Government of South Australia
Department for Correctional Services

Our Ref: CEN/11/0889

Office of the Chief Executive

Central Office

Level 2, 400 King William St
ADELAIDE SA 5000
DX 147

PO BOX 1747
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Tel: (08) 8226 9000
Fax: (08) 8226 9226

www.corrections.sa.gov.au

18 March 2013

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO BOX 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

RE: Submission to the Senate Committee on the value of a justice reinvestment approach to criminal justice in Australia

I am pleased to provide you with a short submission from the Department for Correctional Services. The Department for Correctional Services is entirely committed to contribute to Justice Reinvestment as the role of Correctional Services in reducing reoffending is often central to the debate. In this regard, DCS have participated in a Workshop on Justice Reinvestment that occurred on 9 March 2012, chaired by Senator Penny Wright. I have since had the opportunity to meet with Senator Wright about this issue which I found to be very beneficial.

The Department for Correctional Services strives to deliver an integrated and seamless approach in the delivery of programs and services for sentenced prisoners and offenders to ensure community safety through the provision of rehabilitation and reintegration to reduce their risk of re-offending. I have attached a copy of the Department for Correctional Services 2011-2014 Strategic Plan for your perusal.

A considerable body of research, known as the *What Works* literature (Andrews and Bonta) has shown that the provision of appropriate and targeted programs that focus on effective methods of bringing about changes in an offender's functioning may have a significant impact in reducing crime.

Offence specific programs provided by the department, in conjunction with interventions such as employment, vocational education and training, health and nutrition education and life and social skills contribute to rehabilitation and a reduction in offending behaviours. These programs include the:

- Violence Prevention Program – moderate and high risk violent offenders
- Sexual Behaviours Clinic – moderate and high risk adult and child sex offenders
- Making Changes Program – general offender program with a focus on Alcohol and Other Drug rehabilitation
- Domestic Violence Programs
- Literacy and Numeracy Programs
- Prisoner Reintegration Employment Opportunity Program – focused on the provision of skills and prospective employment to Aboriginal prisoners with BHP Billiton or a partnered contractor upon release.

- SIERRA Program – development of life skills for Aboriginal prisoners, combined with Making Changes, Reintegration and Regime Management.

Culturally sensitive rehabilitation programs have been developed to address the needs of Aboriginal prisoners and offenders in the South Australian correctional system. A dedicated Aboriginal Services Unit within Central Office and Aboriginal Liaison Officers located within each of the prisons play a valuable role in ensuring that prisoners and offenders remain connected with their community whilst in custody and/or if they are on a community based order.

In line with best practice, South Australian rehabilitations programs are integrated with other services including case management and education and vocational training so that a cohesive service is provided. In addition to increasing the offender's opportunity to obtain employment, there is a clear expectation from Government and the community that the department provide a means for offenders to contribute to the community, to acknowledge the impact of their crime on victims and to provide their victims with the opportunity to be involved in the sentencing and correctional process.

In addition to programs and service delivery within prison, there are a range of strategies and initiatives in place to divert offenders from the prison system and where appropriate, manage them within a community setting. The initiatives operating in South Australia include Supervised Bail, Intensive Bail Supervision (Home Detention), electronic monitoring, post sentence pre-parole Home Detention and the range of sentencing options available to the courts including Suspended Sentences, Good Behaviour Bonds and Community Service Orders.

The Department for Correctional Services is also committed to continuing and strengthening existing strategies that provide for integrated offender management that focusses on rehabilitating and reintegrating prisoners in order to reduce recidivism and improve community safety. In this regard, the Department has a contract with a non-government organisation to provide reintegration services and in particular to improve options for:

- Accommodation – information, referral and advocacy to address short and long term accommodation needs
- Linking with services – information, assistance and referral to community based agencies to address health and welfare related needs
- Value added services – prisoners are given access to other health and welfare programs.

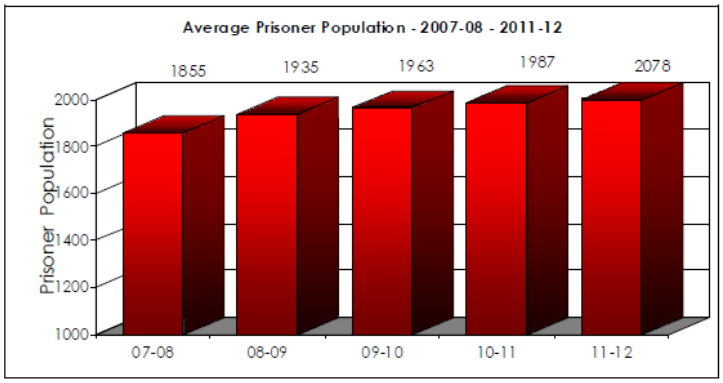
South Australian Data

South Australia's correctional system has led the nation by recording the lowest rate of offenders returning to prison for a fifth year in a row. The Productivity Commission's Report into Government Services 2013 shows in South Australia 29.1 per cent of prisoners returned to custody within two years of release, compared to the national average of 39.3 per cent. In addition to these figures, 46.4 per cent of eligible prisoners participated in one or more accredited education and training programs, exceeding the Australian national average of 33.8 per cent.

Whilst providing best practice services for the community of South Australia by leading the nation with the lowest re-offending rates, the South Australian government spends $211 per prisoner per day (3rd lowest in the nation), compared with the national average of $226 per prisoner per day (Productivity Commission 2013).

Prison Population

The average prison population continued to increase during 2011-12, while the number of prisoners held in custody on remand was steady there was an increase in those serving a custodial prison sentence. The average prisoner population for 2011-12 was 2078, this compares with 1987 in 2010-11 and 1963 in 2009-10. At 30 June 2012, 31.15 % of prisoners were un-sentenced. Graph 1 shows the annual average numbers of prisoners over the last five years. The long term growth in prisoner numbers in South Australia remains at around three percent (compound) per annum.



Graph 1: Average Prisoner Population 2007/08 to 2011/12

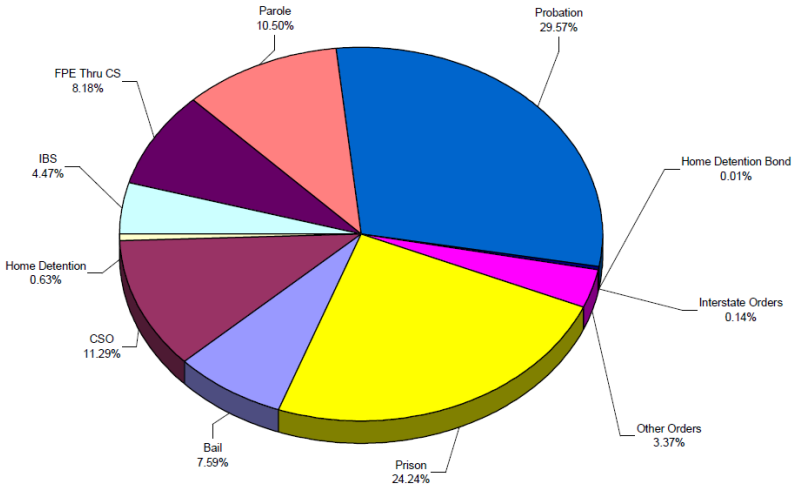
As at 30 June 2012, male prisoners comprise 93.55 percent of the prison population. The percent of Aboriginal prisoners decreased slightly from the previous year. As at 30 June 2012, 22.39 percent of prisoners were Aboriginal, compared to 23.79 percent of prisoners at 30 June 2011.

Evidently, the number of prisoners in custody is primarily determined by the decisions of the Courts where in general, the key factors driving overall prisoner numbers are the numbers of offenders charged or sentenced to custody for serious offences and the length of sentences they receive. Average sentence lengths have increased from 66.4 months in 2007/08 to 70.6 months in 2011/12. Likewise, the decisions of the Parole Board of South Australia (to grant or deny parole) also can have an effect on prisoner numbers.

Community Corrections Population

As at 30 June 2012, 6162 individuals were under supervision for one of more community based orders with a total of 6454 orders registered by Community Corrections. A breakdown of order types is outlined in Graph 2.

Graph 2: Placement of Offenders as at 30 June 2012



NB: CSO = Community Service Order, IBS = Intensive Bail Supervision (Home Detention, FPE Thru CS = Fines Payment Enforcement through Community Service Order.

As at 30 June 2012, male prisoners comprise 82.44% percent of the prison population. 17.7 percent of individuals on community orders were of Aboriginal descent. This figure is comparable to previous years.

Summary

The South Australian Department for Correctional Services performs its role as part of the overall criminal justice system where the net effect in recent years has been a reduction in victim reported crime. Likewise, South Australia has the lowest return to custody rate (within two years) of all Australian states and territories for the fifth year in a row.

All states are unique and service delivery differs, key characteristics of a Justice Reinvestment Approach is that is data driven and place based, and will require genuine partnership between government and communities.

This creates difficulties in considering how justice reinvestment might be progressed within Australia and what methodology and objectives would be used to achieve the required outcomes. In the interim however, the Department for Correctional Services will continue to deliver the appropriate level of services, in line with evidenced based practice to break the cycle of re-offending.

I welcome the Senate Committee examining Justice Reinvestment and look forward to examining the final report by the committee.

Yours sincerely

David Brown
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Enc.

STRATEGIC PLAN : 2011– 2014

Government of South Australia
Department for Correctional Services

Our Vision

A safer community by protecting the public and reducing re-offending

Our Mission

We contribute to public safety through the safe, secure and humane management of offenders and the provision of opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration

Our Values

- Integrity
- Ethical and respectful behaviour
- Social responsibility
- Accountability and professionalism
- Equity, diversity and cultural inclusion
- Workplace safety

Delivering Our Critical Services

Integrated Offender Management

Improve the multi-disciplinary management of offenders with complex needs

Manage the transition and reintegration of offenders into the community

Provide risk-based information and reports to inform decision-making on offenders

Provide targeted interventions and rehabilitation services

Improve the 'whole of sentence' management of offenders

Safety and Security

Respond to the decisions of the Parole Board and the Courts

Ensure the highest standards of safety, security and emergency management

Strengthen the engagement of offenders in meaningful structured activity

Enhance Community Corrections to target and manage offender risk

Meet responsibilities with respect to state protective security, to counter terrorism and violent extremism

Contribute to public safety and confidence by targeting dangerous, serious and high risk offenders

Use intelligence to reduce the risks faced at a state and national level

Community Engagement

Improve the support and engagement of Victims of Crime

Strengthen strategic partnerships to reintegrate offenders back into the community

Increase community engagement and the understanding of Corrections

Expand and enhance volunteerism

Increase the engagement of Aboriginal people and people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds

Building Our Capacity and Capability

Capacity

Upgrade and expand our infrastructure to facilitate service delivery requirements

Plan and manage our resources to meet service objectives

Identify our workforce requirements and target recruitment efforts

Manage the risk in everything we do

Work with our strategic partners to improve service outcomes

Capability

Invest in our staff through:
- targeted training
- performance development, and
- embracing diversity

Enhance and support gender equity

Enhance the safety and well-being of staff in the workplace

Improve how we use information and technology in decision making and service delivery

Leading, Managing and Shaping Our Organisation

Enhance leadership, and target management development and cultural competence

Ensure we exhibit the highest standards of ethics and behaviours

Ensure we communicate with our stakeholders and strategic partners

Engage and consult with our staff

Strengthen our ability to promote and manage diversity

Inform and respond to Government strategy, policy and legislation

Ensure governance, planning and reporting to achieve the highest level of performance

Define and drive corporate change and continuous improvement

Implement the Shaping Corrections Program

Develop and implement the Department's research agenda

Manage our budgets and meet savings targets

Ensure the services we deliver are effective and efficient

Stakeholders

The Community

The Government

Parole Board and the Courts

Victims of Crime

Outcomes

Improved public protection

Secure, safe and humane environments

Reduced re-offending

Improved outcomes for Aboriginal people

Skilled, professional and valued workforce

Accountable and responsible leadership and administration

The Department for Correctional Services aligns its strategies, policies and services to the South Australian Strategic Plan and works in partnership with Justice agencies and other public, private and not-for-profit organisations

Department for Correctional Services