school years (Naucler & Magnussen 1998). This link is implied by the robust finding that oral language deficits in the preschool years are predictive of reading difficulties throughout childhood and adolescence (for example, Catts et al. 2003; Nippold & Schwarz 1996; Snowling, Bishop & Stothard 2000; Stothard et al. 1998). Why is this so? Oral language competence enables the child to transfer knowledge of one communication domain (talking and listening) to another (reading and writing). Specifically, the capacity to think about one's own knowledge of talking and listening, and apply this to reading and writing is referred to as metalinguistic ability. For example, one metalinguistic task mastered in the preschool years is the so-called 'alphabetic principle'. This is the notion that sounds are represented by single letters or groups of letters, and can be decoded in the process of reading, or encoded in the process of writing. In the early stages of learning to read, children draw heavily on spoken language to develop phonemic awareness—detection and prediction of word parts, such as syllables and morpheme units. Linguistically, a morpheme is the smallest unit which can

alter the meaning of a word, so a word such as 'walked' has two morphemes—'walk' plus the grammatical past tense marker 'ed'. Morphemes may be whole words, or they may be affixes which occur at the start of a word (for example, the prefix 'un' in undo), or at the end of a word (for example, the suffix 'ing' in doing). The ability to detect and segment words by both syllabification and later by recognition and identification of morphemes draws heavily on the child's oral language skills.

Not surprisingly, children who enter school with well-developed oral language skills achieve the transition to literacy with little difficulty, provided that adequate and timely instruction is provided. Of course in English, there is some, but by no means a one-to-one, correspondence, between sounds and letters (the so-called phoneme-grapheme link). Children soon learn, therefore, that for every 'rule' there is an exception (for example, the two or more possible sounds that can be associated with the letters 'c' and 'g'). The mastery of these irregularities requires a combination of strong oral language skills, good self-efficacy for reading, and developmentally appropriate instruction techniques.

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to enter into the complex, long-running debate about 'phonics' versus 'whole language' as approaches to reading instruction, it should be noted that children with oral language deficits find it more difficult than their more competent peers to intuitively apply the alphabetic principle. Further, they find it more difficult to develop sufficient phonemic awareness to help them decode novel words and to write their own text. When such children are exposed to 'whole language' instruction in the early school years, the true extent of their language and literacy difficulties may be concealed. If other risk factors are also present, by the time such children reach late primary/early secondary school, however, they may develop a high level of antipathy towards school, and begin to disengage, both overtly and covertly from the curriculum. It is not uncommon for such children to display behaviour problems and early initiation into substance use, association with similar peers, and 'delinquent' behaviour. When the life histories of offenders are examined, this is a frequently observed pattern (Loeber et al.1998).

So, for high-risk children, most particularly boys, developmental oral language disorders frequently underlie school-based learning difficulties. However, these difficulties are typically obscured by the heavy emphasis placed on reading and writing instruction in the classroom setting (Paul 2001; Snow 2000). We suspect that many children (particularly boys) commence school with poorly developed oral language skills, but their difficulties are only identified when they fail to make a successful transition to literacy. At this point, many boys are labelled as having a 'learning problem' and, at around the same time, they may also develop significant behavioural difficulties which undermine effective remediation. The problems of late identification of oral language disorders are compounded by the fact that formal instruction in reading is relatively short-lived. By the middle primary school years, the emphasis in schools changes from learning to read, to reading to learn. Thus, children who miss the 'learning to read' boat never seem to catch up with their achieving peers (Stanovich 1986). In

contrast, the children with adequately developed oral language skills are ‘value adding’ on their already strong oral skills, as they are constantly engaged in the inductive process of decoding new words by making sense of context and discovering reading for pleasure (Nippold & Schwarz 1996).

Forming prosocial relationships

In English-speaking culture, oral language plays a fundamental role in the formation and maintenance of satisfying social relationships. Thus, it is not surprising that children and adolescents with oral language disorders frequently experience interpersonal difficulties with others (Cohen 2001). Such difficulties include (but are not restricted to):

- ❖ problems with the rapid information processing required to follow group interactions, where it is common for many people to be speaking simultaneously, and/or for rapid topic changes to occur
- ❖ an inability to structure and share one’s own experiences with others in a way that is both coherent and engaging for others
- ❖ an inability to ‘read cues’ from others that signal a need for a topic shift, a turn change, or a desire to conclude an interaction
- ❖ an inability to grasp non-literal language, such as humour, metaphor, puns, idioms and sarcasm.

Difficulties forming and maintaining peer relationships has widespread implications for young people. It decreases exposure to prosocial styles of communication (for example, the ability to use appropriate politeness conventions, according to the nature and purpose of an interaction), contributes to poor self-efficacy for spoken and written communication-related activities, and heightens the individuals’ tendency to associate with similar, underachieving (sometimes antisocial) peers. Such patterns are often deeply entrenched by late primary school and become even harder to change following the upheaval associated with the transition to secondary schooling that coincides with early adolescence—a challenging time for most young people, but particularly so for those from more high-risk backgrounds.

High-risk children and adolescents do not typically present with obvious communication breakdown at the level of everyday social interactions. This is probably because their knowledge of conversational scripts can be called into play in these contexts. Scripts represent an individual’s knowledge about everyday interactions which are so familiar and ritualised that they are stereotyped in terms of the temporal ordering of events, main characters and settings (Abbott, Black & Smith 1985; Nelson 1996). Such situations include social greeting rituals, and everyday exchanges between familiar and unfamiliar individuals, for example, in service encounters, or passing a work colleague in the corridor. Over-reliance on script knowledge, however, may cause many young people with significant levels of language processing and production difficulties to superficially ‘get by’ in more novel and challenging interactions such as interviews in forensic or health settings. Further, in many cases, the compensatory behaviours they exhibit, for

example, providing short, simple responses such as 'yep', 'nup', 'dunno', 'maybe' can be mistaken for antisocial behaviour such as rudeness and disinterest, and so can further penalise the speaker.

Research carried out in Canada by Cohen and co-workers (Cohen et al. 1993; Cohen et al. 1998) alerts us to the often unidentified overlap between language and behaviour problems in high-risk children. These workers have shown that some 34–40% of children referred for psychiatric assessment have an unsuspected language impairment that is not detected until a formal assessment is carried out. Cohen et al. (1993) have also reported that children with unsuspected language impairments showed significantly higher levels of externalising behaviour disturbance (for example, aggression, oppositional behaviour) than those whose language impairment had been previously detected. These workers suggested that this may in part reflect the fact that children find their way into the service delivery system by virtue of key adults' perceptions of the primary handicapping condition. In the case of young people at risk for juvenile offending, this is likely to be behaviour disturbance rather than 'subclinical' language impairment. Not surprisingly, many such young people later graduate to the adult correctional system, still handicapped by significant but undetected oral language deficits and poorly developed reading and writing skills.

What factors can interfere with the development of oral language competence?

Most children receive the necessary social, emotional, and environmental stimulation for oral language skills to develop normally from birth into early adulthood. Unfortunately, for some children, oral language is compromised by a range of social and environmental factors. In particular, emotional and/or physical neglect or abuse reduces opportunities to interact with others through talking and listening, stories, music, and mutual enjoyment of books. Parental mental health problems such as depression and substance misuse may interfere significantly with the parent-child attachment process and make it difficult for child-centred interaction to occur. In some families, learning problems are transmitted from one generation to the next (perhaps genetically, perhaps environmentally or due to a combination of factors), hence little emphasis is placed on communication for its own sake, whether it be through the spoken or the written word.

Compared with peers raised in more nurturing secure families, children raised in households with little child-centred interaction typically display impoverished vocabulary and reduced grammatical complexity, as well as difficulties adjusting communication behaviour according to the social and environmental context. It is not uncommon for children with poorly developed oral language skills to find themselves alienated from more verbally proficient peers and associating more with peers whose verbal skills are similar to their own. This can result in lack of reinforcement of prosocial skills and the

normalisation of more antisocial ways of interacting with others. This in turn incurs great social cost to the individual.

It is also important to note that deficits in oral language competence are not always the result of problems in family functioning. They can also be due to having to acquire English relatively late in development, as a second language. Learning a second language is obviously not just a matter of learning to speak the words. As indicated above, communication competence reflects knowledge of how to interact in a wide range of contexts. Difficulties in acquiring a new language are generally more pronounced in cases where the individual has had little prior exposure to the English-speaking culture (for example, through television). Further, they are more pronounced when there is little incentive to integrate into mainstream culture.

Education and training for Indigenous people in prisons

Cydde Miller¹

Indigenous people in Australia are significantly over-represented in the correctional services systems. This is associated with the multiple disadvantages faced by many Indigenous Australians, including high levels of unemployment, non-English speaking background, lower levels of school educational attainment, high rates of substance misuse, and lack of access to services in rural and remote areas. Indigenous education and training programs, the cultural awareness of all prison staff, and practices that are flexible and responsive to the needs of Indigenous prisoners are likely to improve the cultural, social and economic prospects for offenders when they return to their communities. The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) found that a nationally coordinated strategy was imperative to address the education and training needs of Indigenous prisoners. A strategy was developed in 1999 but, fifteen years after the Royal Commission, the strategy appears not to have been rigorously or consistently implemented in all states and territories. A renewed focus is needed in some jurisdictions to advance the prospects of Indigenous offenders.

Introduction

INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS are significantly over-represented in the correctional system. They represented 24% of the total Australian prisoner population at 30 June 2006 (the highest proportion since 1996), compared with their representation in the general population at 2.4% (ABS 2006a). Reflecting their population share, the proportion of prisoners who are Indigenous varies across states and territories, ranging from 82% in the Northern Territory to 6% in Victoria.

Indigenous people also have higher rates of previous imprisonment. In Australia in 2005, 77% of Indigenous prisoners had served prior sentences, compared with 57% of non-Indigenous prisoners (ABS 2005). Indigenous imprisonment rates increased by 31.9% between 2002 and 2006—by 34% for Indigenous women and by 22% for Indigenous men (Productivity Commission 2007).

At this stage no data are available to show the proportion of Indigenous prisoners who participate in education and training nationally or at the jurisdictional level. This illustrates the need for improvement in data collection

1 Contributions for this chapter were supplied either jointly or separately by the departments of corrective services and education and training or their equivalents in the eight states and territories.

which has already been identified for vocational education and training (VET) for adult prisoners and offenders (ANTA 2001). Information on prisoners' VET participation rates is included where it is available.

Other chapters in this book confirm that participation in education and training programs by prisoners has a positive impact on personal confidence, re-integration into the community and recidivism. This chapter sets out to appraise the literature, strategies and programs for correctional education and training for Indigenous people in Australia.

This paper does not deal with the reasons for increases in Indigenous people entering the criminal justice system or innovations in policing and sentencing procedures (for example, Circle sentencing², Koori courts³ and the Kimberley Custodian Plan⁴). It looks at the types of education and training programs available to Indigenous people when they are in correctional centres, and to a lesser extent the post-release services and support available to minimise recidivism and ensure Indigenous people are welcomed back into their communities. It emphasises that a holistic approach to 'throughcare'⁵ for Indigenous offenders is needed. This approach would involve Indigenous community stakeholders and a number of government departments, as well as non-government agencies in the community.

Background

In general, prisoners have various forms of disadvantage, including lower levels of school educational attainment, non-English speaking background, high levels of unemployment, high rates of substance misuse, and lack of access to services in rural and remote areas. The over-representation of Indigenous people in prisons is attributed to a combination of these and other socioeconomic factors and the legacies of dispossession of land and loss of cultural identity (Royal

2 Circle sentencing involves taking the sentencing court to a community setting where community members and the magistrate sit in a circle to discuss the offence and offender to develop a sentence that is best for that offender. The circle sentencing model developed for NSW involves offenders applying to a court to have their matter dealt with by circle sentencing after pleading guilty or being found guilty by the court. Further information available, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au>>.

3 The Koori court has been created in Victoria under the *Magistrates' Court (Koori Court) Act 2002*. It is a division of the Magistrates' Court, which sentences defendants who have pleaded guilty. The Koori Court provides an informal atmosphere and allows greater participation by the Aboriginal (Koori) community in the court process. A Koori Elder or Respected Person, the Aboriginal Justice worker, Koori defendants and their families can contribute during the court hearing. Further information is available, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.magistratescourt.vic.gov.au>>.

4 The Kimberley Custodial Plan is a wide-scoping custodial management plan which has been developed for the Kimberley region in Western Australia to address the issues (e.g. high rates of re-offending, domestic violence, substance abuse and poor health) and specific needs through a consultation process involving the Aboriginal Reference Group, made up of nine eminent Aboriginal leaders from the region. Further information is available under the Kimberley Custodial Plan on the Department of Corrective Services website, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.dcs.wa.gov.au>>.

5 'Throughcare' describes the process of delivering continuous care—providing consistent services and support to prisoners within and beyond prison in an holistic program of rehabilitation, ideally commencing at first contact between the offender and the justice system (see Borzycki 2005; see also chapter by Banfield, Barlow & Gould).

Commission 1991; Boughton & Durnan 1997; Cattarinich 1996 [Canada]). The specific disadvantages faced are greater for Indigenous Australians than for the non-Indigenous population, meaning that they are far more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system, and return to the system repeatedly.

In response to large numbers of Aboriginal deaths in custody during the 1980s, a Royal Commission was established to explore the circumstances of the deaths and analyse the factors contributing to offending behaviour and incarceration. It also looked at the needs of Indigenous prisoners within the system, and post-release from prison, finding that:

... there is an urgent need for a comprehensive national strategy dealing with the improvement of education and training opportunities for those in custody.

(Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991, 25.9.52)

It was not until the late 1990s that discussions between government authorities responsible for education and training and correctional services culminated in a proposed national strategy to improve education and training outcomes for adult Indigenous Australians in the custody of correctional authorities (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs 1999). This strategy describes in detail the objectives and plans for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on education and training outcomes for Indigenous prisoners. It also provides specific information on the implementation of the strategy for stakeholders. An inquiry into the effectiveness of Indigenous education programs by the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee (2000) was informed that all relevant state and territory government ministers had signed the memorandum of agreement for the strategy.⁶

Subsequently, the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia (ANTA 2001) was endorsed by all state and territory departments for vocational education and training and corrective services in 2001.⁷ This strategy includes very little of the specific requirements of Indigenous prisoners and how systems and institutions can better respond to the needs of their Indigenous inmates. It does, however, identify that Indigenous people need to be considered as an equity group in the implementation of the strategy. Some jurisdictions have subsequently developed cross-sectoral partnerships and strategies to ensure commitment to improving the social, cultural and economic prospects of Indigenous prisoners.

6 A search of the relevant literature and websites found no other evidence that this agreement was endorsed by relevant government departments and no evidence that the implementation of the national strategy was monitored or an evaluation undertaken on a national basis.

7 The National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia: 2006 and *Rebuilding lives: VET for prisoners and offenders* (the implementation framework to 2010) were recently endorsed by the Corrective Services Administrators' Committee and the National Senior Officials Committee. The national implementation plan, *Rebuilding lives: VET for adult prisoners and offenders* (Corrective Services Administrators' Committee 2006) was drafted in 2005 by the NSW TAFE sponsored national project team of correctional education and state training provider representatives responsible for VET provision for offenders.

Two recommendations from the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody appear to require closer attention to monitoring and reporting of the proportion of Indigenous prisoners participating in education and training nationally.⁸ These are:

That Corrective Services authorities ensure that all Aboriginal prisoners in all institutions have the opportunity to perform meaningful work and to undertake educational courses in self-development, skills acquisition, vocational education and training including education in Aboriginal history and culture. Where appropriate special consideration should be given to appropriate teaching methods and learning dispositions of Aboriginal prisoners [Recommendation 184].

That the [Commonwealth] Department of Education, Employment and Training be responsible for the development of a comprehensive national strategy designed to improve the opportunities for the education and training for those in custody. This should be done in cooperation with state Corrective Services authorities, adult education providers (including in particular independent Aboriginal-controlled providers) and state departments of employment and education. The aim of the strategy should be to extend the aims of the Aboriginal Education Policy and the Aboriginal Employment Development Policy to Aboriginal prisoners, and develop suitable mechanisms for the delivery of education and training programs to prisoners [Recommendation 185].

A paper commissioned by the Federation of Independent Aboriginal Education Providers in 1997 found at the time that almost no effort had been made to involve Indigenous-controlled providers in developing and delivering vocational and adult education for Indigenous people in prisons (Boughton & Durnan 1997). However, since 1997, Northern Territory Correctional Services has developed partnerships with organisations such as Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and the Centre for Appropriate Technology, both Aboriginal-controlled education providers.

Recent research

A relatively small amount of research has been undertaken in Australia in relation to education and training programs designed specifically for Indigenous people in correctional institutions. The Australian Institute of Criminology (2005) produces statistics and reports on Indigenous Australian issues within the criminal justice system, and has held conferences (in 1999 and 2001) focusing on good-practice interventions for Indigenous prisoners (see ‘Recent conference proceedings’ in the references section). The Australian Bureau of Statistics also reports numbers of people in prisons and other correctional facilities (ABS 2005; 2006a, 2006b). Furthermore, the Australian Government’s Productivity Commission reports annually on Indigenous justice and correctional issues

⁸ While the proportion of prisoners enrolled in education and training in each jurisdiction is provided to the Productivity Commission (2007, table 7.11), similar figures for the proportion of Indigenous prisoners participating in education and training do not yet appear to be available nationally.

in its Indigenous compendium (Productivity Commission 2007). Few of these publications, however, look at the prevalence, design or quality of educational services in prisons for Indigenous inmates.

The Australasian Corrections' Education Association⁹ holds a biennial conference to share practice and research on education and training in prisons. In recent years a number of presentations have looked at Indigenous programs and the need for cultural awareness of correctional staff, as well as systems that are more responsive to the specific needs of their Indigenous inmates (see 'Recent conference proceedings' in references).

The research

In 1998, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council released a position paper that provided a detailed list of the barriers facing Indigenous prisoners' participation in education and training and some recommendations to overcome these barriers. The findings were drawn mainly from a 1996 Senate Committee report on education and training in correctional facilities, and most applied to the overall prison population (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee 1996).

Following some of the specific recommendations contained in these reports, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Study Scheme (ABSTUDY) was extended to provide financial assistance for Indigenous people in 'lawful custody'. As we have [seen] the National Strategy for Improving Education and Training Outcomes for Adult Indigenous Australians in the Custody of Correctional Authorities (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs 1999) was also developed.

Literacy and numeracy skills are major problems for Indigenous inmates, as they are for the non-Indigenous inmates. Indigenous prison populations around Australia often consist of diverse language and cultural groups. For example, in the Northern Territory where over 80% of prisoners are Indigenous (ABS 2006a), significant proportions of Indigenous inmates come from vastly different non-English speaking backgrounds in rural and remote areas.

There are differing findings from research into the value of Indigenous-specific programs compared with Indigenous participation in 'mainstream' programs. For example, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) identified that Indigenous-only courses had the potential to engender racial animosity between inmates, but at the same time could provide the appropriate space in which Indigenous prisoners would feel comfortable with learning (see also Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council 1998). This is particularly the case where programs are designed to help rebuild the cultural strength and identity of Indigenous prisoners and keep them in contact with their communities. Another perspective on courses with Indigenous-specific content and resources, in which both Indigenous and non-Indigenous inmates are able to participate, promotes cross-cultural awareness and a better understanding between prisoners (Jones 2001).

⁹ Formerly known as the International Forum for Education in Correctional Settings Australia.

Bamblett (2005) finds in one prison that students are most comfortable with resources that have relevant Indigenous content and would prefer the content to be adaptable to respond to the diverse backgrounds of Indigenous prisoners. This finding, that courses should be culturally relevant and appropriate, was found through the NCVER's systematic review of existing research to be one of the seven critical factors¹⁰ that lead to positive and improved outcomes for Indigenous Australians as a result of vocational education and training (Miller 2005).

The use of electronic resources, especially computers and online learning programs, in prisons is a particular issue for correctional education (Bamblett 2005). While such resources can provide appropriate content and practical training for students, the security requirements of prisons means that internet links are generally inaccessible to adult prisoners. Many electronic resources may also require high levels of literacy, as the content can be very wordy. Ideally, these resources should be designed for self-paced learning programs that are adaptable for differences in individuals' literacy and numeracy skills levels, as well as in their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. To be most effective, such programs need to be designed to incorporate the different starting points of individuals, and components of the programs built into other training and work settings.

Indigenous women

The specific needs of Indigenous women prisoners have been addressed in two reports. The first, reports on a study undertaken by the New South Wales Aboriginal Justice Advisory Council and explores the backgrounds and experiences of Indigenous women while in prison, including education and training. It finds many of these women have attempted training courses outside prison, and have a high propensity to want to access further education in prison (Lawrie 2003). The second report, from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, is the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner: Social Justice Report 2004*, which includes a chapter focusing on the post-release needs of Indigenous women prisoners, especially housing.

The New South Wales report (Lawrie 2003) also notes that the women prisoners were caring for children (their own and others) prior to imprisonment, and these women wanted courses in life and parenting skills, in addition to programs addressing their need to overcome drug or alcohol abuse problems (the most likely cause of their criminal behaviour).

Post-release programs and employment

In line with international studies, specifically in Canada and New Zealand, a great deal of emphasis is placed on 'healing' programs for inmates and building the capacity of communities to welcome them back when they are released.

¹⁰ The seven key factors are: community ownership and involvement; the incorporation of Indigenous identities, cultures, knowledge and values; the establishment of 'true' partnerships; flexibility in course design, content and delivery; quality staff and committed advocacy; extensive student support services; appropriate funding that allows for sustainability (Miller 2005). Training built on all seven of these factors will lead to outcomes from VET that Indigenous Australians aspire to, including skills for self-development, employment, community development and self-determination. The absence of any one of these will lessen the likelihood of positive outcomes.

Programs are likely to be successful if the offenders themselves and Indigenous community Elders and members are involved in the planning, development and delivery stages of such programs (Callan & Gardner 2005; Jones 2001; Navin & Kennedy 2001; Fitzgerald & Manners 1999). The NCVET systematic review of existing research also found that community and cultural ownership of programs was one of the seven critical factors which lead to positive and improved outcomes for Indigenous Australians as a result of vocational education and training (Miller 2005).

With most prisoners serving short-term sentences (less than six months), few courses are finished in prison so that, upon leaving prison, students need to continue their studies with mainstream VET providers to complete their qualifications. This was clearly identified in the national strategy for Indigenous prisoners (Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs 1999), as well as the Senate Committee report into education and training in correctional facilities (Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee 1996).

More importantly, training needs to be negotiated directly with Indigenous communities to which the prisoners will return, so that there are realistic options available for them to gain employment when they are released from prison. In some rural and remote areas, this will be very challenging due to few employment opportunities, which makes ongoing communication and partnership with communities absolutely critical (Callan & Gardner 2005).

Indigenous staff and cultural awareness

A number of reports provide evidence that more Indigenous staff and teachers are needed in the correctional services systems so that Indigenous students feel confident in a learning environment (Bamblett 2005; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Training Advisory Council 1998; Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee 1996; Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody 1991). These reports also note that professional development of all prison staff and teachers, particularly to develop Indigenous cultural awareness and inclusiveness, is required for improved cultural, social and employment prospects for Indigenous offenders. In prisons where diverse Indigenous groups and languages are represented, there is a need for teachers to have appropriate skills and awareness to work with individual students.

Current policies and programs in Australia

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy, signed in 1989, has as its primary objective the achievement of 'educational equality for Indigenous Australians' (Department of Education, Science and Training 2003, p.109). The aim was to establish 'as the standard for Indigenous Australians, the level of educational access, participation and outcomes achieved by non-Indigenous Australians' (Department of Education, Science and Training 2003, p.109). This policy, and the set of targets it implies, is still in effect today.

Key national VET strategies include *Shaping our future: Australia's national strategy for vocational education and training 2004–2010* (ANTA 2003), Australia's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy for Vocational Education and Training 2000–2005—*Partners in a learning culture* (ANTA 2000) and the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training for Adult Prisoners and Offenders in Australia (ANTA 2001). In addition, *Partners in a learning culture: The way forward* (ANTA 2005) reviewed the progress of the national strategy (*Partners in a learning culture*), and presented six new priorities to be added to the original objectives. These included: building the capacity of the VET sector; creating more pathways; improving funding frameworks; culturally appropriate product development, design and delivery; links to employment; and growing VET sector partnerships.

Since managing adult prisoners and offenders in Australia is the responsibility of each state and territory government department¹¹, this section provides information on strategies and initiatives for Indigenous prisoners in each jurisdiction.

New South Wales

Inmate profile

The New South Wales Inmate Census¹² of people in custody in correctional centres and periodic detention centres, conducted on 30 June 2006, reports that there were 9051 inmates; 21% of the inmate population of 9051 were Aboriginal people; 93% of inmates were men—of these 20% were Aboriginal men; and 7% of inmates were women—of these 32% were Aboriginal women.

Strategies and plans

National, state and departmental plans and policies in the areas of vocational education and training and justice provide a contextual framework and high-level direction for the provision of education and training to Aboriginal inmates in New South Wales correctional centres.

Key New South Wales VET strategies and plans are:

- ❖ *'Two ways together' partnerships: A new way of doing business with Aboriginal people, NSW Aboriginal Affairs Plan 2003–2012*¹³—a cluster group of key government agencies and Aboriginal peak bodies formed for each of the priority areas, including education and justice cluster groups. The cluster groups have set goals, targets and action plans for New South Wales consistent with national indicators. The Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs will approve action plans and monitor the progress of each cluster group.

11 Sentenced prisoners in the ACT currently serve their sentence in NSW prisons, but the construction of an adult prison in ACT is due for completion in 2008.

12 NSW Inmate Census 2006—Available at NSW Department of Corrective Services website, viewed February 2007, <<http://www.dcs.nsw.gov.au>>.

13 Viewed December 2006, <<http://www.daa.nsw.gov.au/policies/policy.html>>.

- ❖ NSW Strategic Plan for Vocational Education and Training 2005–2008¹⁴
- ❖ *New partners, new learning, New South Wales state VET plan 2001–2005: Vocational education and training for Indigenous communities in NSW*¹⁵ and its partner document, *The NSW vocational education and training strategy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*
- ❖ New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and New South Wales Department of Education and Training *Report of the Review of Aboriginal Education*¹⁶ (August 2004).

Key New South Wales Department of Corrective Services strategies and plans are:

- ❖ Corporate Plan 2004–2007¹⁷ and accompanying Strategic Plan 2002–2005
- ❖ Aboriginal Offenders Strategic Plan 2003–2005¹⁸
- ❖ TAFE NSW Provision for Aboriginal Offenders Implementation Plan 2004–2005.¹⁹

Key partnerships and strategic directions

TAFE NSW and the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services have a memorandum of understanding which establishes the framework for TAFE NSW provision in adult correctional centres with provision for Aboriginal offenders identified as a key priority area.

Under the memorandum, TAFE NSW provided approximately 20 000 hours of delivery in New South Wales correctional centres during 2005–06, 6000 of which were identified for provision specifically targeting the needs of Aboriginal offenders. The Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate of the New South Wales Department of Education and Training contributed \$200 000 towards the cost of this provision, while the Department of Corrective Services contributed an equivalent amount from its funding allocation for TAFE NSW delivery under the memorandum.

The memorandum of understanding for 2005–08 includes an undertaking by TAFE NSW and the Department of Corrective Services to update the TAFE NSW Provisions for Aboriginal Offenders Implementation Plan and ensure that the revised plan aligns with the Department of Corrective Service's Aboriginal Offenders Strategic Plan, recommendations from the Department of Education and Training's *Report of the Review of Aboriginal Education*²⁰ and other national and state plans for Aboriginal VET provision.

14 Viewed December 2006, <<http://www.bvet.nsw.gov.au/pdf/stratdoc0508.pdf>>.

15 Viewed December 2006, <http://www.aboriginaleducation.nsw.edu.au/strategic_policies/NPNLbklt_120dpi.pdf>.

16 Viewed December 2006, <http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/reviews/aboriginaledu/the_report.htm>.

17 Viewed December 2006, <<http://www.dcs.nsw.gov.au/information/CorpPlan2004-2007.pdf>>.

18 Viewed December 2006, <http://www.dcs.nsw.gov.au/offender_management/offender_services_and_programs/ASPU/Strategy.pdf>.

19 This plan is available from TAFE Equity, NSW Department of Education and Training, Sydney.

20 Viewed February 2007, <http://www.det.nsw.edu.au/reviews/aboriginaledu/the_report.htm>.

The current plan, TAFE NSW Provision for Aboriginal Offenders Implementation Plan 2004–2005 establishes objectives, strategies and measurable outcomes to ensure quality TAFE courses in New South Wales correctional centres for Aboriginal prisoners.

The objectives of the plan are to:

- ❖ increase the number of Aboriginal offenders participating and completing vocational education and training courses in correctional centres
- ❖ increase vocational education and training outcomes for Aboriginal offenders in correctional centres that are linked to realistic post-release opportunities for further education and employment
- ❖ increase Aboriginal staff and offender involvement in decision-making at all levels of vocational education and training, including the choice and delivery of provision
- ❖ strengthen the accountability requirements in government-funded vocational education and training provision for Aboriginal offenders
- ❖ implement innovative and flexible delivery of VET programs which incorporate literacy, numeracy and communication components specific to the particular needs of Aboriginal offenders.

An Aboriginal VET Working Party, a sub-committee of the TAFE NSW and Department of Corrective Services Memorandum of Understanding, Monitoring and Liaison Committee, ensures wide consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders. The working party includes representatives from the Aboriginal Education and Training Directorate (Department of Education and Training), TAFE NSW Equity and Corrections Unit, the Aboriginal Support and Planning Unit (Department of Corrective Services) and the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute (Department of Corrective Services). Regional joint TAFE NSW and the Department of Corrective services staff committees have been set up throughout the state to assist with the effective implementation of the plan at local correctional centres.

In addition to course delivery, annual workshops and conferences provide a forum for the evaluation of key strategies of the implementation plan, for feedback on provision of local strategies and initiatives, and sharing of good practice and innovations.

Working together for Aboriginal training—Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute and Aboriginal Support and Planning Unit

The Aboriginal Support and Planning Unit was initially formed in 1993 as part of the Department of Corrective Services' commitment to implementing the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991). Through the implementation of the department's Aboriginal Offenders Strategic Plan, the unit acts as a strategic Aboriginal affairs advisory, planning, support, program and policy unit for the department, particularly in relation to services, planning and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders in correctional centres and under the supervision of the department in the community.

A key service of the Aboriginal Support and Planning Unit is to contribute to the design and implementation of support programs and vocation-oriented courses, which provide knowledge and skills to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders' contributions to society.

A priority for both the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute and the Aboriginal Support and Planning Unit in 2005–06 has been to strengthen their working relationship in order to better meet the skills development needs of Aboriginal prisoners in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner. Over the past year the divisions have collaborated to develop recruitment strategies to increase the number of Aboriginal education staff, to provide targeted professional development for Aboriginal teachers, and to develop innovative models of program provision. The two units have also jointly funded and supported the development of resources to assist the implementation of Aboriginal-specific curriculum, and established relationships with Indigenous training providers in order to explore training and support services they might provide to Aboriginal offenders pre- and post-release.

The Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute has the capacity to deliver culturally specific Aboriginal curriculum in the 12 correctional centres in which there are designated Aboriginal teaching positions. The professional skills and networks of these Aboriginal teachers have been strengthened through workshops co-facilitated by the two divisions. A three-day workshop, held in early 2006, focused on supporting and enhancing the delivery of Certificates I, II and III in Learning Pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The workshop aimed to ensure, in correctional centres, a consistent standard of teaching and assessment that is culturally appropriate, well resourced, and clearly addresses the curriculum learning outcomes. Over 2006 culturally appropriate resource materials were developed to support the implementation of the preferred Aboriginal-specific curriculum. These resources support moves towards greater consistency in delivery of the curriculum across correctional centres.

Initiatives and programs for Aboriginal offenders in correctional centres

Aboriginal offenders access education and training programs developed by the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute and the Aboriginal Support and Planning Unit. These programs target the needs of the general offender population, and specifically target the needs of Aboriginal offenders. They also access vocational training courses developed by TAFE NSW targeting the general population and technical and further education (TAFE) courses specifically targeting the vocational and cultural needs of Aboriginal learners which are delivered in TAFE NSW institutes.

Through the memorandum of understanding between TAFE NSW and the Department of Corrective Services, most correctional centres offer a range of courses specifically for Aboriginal students. TAFE provision focuses on a variety of learning outcomes that include Aboriginal art and cultural practices

and vocational programs customised to meet the learning and training needs of Aboriginal offenders, including horticulture, agriculture and construction.²¹

The education participation rate for all offenders in New South Wales correctional centres in 2005–06 was 35%. Of those participating in education, 24.5% were Aboriginal prisoners, which represents 38.5% of the total population of Aboriginal offenders.

Specific examples of Indigenous-specific initiatives and programs targeting Aboriginal offenders in correctional centres²² are described in attachment A.

Victoria

Inmate profile

In Victoria, the average daily number of adult people in full-time custody for June 2006 was 3818 inmates; 6% of the inmate population were Indigenous people; 94% of inmates were men—of these 6% were Indigenous men; and 6% of inmates were women—of these 5% were Indigenous women (ABS 2006b).

Education and training strategies for Indigenous prisoners in Victoria

The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement was an outcome of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (1991) and has been in operation since 2000. This agreement is a partnership between the Victorian Government and the Koori²³ community and aims to minimise Koori over-representation in the criminal justice system by improving accessibility, utilisation and effectiveness of justice-related programs and services. Phase two of the agreement was launched in June 2006 and will take the initiatives forward for the next five years.

In 2002, the Review of Education and Training in Victorian Prisons was undertaken as a joint initiative of the Ministers for Corrections and Education. The review analysed current education and training arrangements in Victorian prisons and the education and training needs of Victorian prisoners. The review report (Bearing Point 2003) sets the way forward for corrections education and training in Victoria. It includes 29 recommendations on the purpose of, and practices relating to, corrections education and training.

21 In the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 TAFE NSW courses included: *hospitality kitchen operations, visual arts and Aboriginal arts and cultural practices, Aboriginal vocational preparation, business skills, horticultural applications, horticulture parks and gardens, senior first aid, general construction, conservation and land management, Aboriginal mentor training, rural production studies, responsible conduct of gambling, responsible service of alcohol, horticultural applications, conservation earthworks, chainsaw operations level 1, welding and thermal cutting, Aboriginal committee training I, information technology, fitness, carpentry and joinery, farm mechanics, painting materials and preparation, workplace safety, coping with injury in the workplace, OH&S induction work cover, and work skills.*

22 More information is available from the Department of Corrective Services website, viewed December 2006, <http://www.dcs.nsw.gov.au/offender_management/offender_services_and_programs/ASPU/index.asp>.

23 Koori is a term used by the Aboriginal people of Victoria, part of New South Wales and Tasmania to describe Aboriginal people like themselves. It is sometimes also written as Kori and Koorie. It was originally a word from the north coast of New South Wales, recorded for the first time in 1834. Source: viewed December 2006, <<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~bangercc/Kooriname.html>>.

Corrections Victoria has also developed its Koori Education, Training and Employment Strategy, which complements the recommendations of the Bearing Point Review and aligns with the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement. The strategy aims to reduce re-offending among Koori prisoners and offenders through targeted education, training and employment assistance. It recognises that improved education, training and employment outcomes for Koori prisoners and offenders can be achieved through real collaboration and partnerships with the Koori community, and acknowledges the **importance of coordinated initiatives and strategies.**

Education and training programs for Indigenous prisoners in Victoria
Prison education and training programs (provided by TAFE institutes) are included in the TAFE providers' funding allocations from the Office of Training and Tertiary Education. Under this funding model, providers are allocated resources for delivery of Koori education and training programs. The Office of Training and Tertiary Education also funds the employment of Koori liaison officers by the respective TAFE institution to support Indigenous TAFE students in community and custodial settings.

Program delivery for Indigenous people in custody in Victoria has been built around a framework of nationally accredited courses and reflects the spirit of both the 2004 Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated's Wurreker Strategy.²⁴

In a number of prisons, education programs are delivered within Indigenous cultural centres and are complemented by Elder visitation programs. The Koori Elder visitation programs provide support for Indigenous prisoners undertaking education and are supported by Koori educators. These visitation programs are also facilitated by the TAFE-employed Koori liaison officers who work closely with the prison Koori liaison officers.

Wulgunggo Nglau Learning Place

Wulgunggo Nglau Learning Place²⁵ which will open in late 2007 is a residential facility for up to 20 Koori men sentenced to a community-based order. At Wulgunggo Nglau, Koori men will be assisted to complete their order and provided with opportunities to learn essential life skills and address their offending behaviour in a culturally appropriate way. This is a voluntary program and Koori Elders will be involved.

24 The Wurreker Strategy was developed by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI) in partnership with the state government, via the Office of Training and Tertiary Education. It was launched in July 2000 by the President of VAEAI and the Minister for Education and Training. Wurreker builds on pre-existing policy frameworks established in the original Partnership in Education policy, launched in 1990. *Wurreker: The Koorie Community and TAFE in Victoria in Equal Partnership* documents the collaborative and equal partnership that exists between the signatories. Further information at, viewed December 2006, <<http://www.vaeai.org.au/strategies/wurreker.html>>.

25 Further information available from Department of Justice website, viewed 10 April 2007, <<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au>>.

Queensland

Inmate profile

In Queensland, the average daily number of persons in full-time custody for June 2006 was 5592 inmates; 27% of the inmate population were Indigenous people; 93% of inmates were men—of these 27% were Indigenous men; and 7% of inmates were women—of these 29% were Indigenous women (ABS 2006b).

Strategies and plans

With the recent release of the Queensland Skills Plan²⁶, the state's training system (through the Department of Employment and Training) is currently undergoing significant reforms to better align training delivery with the needs of the workforce. Within the reforms announced in the Skills Plan, the government is committed to the development of an Indigenous Employment and Training Strategy, aimed at improving the employment and training outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including those in or exiting correctional facilities.

This strategy also links with Partnership Queensland²⁷, the state government's future directions framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy in Queensland 2005–10. Partnerships Queensland integrates all government activities, drawing them together into a single overarching framework and focusing them on the four key whole-of-government goals—stronger families, strong cultures; safe places; healthy living; and skilled and prosperous people and communities. Every Queensland Government action concerned with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will contribute to outcomes under one or more of these goals.

VET for Indigenous prisoners in Queensland

The Department of Corrective Services²⁸ provides the Post-Release Employment Assistance Program that assists prisoners immediately prior to release, and after release, to gain and retain employment. The program helps with literacy and numeracy skills, living skills, as well as vocational training and job-search placement. This program is a whole-of-government approach to providing a wide range of support and assistance to ex-offenders and is embedded as a key action under the Queensland Crime Prevention Strategy (Cox 2001). The program was piloted in the Townsville region in 2000, where 94 program participants were Indigenous and 22 of these were placed into employment (Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs nd).

26 The Queensland Skills Plan outlines a policy framework that will better match the supply of skilled labour to industry's needs and the economy's demands. It sets out a range of actions the Queensland Government will take to implement these policies. Further information at, viewed December 2006, <<http://www.trainandemploy.qld.gov.au/skillsplan/>>.

27 There are ten fact sheets outlining the key areas to be addressed under the Queensland Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ten Year Partnership. Further information at, viewed December 2006, <http://www.datsip.qld.gov.au/partnerships/ten_year.cfm>.

28 Information from the Department of Corrective Services website under 'Rehabilitation' and 'Custodial corrections', viewed December 2006, <<http://www.dcs.qld.gov.au>>.

Prisoners are able to participate in formal vocational training and, on completion, are awarded a certificate from a TAFE institute. Most of the vocational training is directly related to the areas they may be working in. Prison industries are a key element of Corrective Services' goal of rehabilitating offenders. Farming or industry activities are located within all 13 of Queensland's correctional centres, including the state's two privately run facilities.

While practical education and vocational skills are considered to be essential to an offender's rehabilitation, self-expression through creative endeavours also assists with emotional rehabilitation. Many offenders take the opportunity to participate in art and craft workshops, either discovering talents for the first time or continuing to develop skills learnt prior to their imprisonment. Items created within prisons include paintings, pottery, jewellery, leatherwork and woodwork.

The department is developing cognitive-behavioural programs to meet the specific needs of Indigenous and female offenders.

The Work Program began 14 years ago in the aftermath of a devastating flood at Charleville. Offenders joined a massive volunteer relief effort cleaning up and replacing damaged infrastructure. The project was so successful that a series of 11 Work Camps were set up in isolated western communities. The 2004 Business Model Review²⁹ recommended a restructure of the program so that the 11 Work Camps are permanent 'open' (minimum security) custody centres aligned to local correctional centres (see attachment A). Offenders on the Work Program scheme operate on a roster system where they perform community services in the western communities and are accommodated at the Work Camp site for a period of six months. They only return to Brisbane as part of their re-integration to community to attend transition programs or visit their families. Officers accompany them to the camps and a local officer is employed at each site. The program aims to provide offenders with meaningful work while benefiting remote communities.

South Australia

Inmate profile

In South Australia, the average daily number of people in full-time custody for June 2006 was 1578 inmates; 20% of the inmate population were Indigenous people; 94% of inmates were men—of these 19% were Indigenous men; and 6% of inmates were women—of these 26% were Indigenous women (ABS 2006b).

Aboriginal Prisoner Education Program

There are nine adult prisons in South Australia with only one accommodating women. In 2005, one-quarter of all 'prison receptions' for remand, fine default or after court sentencing were Aboriginal (South Australian Council of Social Services 2005). This equates to a total of 250 Aboriginal people (15 women).

²⁹ The 2004 Business Model Review of the Queensland Department of Corrective Services resulted in a re-organisation of their organisational structure and a name change to Queensland Corrective Services.

The aim of the Aboriginal Prisoner Education program is to provide education opportunities to Aboriginal offenders and to improve further study and employment prospects on release. Courses were offered in the areas of community services, small business administration and business administration; the course, Introduction to Vocational Education, was also offered. The Aboriginal prisoner education and training was previously supplied by the state training authority through TAFE SA institute staff.

At the beginning of 2007 the Department of Correctional Services assumed responsibility for the delivery and operation of Aboriginal prisoner education. It has been funded for this work through a memorandum of understanding with the state training authority. Although this initiative is new, designated Aboriginal education teachers have been employed at each of its prisons. A curriculum from within the Introduction to Vocational Education program was identified and teaching and administration staff have been involved in a cross-cultural training day. The Department of Correctional Services is also seeking supplementary funding from the Australian Government to further enhance this program.

Western Australia

Inmate profile

In Western Australia, the average daily number of people in full-time custody for June 2006 was 3500 inmates; 40% of the inmate population were Indigenous people; 93% of inmates were men—of these 39% were Indigenous men; and 7% of inmates were women—of these 52% were Indigenous women (ABS 2006b).

While around 20% of all inmates served sentences in default of fines, noteworthy is the statistic that 33% of sentenced female Indigenous inmates were in prison for fine default (Ferrante et al. 2005).

The Western Australian Aboriginal Justice Agreement

The Western Australian Aboriginal Justice Agreement³⁰ is concerned with working in partnership with Aboriginal communities to ensure that Aboriginal people experience the same justice outcomes as other Western Australians. Aboriginal people are significantly over-represented in the criminal justice system, both as victims and offenders. While Aboriginal people represent only 3% of the state's population they make up some 40% of prisoners. In addition, they are five times more likely to be a victim of a violent crime than non-Aboriginal people.

The agreement is a planning framework that brings together Aboriginal people and government and non-government agencies to identify and address justice issues at local, regional and state levels. It aims to address the specific needs of Aboriginal communities while improving the effectiveness of justice-related programs through a coordinated approach to planning and service

30 The administration of the Western Australian Aboriginal Justice Agreement is managed by a dedicated team at the Department of the Attorney General. Further information at, viewed December 2006, <<http://www.justice.wa.gov.au/portal/server.pt>>.

delivery. The three planned outcomes of the agreement are: safe and sustainable communities; reduction in the number of victims of crime; and reduction of over-representation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

Government signatories to the Aboriginal Justice Agreement are:

- ❖ Department of the Attorney General
- ❖ Department for Community Development
- ❖ Department of Corrective Services
- ❖ Department of Indigenous Affairs
- ❖ WA Police.

In addition, the Western Australia Aboriginal Legal Service is a non-government signatory to the Aboriginal Justice Agreement.

Local justice forum meetings are attended by managers from the signatory agencies and other government and non-government organisations, and nominated representatives from the local Aboriginal community. Aboriginal representatives are selected through a community-based process. Individuals and members of local Aboriginal organisations are asked to nominate potential representatives and final membership is decided by community consensus. The guiding principles of the agreement make inclusion of Elders, youth and women a vital part of the process.

The Department of Corrective Services³¹ acknowledges and respects Aboriginal history and culture and has officially restated its commitment to Aboriginal people in its Statement of Reconciliation.³² The Aboriginal Policy and Services directorate enhances services to Aboriginal people by ensuring that Department of Corrective Services' policies and practices provide equity of access to services and a responsive approach to meeting the needs of Aboriginal people.

Following its separation from the Department of Justice in February 2006, the directorate now operates from the Department of the Attorney General. It provides a range of services, including policy analysis and advice, planning and coordination, monitoring and community consultation. It is also responsible for the administration of the Aboriginal Alternative Dispute Resolution Service.

Polices and plans for Indigenous prisoners

- ❖ the Department of Corrective Services' Prisons Division, Strategic Plan For Aboriginal Services 2002–2005³³

31 Department of Corrective Services website, viewed December 2006, <<http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/>>.

32 Available from Aboriginal Policy and Services, go to the WA Department of the Attorney General website, viewed December 2006, <<http://www.justice.wa.gov.au/portal/server.pt>>.

33 'Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Services 2002–2005' (formerly Department of Justice, Prisons Division, Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Services 2002–2005) cited in 'Women in prison' available on Department of Corrective Services website, viewed December 2006, <http://www.correctiveservices.wa.gov.au/_files/Women_in_prison.pdf>.

- ❖ the WA Aboriginal Education and Training Operational Plan 2005–2008³⁴ based on nationally agreed objectives, priorities and targets that are monitored and reported against by the Indigenous Participation and Achievement Directorate
- ❖ the WA Aboriginal Education and Training Policy 2006³⁵ includes specific reference to correctional services.

In September 2005, 70% of the Indigenous prison population was enrolled in accredited education and vocational training. The Education and Vocational Training Unit of the Department of Corrective Services promotes community involvement and shared decision-making as a priority within the Indigenous education program. The Department of Corrective Service's Indigenous Education Coordinator focuses on establishing strong links to Indigenous educational experts to assist with decision-making that influences program delivery in regional and metropolitan prisons. Each prison facilitates meetings of the Indigenous Vocational Education and Training Steering Committee, comprising representatives from Indigenous educational institutions, Indigenous prison staff and a representative group of the adult course participants. The group meets to discuss and, as appropriate, make recommendations concerning:

- ❖ curriculum development and implementation of the prison education centre's education and training programs in relation to cultural sensitivities
- ❖ endorsement of appropriate accredited curriculum specifically developed for Indigenous students
- ❖ assessment of courses and training programs that will be delivered within the prison education centres
- ❖ development, where possible, of Indigenous curriculum by Indigenous people
- ❖ the monitoring of quality and relevance of education and training programs for Indigenous prisoners
- ❖ the monitoring of learning environments to ensure that they are culturally appropriate and welcoming to Indigenous peoples
- ❖ the monitoring of staff attitudes to ensure that they are relating to inmates in a culturally sensitive manner.

34 The WA Aboriginal Education and Training Operational Plan 2005–2008, viewed December 2006, <<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/education/abled/policies/polonl.htm>>.

35 The WA Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Education and Training is a statement of the major priorities, outcomes and strategies for Aboriginal education and training. It is the principal planning tool for all agencies providing education and training services to Aboriginal people in Western Australia. This plan aims to promote and ensure improved outcomes for Aboriginal people through the adoption of agreed outcomes and strategies, viewed December 2006, <<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/strategies/programs/wa/index-Policies.html>>.

Indigenous-specific learning resources

- ❖ *Self-paced learning resources* (for example, Indigenous-specific, or written by Indigenous authors, printed material, literature, CDs and videos): these have been developed to encourage Indigenous prisoners to access education, and include *Aboriginal people and media, Native Title, poetry and song, reconciliation and treaty*.
- ❖ *Noongar*³⁶ *language/Aboriginal English*: The ABC of Two Way Literacy and Learning project produced literacy learning resources. In 2005, this project involved the creation of three texts written in Aboriginal English and illustrated by an Indigenous artist and developed in collaboration with the Department of Education and Training. Some of these texts touched on traditional story lines, bringing otherwise hidden cultural expressions to the fore. These texts are currently being trialled with a group of teachers and they will eventually be available as examples of Aboriginal English for tutors in prisons.

Specific program initiatives

Many corrections education teachers have completed The ABC of Two Way Literacy and Learning professional development program in Aboriginal English developed and delivered by the Department of Education and Training. As a result of this staff training designed to increase the effectiveness of delivery to Aboriginal prisoners, some sites have helped to produce Indigenous student stories which will form part of the teaching and learning resources for the project.

In 2004, in addition to 178 000 hours of training delivery for all Western Australian inmates, a further 176 000 hours specifically for Indigenous prisoners and offenders was delivered by correctional services. These Indigenous enrolment data³⁷ are collected from the Department of Corrections (the funder) in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's Aboriginal Services Bureau. Collection of the Indigenous prisoner enrolments data is required as a condition of state and national funding of the Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme supplement from the Australian Government's Department of Education, Science and Training.

A joint committee of the Department of Corrective Services and Outcare Inc.³⁸ personnel has recently been established to investigate better linkages for

36 The Aboriginal people of the south-west of Western Australia refer to themselves as Noongar people. Noongar territory covers the area from Jurien Bay to Southern Cross, and to the south between Esperance and Ravensthorpe. The Noongar Language Centre lists amongst its achievements the publication of 17 books, most of which are printed in Noongar only. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island language programs are serviced by a network of language centres operating across Australia. Further information is available from the Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages website, viewed December 2006, <<http://www.fatsil.org>>.

37 Although not for claim under the National VET Agreement, these data have been reported for many years in WA for the National VET Collection managed by NCVER.

38 Outcare Inc., a community-based organisation working with prisoners, offenders and ex-offenders in Western Australia, provides services such as advice on employment and career, assistance with job applications, resumes and searches, training information and placement before release from prison as well as ongoing support.

offenders who participate in formal training and education in prison to further education, training or employment once released.

Examples of Indigenous-specific initiatives and programs targeting Aboriginal offenders are described in attachment A.

Tasmania

Inmate profile

In Tasmania, the average daily number of persons in full-time custody for June 2006 was 509 inmates; 10% of the inmate population were Indigenous people; 91% of inmates were men—of these 10% were Indigenous men; and 9% of inmates were women—of these 13% were Indigenous women (ABS 2006b).

Funding sources for training provision

The Prison Education and Training Unit in the Tasmanian Department of Justice is a registered training organisation. It provides traineeships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners through User Choice³⁹ administered by the Department of Education. This funding allows it to deliver structured training that enables offenders to gain a nationally recognised qualification (or part thereof).

In addition, extra funding is now available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners through the new Tasmanian Skills Equip program which funds accredited training for people from specific equity groups. Skills Equip also allows the registered training organisation to select competencies from existing accredited courses that meet the identified needs of their client group.

Consultation processes

There are a number of advisory and implementation committees in Tasmania which identify, discuss and progress issues related to vocational education and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners and offenders. These include:

- ❖ the Department of Education's VET Equity Advisory Committee
- ❖ the Tasmanian Women's VET Reference Group.

In addition, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Education Association (TAEA), jointly funded by the Tasmanian and the Australian Governments, is currently working on an issues paper to investigate the options for delivery of culturally based training (including literacy and numeracy) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates.

³⁹ User Choice funding and other incentive payments associated with traineeships provide additional monies to employ a dedicated trainer and assessor within prison industries, and training resources such as laptops so apprentices/trainees can complete their written assignments in their cells. The Prison Education and Training Unit also arranges for other registered training providers to deliver aspects of the training to offenders.

Education and support provision

A number of education programs and support mechanisms are available for Aboriginal prisoners. These include the following.

- ❖ Tutoring support is available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners studying open learning Year 10/11/12 courses through Rosny College, one of Tasmania's Year 11/12 colleges. The tutor provides on-site support for the students in Risdon Prison.
- ❖ *Introduction to Aboriginal studies* is a distance program with weekly on-site tutorial support provided by the University of Tasmania. Prisoners also have access to: any University of Tasmania courses which are available via distance mode; individual tutorial support to students in prison who are undertaking university studies; and tutorial support for inmates who are allowed daily release to attend university.
- ❖ Although e-learning programs specifically for Aboriginal learners are not provided, CDs and computer-based learning resources are provided to those inmates engaged in education or training programs. Inmates can book themselves into the computer laboratory where there are eight computers (but they are not connected to the internet).

Northern Territory

Inmate profile

In the Northern Territory, the average daily number of persons in full-time custody for June 2006 was 783 inmates; 82% of the inmate population were Indigenous people; 96% of inmates were men—of these 83% were Indigenous men; and 4% of inmates were women—of these 69% were Indigenous women (ABS 2006b).

Specific partnerships

Northern Territory Correctional Services is funded directly from the Northern Territory Government to deliver education and training to adult prisoners. It works closely with the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, which has a network of campus sites and annexes in many remote communities as well as in Bachelor and Alice Springs. It delivers culturally appropriate training, such as Aboriginal Health Worker and Indigenous Alcohol and Other Drugs Worker, both of which lead directly to post-release community employment.

The Northern Territory Correctional Services also collaborates with external agencies to deliver:

- ❖ *Driver training* (Charles Darwin University)

- ❖ Diploma in Indigenous Interpreting (Australian Interpreting Service and Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education)⁴⁰
- ❖ *Deckhand's course* (Seafood and Maritime Industries Training Council)
- ❖ *Aquaculture operations—crocodile handling and farming* (International College of Advanced Education).⁴¹

Because of the nature of prison sentences—almost half of all prisoners serve sentences between three and 12 months—it is not possible for many prisoners to gain full certificates. The jurisdiction of Correctional Services starts and ends at the prison gate, so that it is impossible for Correctional Services staff to be involved in ongoing support or mentoring beyond the prison's boundaries. Much training begins in prison but is not completed and therefore becomes meaningless, especially to people from remote communities. If training is completed, it is often only at certificate I level and this is often not sufficient, either to give confidence or gain an employment outcome. Without further support in the community, the ex-offender is left marginalised. Hence, partnerships with external agencies are crucial to enabling ex-offenders to complete meaningful training and receive ongoing support to gain and retain meaningful employment in the community and break the cycle of re-offending.

Northern Territory Prisons Job Centre

The Prisons Job Centre is new initiative which provides preparation and skills training for re-integration of male and female prisoners into communities through an 'interactive' prison-based Job Centre in collaboration with Job Network⁴² members.

The Job Centre provides:

- ❖ training in business administration skills
- ❖ training in work preparation skills
- ❖ job search skills and opportunities
- ❖ job placement of prisoners on or in preparation for release
- ❖ work opportunities, in collaboration with prison industries, to ensure offenders are working towards targeted skills acquisition that will lead to meaningful employment and ongoing training
- ❖ opportunities for acquiring life skills
- ❖ opportunities for Job Network members to establish relationships for ongoing support of prisoners post-release.

40 See also Halliday Wynes' chapter titled 'Improving VET for adult prisoners and offenders in Australia'.

41 Aquaculture operations from the Seafood Industry Training Package as preparation for aquaculture enterprises in home communities. Further information at, viewed 8 March 2006, <http://www.deet.nt.gov.au/training/publications/docs/ttt_dec_06.pdf>.

42 Job Network, an Australian Government initiative, is a national network of private and community organisations dedicated to finding jobs for unemployed people, particularly long-term unemployed. Further information at, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.jobnetwork.gov.au/>>.

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory does not have an adult prison but has been preparing for the opening in 2008 of the Alexander Maconochie Centre. The centre proposes to deliver VET and rehabilitative programs (Australian Capital Territory Department of Justice and Community Safety 2006, p.15). This report notes that:

For the 2002–2003 financial year, based on daily average figure, people of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait background represented 15.4% of detainees at Belconnen Remand Centre (out of 734 admissions, 117 persons were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait background) ...

... there are prospects that this over-representation could increase, with the attendant risks to the well-being of Indigenous prisoners because their accumulative adverse life experiences heighten their vulnerability in general, but particularly in correctional settings.

Thus, the Alexander Maconochie Centre provides an opportunity for ACT Corrective Services to further develop its collaboration with other government agencies in responding to issues arising from the relationship between Indigenous offending and imprisonment. In addition, the staff will seek to expand the engagement of Indigenous groups and Indigenous leadership in the management of Indigenous people placed in the care and custody of ACT Corrective Services. An Indigenous 'official visitor' will be appointed to allow greater access of Indigenous prisoners to a culturally aware advocate; furthermore, the role of the Indigenous liaison officer will be expanded.

In conclusion

The 2005 NCVER systematic review of existing research identified seven critical factors for positive outcomes from education and vocational training for Indigenous people. The review concluded that education and training built on all seven of these factors will lead to outcomes from VET to which Indigenous Australians aspire, including skills for self-development, employment, community development and self-determination. As for VET, the absence of any one of the seven factors in correctional education and training will lessen the likelihood of positive outcomes for Indigenous prisoners.

This chapter shows that there are concerted strategic efforts occurring in many institutions and state and territory correctional systems. However, some jurisdictions require more focus on implementation of education and training activities for Indigenous people in prison to ensure national consistency, thereby improving the social, cultural and employment prospects for Indigenous adult prisoners and offenders.

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Recent conference proceedings

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Attachment A: Summary of Indigenous-specific initiatives and programs implemented to enhance Indigenous prisoners' post-release employability and access to VET

The following table outlines Indigenous-specific initiatives and programs implemented in the jurisdiction to enhance prisoners' social, cultural and employment prospects and access to VET.

Indigenous-specific programs implemented to assist prisoners' access to VET

State or territory	Initiatives or programs	Description
New South Wales	TAFE NSW—Western Institute Welding Truck	At Broken Hill and Ivanhoe Correctional centres, which have approximately 80% Indigenous inmates, TAFE NSW Western Institute has provided a fully equipped Welding Truck to cater for a wide variety of welding projects, thus enabling welding modules to be completed through TAFE NSW. Inmates also have the opportunity to participate in vocational training in shearing, wool classing, fire fighting, construction earthworks and chemical applications (applying sprays in orchards) so preparing them to access employment opportunities in the remote areas to which many will return on release.
	New kitchen at Bathurst Correctional Centre	The Aboriginal Programs Unit (TAFE NSW) located its Mobile Catering Van at Bathurst Correctional Centre from 2003 to 2006. Access to the facilities of the van enabled primarily Aboriginal inmates to complete hospitality courses. Recently, a new kitchen has been built for the hospitality courses which run over four days a week. These courses are a pathway to completing commercial cookery courses and finding employment in the hospitality field. One of the projects the offenders have been involved in is the writing of a recipe book titled 'Buy up, cook up, eat up' which looks at the food used in the hospitality courses. This recipe book is being printed and copies will be available for inmates to buy in the store.
	Nangy Kungar Program	The Nangy Kungar Program, which is run at Cessnock Correctional Centre, is an integrated and holistic vocational training program for up to twelve minimum-security Indigenous inmates. On completion, the students have the training to work in the building and construction industry.

State or territory	Initiatives or programs	Description
	Yetta Dhinnakkal Program	<p>Brewarrina (Yetta Dhinnakkal) Correctional Centre is situated on a 10 553-hectare property at Brewarrina in north-western NSW, 800 kilometres from Sydney. Yetta Dhinnakkal is a minimum-security institution which accommodates approximately 45 young Aboriginal male offenders. Offenders are involved in the management of the property, including activities such as goat grazing, wool and lamb production, vegetation management, land rehabilitation and river care.</p> <p>Offenders are organised into work crews, and an Aboriginal Support Officer works closely with the Senior Correctional Education Officer to identify individual training needs and source appropriate training to meet the centre's employment needs and provide skills needed for employment in the communities where offenders will return upon release.</p> <p>At Yetta Dhinnakkal recognition and restoration of the cultural links of young adult offenders with the land and their history is a priority. The cultural awareness aspects of the program are provided by direct input from Aboriginal Elders and members of the local Indigenous community. While participating in the program, offenders have more access to their families than if they were detained in traditional correctional centres.</p> <p>Offenders coming into the Yetta Dhinnakkal Program must agree to be contacted for a period of up to 12 months upon their return to the community. This allows the Aboriginal Support Officer to provide on-going mentoring of ex-offenders upon release, to support their return to the community. In 2005, the Yetta Dhinnakkal Program won the gold award at the NSW Premier's Public Sector Awards in the Social Justice Category.</p>
Victoria	Koori education and training programs	Under the Victorian funding model, TAFE providers allocate resources for delivery of Koori education and training programs in prison settings.
	TAFE-employed Koori Liaison Officers	The Department of Education's Office of Training and Tertiary Education also funds the employment of Koori Liaison Officers by the respective TAFE institution to support Indigenous TAFE students in prison settings.
	Koori Elder visitation programs	In a number of prisons, education programs are delivered within Indigenous cultural centres and are complemented by Elder visitation programs. The Koori Elder visitation programs provide support for Indigenous prisoners undertaking education and are supported by Koori educators. These visitation programs are also facilitated by the TAFE-employed Koori Liaison Officers who work closely with the prison Koori Liaison Officers.
Queensland	The Work Program and 11 Work Camps	The Work Program began 14 years ago in the aftermath of a devastating flood at Charleville. Offenders joined a massive volunteer relief effort cleaning up and replacing damaged infrastructure. The project was so successful that a series of 11 Work Camps were set up in isolated western communities. A 2004 Business Model Review recommended a restructure of the program. As a result, the Winton Work Camp was trialed for 12 months as a permanent open (minimum security) custody centre where prisoners were permanently accommodated at the site for a period of six months. The 11 Work Camps have been aligned to local correctional centres. Darling Downs Correctional Centre is managing the Mitchell, Dirranbandi, St George, Charleville and Yuleba Work Program sites; Capricornia Correctional Centre is linked with the Clermont, Blackall and Springsure Work Program sites; and the Boulia, Julia Creek and Winton trial site are aligned to Townsville Correctional Centre.

State or territory	Initiatives or programs	Description
South Australia	Aboriginal Prisoner Education program	At the beginning of 2007 the Department of Correctional Services assumed responsibility for the delivery and operation of Aboriginal prisoner education. It has been funded for this work through a memorandum of understanding with the state training authority. Although this initiative is new, designated Aboriginal education teachers have been employed at each of its prisons. A curriculum from within the Introduction to Vocational Education program has been identified and teaching and administration staff have been involved in a cross-cultural training day. The Department of Correctional Services is also seeking supplementary funding from the Australian Government to further enhance this program.
Western Australia	Gubinge propagation project	Gubinge propagation project assists local Kimberley Aboriginal communities around Broome to start commercial growing of gubinge, a native plant with extremely high levels of vitamin C. The project uses prisoners as agents for positive change in the surrounding communities, which sometimes struggle to motivate their people to undertake projects that may generate better outcomes for the community.
	Reducing Aboriginal Imprisonment Project	Indigenous tourism combined with commercial art production training is being piloted in the Kimberley region. Vocational training including pre-selection for employment in the mining industry is being piloted in the Pilbara region at Decca Station (Ministerial statement)
	Paving the Way—Breaking the Cycle	<p>'Paving the Way—Breaking the Cycle' was a Department of Education and Training collaborative project involving Community and Youth Training Services Inc, Ruah Community Services and Murdoch University, which started in December 2005 and finished in February 2006. The project delivered and evaluated an educative program that aimed to empower and support Aboriginal women leaving the prison system. It provides education in life skills such as building social networks, communication, cross-cultural awareness and resilience.</p> <p>'Paving the Way—Breaking the Cycle' was groundbreaking in that it was designed by Aboriginal women for Aboriginal women, and two of the three trainers were themselves Aboriginal women. The project helped the women develop skills that will assist them to better access support services, VET sector training and sustainable employment. The enrolment rate in the program consistently exceeded the target and in fact had a waiting list. The research findings of this project are being widely promoted by Murdoch University and have attracted international interest.</p>
	Building and Construction Project	The Building and Construction Project is a prison-training-to-community employment program which is funded by Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. The project uses industry-supported private providers to train soon-to-be-released prisoners. Prisoners who successfully complete their training are secured employment in the community. The program addresses a VWA labour market shortage while providing skills, favourable wages and sustainable employment for ex-prisoners.

State or territory	Initiatives or programs	Description
	First Click and Second Click programs	<p>'First Click' and 'Second Click' are Department of Education and Training strategies established to provide learning materials and community-based grants aimed at people wanting to take their first steps towards computer literacy. Outcare Inc., a not-for-profit, community-based organisation working with prisoners, offenders and ex-offenders in Western Australia, received funding from First Click in 2002–03 and 2004–05. Outcare Inc. delivered 'First Click' in 2004–05 to total of 97 people at Acacia Prison, Bandyup Prison and Woorooloo Prison Farm. While the program was not offered as an Indigenous program, the participants were predominantly Indigenous and included adults, youth and women. Previously (in 2002–03) a total of 127 people participated in Outcare's 'First Click' program in various regions; of these 99 were from regional areas.</p> <p>The 'Second Click' grants program was introduced in 2005 to allow people with basic computer literacy skills the opportunity to build on these skills through remedial training, extension training or online training. Training through the 'First Click' and 'Second Click' programs is free for participants.</p>
	Life Skills Workshops	Outcare Inc. runs a three-day Life Skills workshop in all five male metropolitan prisons in Perth. Topics covered include employment, welfare, housing, parenting and communication. These workshops are aimed at prisoners who are within three months of their expected release date.
	Linking Offenders to Services forum	Outcare Inc. is a permanent member of a forum called 'Linking Offenders to Services', a Centrelink ⁴³ and Department of Corrective Services committee that meets every two months to discuss issues facing offenders and ex-offenders. The committee invites various agencies such as Job Network members to participate.
Tasmania	Tutorial support	<p>Tutoring support is available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners studying open learning courses through Rosny College, one of Tasmania's Year 11/12 colleges. The tutor provides on-site support for the students in Risdon Prison.</p> <p>Individual tutorial support is also provided by the University of Tasmania for prisoners enrolled in university courses by distance mode or by day-release to attend the university.</p>
	Introduction to Aboriginal Studies	Introduction to Aboriginal Studies is a distance program with weekly on-site tutorial support provided by the University of Tasmania.
Northern Territory	Job Centres	Through new 'interactive' prison-based Job Centres in collaboration with Job Network members, prisoners will develop life and work skills for transition to the community.
	Diploma in Indigenous Interpreting	Diploma in Indigenous Interpreting was developed in partnership with the Australian Interpreting Service and Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, as there is a chronic shortage of male Indigenous interpreters in the Northern Territory. The interpreters trained at the Darwin Correctional Centre are qualified to interpret on legal matters, in court hearings, in health clinics, hospitals and other community service areas. The Aboriginal Interpreting Service can offer work to these prisoners immediately and after their release from prison.

⁴³ Centrelink is an agency of the Australian Government Department of Human Services and delivers a range of services to the community. Further information at, viewed 20 November 2006, <<http://www.centrelink.gov.au>>.

Contributors

Editor

Susan Dawe is a senior research fellow in the International and Consultancy Services Branch at the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). In this role she has worked on a wide range of research and evaluation projects. With experience in evaluation, teaching and scientific research, Susan joined NCVER in 1992 to pilot the national vocational education and training (VET) surveys. Two recent publications include *The mature-aged and skill development activities: A systematic review of research* and *Education and training that meets the needs of small business: A systematic review of research*.

Other contributors

Maria Allan is a lecturer with the School of Psychology at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia. Her research interests include psychometric properties of psychological tests; the prediction of sexual and violent reoffending; bail decision-making; and the role of apology, forgiving and reconciliation in law and therapy.

Karen Banfield is Principal of the Adult Education and Vocational Training Institute for the Department of Corrective Services in New South Wales. Karen previously managed the provision of adult education programs for refugees and migrants settling in Australia. Program areas included English language programs for adult migrants and refugees, and job-seeking skills and work experience programs for qualified skilled migrants seeking employment in their fields in the New South Wales labour force.

Steve Barlow teaches *life skills, communications, and English for speakers of other languages* with the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services at Parklea Correctional Centre. Steve spent 25 years teaching in various primary and secondary schools around the Sydney area before he joined the Department of Corrective Services in 2002. He is currently completing a Doctorate of Philosophy in correctional education and is particularly interested in the area of readiness for positive life change.

Lyn Bennett was Change Manager for Bandyup Women's Prison and has extensive experience in the correctional facilities in Western Australia.

Victor Callan is Professor of Management at the University of Queensland Business School. He has published a number of recent reports into the leadership and management capabilities required of staff in VET, the characteristics of more innovative VET organisations, and the features of successful VET-industry provider partnerships. The current project on VET provision in correctional centres brought together this expertise in VET, together with over a decade of research and consulting experience in community and custodial corrections. In recognition of his national and international research contributions to the social sciences, Victor was recently elected as Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences of Australia.

Raymond Chavez has been a correctional educator since 1984 and has worked in a variety of positions at six different prison locations. The education and training model he helped develop while at Wooroloo Prison Farm created the template for the introduction of the technical and further education (TAFE) resource agreements that now exist at each public prison in Western Australia. As Coordinator of Vocational Training in the Education and Vocational Training Unit of the Department of Corrective Services in Western Australia, he developed the traineeship program for offenders. More recently he has been involved in 'target marketing' vocational training for offenders to employers experiencing skill shortages.

Peter de Graaff is an organiser for the New South Wales Teachers' Federation with responsibility for statewide issues relating to teachers in Corrective Services. He also works with TAFE teachers. President of the New South Wales Corrective Services Teachers' Association from 1994 to 2000, he is currently on leave from his position as Senior Correction Education Officer with the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services. Peter has a number of published articles on criminological and penological issues and, along with teachers at the Long Bay Remand Centre, was recipient of an Adult Learners' Week Award for the development of a Legal Literacy program.

Michael Fewster is now a consultant living in Adelaide but was previously Senior Education Officer at the Alice Springs Correctional Centre in the Northern Territory. As a secondary school teacher since 1968, he has a long-standing interest in the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In the 1980s he was Director of the Richmond Community Education Centre in Victoria. The centre developed programs and provided support for schools working with immigrant communities.

John Gardner is Lecturer in Management at the University of Queensland Business School. John holds a PhD in Organisational Psychology, and has research interests in interpersonal communication between supervisors and subordinates, organisational change processes and change management, computer-based communication technology, and research design and analysis techniques. As well as teaching and research experience in these areas, he has extensive experience in statistical research and consulting.

Margaret Giles is coordinator of a project at Silver Chain in Western Australia on the home support needs of people with neuro-degenerative disorders. She is also a research associate of the Women in Social and Economic Research Centre at the Curtin Business School. Margaret was previously a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Labour Market Research at the University of Western Australia. She has extensive experience in economic and econometric analysis and is co-author of the textbook *Economics of Australian labour markets* (sixth edition).

David Gould is State Manager, Vocational Education and Training in the New South Wales Department of Corrective Services after commencing as a Correctional Education Officer at Silverwater (Work Release) Correctional Centre in 1996. He has extensive experience in developing, implementing and evaluating adult education and vocational training programs for inmates. His specific areas of interest are the integration of work and learning for inmates and the transference of the skills gained to post-release employment.

Joe Graffam has a Chair of Psychology and is Head of the School of Psychology at Deakin University, Victoria. Since 1979, his teaching and research have centred on the employment of socially marginalised groups, including people with a disability, people with a mental illness, ex-offenders and older workers. He has directed large-scale projects and program evaluations funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC), not-for-profit organisations and the Victorian Government and the Australian Government.

Sian Halliday Wynes is a research officer in the International and Consultancy Services Branch at the National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd. Since joining NCVER in 2006, she has worked on a variety of research projects. Sian was previously employed at the School of Education, University of South Australia, and contributed to a published report *Reflecting on white privilege*.

Lesley Hardcastle is a research fellow in the School of Psychology at Deakin University. She is currently working on a project funded by the Criminology Research Council on the perceptions of the employability of ex-offenders. Other research has included disabilities support program evaluation for the Victorian Department of Human Services and a review of the use of information and communications technology for disadvantaged students for the Department of Education, Science and Training.

Christine Laird is the Manager of the Education and Vocational Training Unit of the Department of Corrective Services in Western Australia. She has extensive experience in the adult correctional education field. She has provided a leadership role in the establishment of an innovative correctional education program characterised by its diversity, flexibility and inclusiveness. In recognition of these achievements, the unit was awarded the Australian Training Initiative Award (auspiced by the Australian National Training Authority [ANTA]*) in 2004.

* ANTA was abolished in 2005, its responsibilities subsequently assumed by the Department of Education, Science and Training.

Ann-Claire Larsen is a lecturer with the School of Law and Justice at Edith Cowan University. Her research interests include women in prison and how some services may fail to meet the needs of the people they are set up to address. She was previously a sociologist with the School of Social Inquiry at Murdoch University. She has had extensive experience using qualitative research methods.

Catherine Lees is a lecturer in the School of Economics and Commerce at the University of Western Australia. Her research interests are judgement and decision-making, analysis and design of work and human performance, and the role of human resource management.

Bernard Meatheringham is Manager, Offender Education Services and Manager, Vocational Training and Education Centres of the Department for Correctional Services in South Australia. He has extensive experience in the adult correctional education field spanning over 18 years. He is a founding member of the Australasian Corrections' Education Association. Bernard recently worked with correctional educators in developing a national language, literacy and numeracy assessment screening tool, funded through the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training, National Literacy Innovations Projects.

Cydde Miller is a research officer at NCVER. She managed the development of the Indigenous VET research strategy between NCVER and the former Australian Indigenous Training Advisory Council (AITAC) from 2003 to 2006. Cydde has worked primarily on NCVER's Indigenous research, including management and writing of a systematic review of VET for Indigenous Australians and parts of the survey of Indigenous VET students.

Anh Tram Le is a senior lecturer in the School of Economics and Commerce at the University of Western Australia. Her research interests include labour market choice, quality of jobs, labour market outcomes and educational attainment.

Martine Powell is Professor in the School of Psychology at Deakin University. Prior to becoming an academic, she worked as a psychologist in a child protection unit and as a school teacher. Her primary area of expertise relates to the issue of forensic interviewing of children and other vulnerable witnesses.

Pamela Snow is a senior lecturer in the School of Psychology, Psychiatry, and Psychological Medicine at Monash University. Previously she was Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Health and Environment in the School of Public Health at La Trobe University, Bendigo. She is a registered psychologist, having qualified originally in speech pathology, and her current research interests are multi-risk young people, in particular, juvenile offenders; drug and alcohol education or prevention; and investigative interviewing of children in cases of abuse allegations.

Melanie Zan is the Principal of Adult Education Services for the Department of Corrective Services in Western Australia. She has worked with juvenile and adult offenders, serious repeat offenders who were undertaking treatment programs, and in policy development and staff training. She is a skilled trainer and facilitator, providing motivational professional development and solution-focused approaches to correctional education coordinators. Melanie has completed several innovative initiatives designed to promote correctional education as a career pathway for graduates.

Glossary of terms

adult prisoners	Adult prisoners are those people at or over the minimum age at which sentencing to adult custody can occur in each jurisdiction—17 years in Queensland, and 18 years in all other jurisdictions in Australia (Productivity Commission 2007). It does not include juvenile offenders i.e. those sentenced for crimes committed while under the age of 18 years in most jurisdictions.
cognitive-behavioural programs	Cognitive-behavioural based intervention programs target offending behaviours and anti-social thinking. These programs are designed from a psychological perspective to assist offenders to confront and understand their past criminal behaviour, and to develop pro-social skills and techniques to control their behaviour and avoid situations that may lead to further offending when released from supervision or custody. These programs may target specific offence types such as substance abuse, violence and sexual offences.
community-based order or sentence	A community-based order or sentence refers to a legal requirement for offenders to serve their sentence in prescribed activities in the community. All jurisdictions have community correctional services units which are responsible for a range of 'community-based orders' such as non-custodial sanctions (including unpaid community work components, personal development program attendance, or home detention restrictions). They also deliver post-custodial interventions (such as Adult Parole Board orders) under which prisoners released into the community continue to be subject to corrective services supervision (Productivity Commission 2007)
correctional education	Correctional education refers to education and training delivered to prisoners (sometimes referred to as custodial offenders) and offenders sentenced to community-based work orders or under the supervision of the correctional system. The term 'corrections education' is also used in the same way, especially in Australia (e.g. Australasian Corrections' Education Association).
correctional institution	Correctional institution means an institution operated or maintained by the state or territory government ministry in each jurisdiction for the purposes of lawful custody of offenders. The term 'corrections' is also used in the same way by the relevant Australian Government ministry.

correctional system	The correctional system provides custodial and community-based correctional services and is a key element of the criminal justice system in each state and territory jurisdiction in Australia.
corrective services authority	The corrective services authority refers to a correctional system that is administered by the minister of corrective services (or equivalent) in each state or territory in Australia.
crime	A crime is an act committed or an omission of duty, injurious to the public welfare, for which punishment is prescribed by law. (Note: 'criminal' <i>adjective</i> refers to pertaining to a crime or its punishment; 'criminal' <i>noun</i> refers to a person guilty or convicted of a crime.)
criminogenic needs	Criminogenic needs refers to risk factors that are <i>dynamic</i> or amenable to change over time such as family and social factors, substance abuse history, educational factors, and non-severe mental health problems. Interventions, which should target these dynamic risk factors, are learning experiences which are in some models facilitated by cognitive-behavioural programs from a psychological perspective (e.g. anger management program).
criminology	Criminology refers to the science dealing with causes and treatment of crimes and criminals.
custodial offenders	Custodial offenders is also used to refer to people in prison.
home detention	Home detention refers to a method of dealing with some offenders by allowing them to remain in their home with family members under strict conditions and supervision (often involving surveillance technology).
incarceration	Incarceration refers to the process of imprisoning or confining.
inmate	Inmate refers to a person confined to a correctional institution or otherwise detained in lawful custody or under a custodial sentence.
juvenile offenders	Juvenile offenders are those young people sentenced for crimes which they committed while under the age of 18 years.
non-custodial sanctions	Non-custodial sanctions are included in community-based orders as alternatives to incarceration, and may include unpaid community work components, personal development program attendance, or home detention restrictions.
offenders	The general term 'offender' means a person who has committed a crime. It therefore includes those offenders sentenced by a law court to a custodial sentence (prisoners) and offenders sentenced to community-based orders or supervision. However, in circumstances where 'prisoners' and 'offenders' are being differentiated, or referred to separately, the term 'offenders' is used to refer to people serving community-based work orders or on parole or on probation (see Productivity Commission 2007).

offender management services	Offender management services encompasses correctional centre custody of remand and sentenced inmates and community offender supervision including: periodic detention, home detention, parole and community service orders. It also includes the provision of custodial escort and court security services in many areas.
parole	Parole refers to the liberation of a person from prison, conditional upon good behaviour, prior to the end of the maximum sentence imposed upon that person. The person may be referred to as a 'parolee' for the non-custodial period of their sentence.
periodic detention	Periodic detention refers to an available option for sentencing offenders in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory which allows them to serve their sentence in regular prescribed blocks of time (for example full-time weekend custody). The person may be referred to as 'periodic detainee'.
post-release	Post-release refers to the time following custody. <i>Post-release interventions</i> aim to minimise re-offending during this time, by managing risk and promoting rehabilitation.
prisoners	Prisoners refers to people in full-time custody (sentenced and unsentenced prisoners held on remand) under the jurisdiction of an adult corrective service agency. It includes those people sentenced to periodic detention (e.g. weekend custody) in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory but does not include those offenders in police custody or juvenile detention (Productivity Commission 2007).
prisoner re-entry	In the United States, the term 'prisoner re-entry' is commonly used to refer to the process of leaving prison and returning to society.
probation	Probation refers to a method of dealing with offenders who are guilty of minor crimes or first offences by allowing them to remain in the community under certain conditions and supervision.
recidivism	The most commonly employed outcome measure of intervention or rehabilitation programs is recidivism which can be defined in a number of ways, including re-offending (with or without law enforcement detection); re-arrest; reconviction; re-imprisonment, and the time-frame for failure (e.g. re-offending, re-arrest, reconviction or re-imprisonment).
re-entry (to the community)	Re-entry (to the community) refers to the <i>moment in time</i> when a prisoner is released from custody. It can also be a process by which prisoners move from custody to independent community living. The re-entry process can be formal and mandatory, such as is the case with parole supervision. However, not all Australian prisoners are subject to formal re-entry programs (see Borzycki 2005).
rehabilitation	Rehabilitation refers to the process of restoring the offender to the community as a law-abiding person. The Canadian criminogenic needs model theory of rehabilitation suggests that reductions in recidivism can be maximised when high-risk offenders undertake, in ways that facilitate learning, programs which target factors that are known to be directly related to the reasons for offending, such as antisocial attitudes, substance misuse and anger.

re-integration (to the community)	Re-integration (to the community) describes the desired aims of ‘throughcare’—independent and productive community membership—as well as the processes required to achieve this aim. The term captures the idea of offenders actively participating in their re-entry process rather than just passively receiving services (see Borzycki 2005).
remand	Offenders charged but not yet convicted (or awaiting trial) are held in custody ‘on remand’.
risk-needs analysis	Risk is assessed from <i>static</i> risk factors that are not amenable to intervention (including age of onset of crime, offence history and family structure), and <i>dynamic</i> risk factors that might change over time. The dynamic risk factors include family and social factors, substance abuse history, educational factors and non-severe mental health problems.
transition	Transition refers to the gradual process of moving from custody to independent community living. <i>Transitional</i> services are those that aim to assist in this process, and these can be any formalised supports provided just before, at the point of, or following release. They can specifically refer to <i>transitional/pre-release centres</i> , which are supervised residential settings that bridge the gap between community and custody, and allow inmates substantial interactions with the outside world (e.g. outside employment or family contact) (see Borzycki 2005).
throughcare	Throughcare describes the process of delivering continuous care—providing consistent services and support to prisoners within and beyond prison in a holistic program of rehabilitation, ideally commencing at first contact between the offender and the justice system (see Borzycki 2005). The throughcare principle of offender management ensures a coordinated and integrated approach to reducing re-offending by people who are the responsibility of the relevant department of corrective services (or equivalent). It starts from their point of contact with the correctional system to the completion of their legal orders and their transition to law-abiding community living.

References

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Research readings are comprised of a collection of selected research papers on a particular topic of interest.

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