



Rehabilitative needs and treatment of Indigenous offenders in Queensland

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Glossary of Terms

CBT	Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
CLO	Cultural Liaison Officer
ICJRA	Indigenous Criminal Justice Research Agenda
IOMS	Integrated Offender Management System
ISDR	Internal Services Delivery Review
MSO	Most Serious Offence
NAIDOC	National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee
OMP	Offender Management Plan
ORNI-R	Offender Risk Need Inventory-Revised
ORSS	Offender Reintegration Support Service
QCS	Queensland Corrective Services
ROR	Risk of Re-Offending
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Report Summary

This report presents the findings of the Rehabilitative Needs and Treatment of Indigenous Offenders in Queensland project undertaken by Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) as part of the Indigenous Criminal Justice Research Agenda.

The project used a range of methods to collect information to address the project's key research questions. This included conducting a literature review, analysis of QCS administrative data and analysis of qualitative data collected as part of the QCS Internal Service Delivery Review.

The project findings are summarised below under the project's key research questions.

What is known about the rehabilitation needs of Indigenous offenders?

- The over-representation of Indigenous offenders under supervision by QCS indicates a high demand for rehabilitation among Indigenous offenders.
- Indigenous offending is linked to disadvantage resulting from past government policies that removed Indigenous people from their traditional land, families and culture. This history makes the rehabilitation needs of Indigenous offenders distinct from non-Indigenous offenders.
- Indigenous offenders disproportionately experience social and economic disadvantage such as lower levels of education attainment, poor health, higher levels of unemployment and greater reliance on social services for housing and welfare compared to non-Indigenous populations. Indigenous persons are also more likely than non-Indigenous persons to be victims of violence and experience violence of greater severity.
- Indigenous offenders are more likely than non-Indigenous offenders to be incarcerated for offences relating to offences against persons, a breach of a domestic violence order or breach of the *Bail Act*. They are also more likely to be younger, serve sentences of less than 12 months and be repeat offenders.
- Although Indigenous offenders are more likely than non-Indigenous offenders to completely abstain from alcohol, they are also significantly more likely to be involved in risky levels of alcohol consumption. Research has shown a clear link between problematic alcohol use and Indigenous offending.

What are some of the considerations in delivering programs to Indigenous offenders?

- Best-practice literature indicates that rehabilitative programs should respond to risk of re-offending, criminogenic needs and offender responsiveness.
- Meta-evaluations have shown that rehabilitative programs that utilise cognitive behavioural therapy have a demonstrated effect on reducing recidivism among participants. Importantly, rehabilitative programs that target offender criminogenic needs have been shown to have the highest impact on reducing recidivism.
- There is a paucity of evidence-based research on the rehabilitation of Indigenous offenders in Australia. The best information suggests that rehabilitation efforts should combine cognitive behavioural therapy with culturally sensitive content and delivery modes. Research also demonstrates that Indigenous offender criminogenic programs should be high in frequency and duration.
- Some researchers have been critical of applying the cognitive behavioural therapy approach to Indigenous offenders. It has been suggested that promoting self-disclosure in a peer group setting contravenes Indigenous mores and can be seen to be associated with shaming.
- Some Indigenous offenders participating in the QCS Internal Services Delivery Review reported that they felt shame when discussing personal issues in a group context, while others reported benefits in being involved in this kind of self-disclosure. It is clear that further research on suitability of programs underpinned by the cognitive behavioural therapy approach for Indigenous offenders is required.
- Other researchers have indicated that Indigenous rehabilitation interventions need to be holistic in approach and attend not only to criminogenic needs, but the multilayered issues faced by this group. This latter approach is evident in the strength-based model that has been implemented in other jurisdictions (for example, Healing Lodges in Canada). Although this model is yet to show significant benefits in terms of reducing recidivism, it is worth noting that some Indigenous offenders participating in the QCS Internal Services Delivery Review expressed an interest in (re-)connecting with Indigenous culture, history and heritage.
- Low literacy and numeracy skills among Indigenous offenders were regularly cited as a barrier to participation in rehabilitative interventions (including criminogenic programs and other educative and vocational training opportunities).

- The ability to deliver rehabilitation programs that are high in frequency and duration to Indigenous offenders is impeded by a number of factors. For example, Indigenous offenders are more likely than non-Indigenous offenders to be in prison under sentence for 12 months or less. QCS has made an effort to address this issue, with the “Ending Family Violence” and “Ending Offending” programs being designed to target Indigenous offenders in prison under sentence for less than 12 months. However, Indigenous sex offenders in short term custody under sentence may not be eligible for sex offending programs (due to the need to ensure that programs are completed before being released from custody). Furthermore, the deliverance of rehabilitation programs to Indigenous offenders under community supervision can also be impeded by offenders’ competing priorities and transport difficulties that hamper their ability to attend program sessions.
- The difficulty of recruiting and retaining suitably qualified Indigenous staff members poses a challenge in the delivery of rehabilitative interventions by Indigenous facilitators.

How is QCS responding to the rehabilitation needs of Indigenous offenders?

- QCS delivers a range of rehabilitative interventions in line with current best-practice.
- Indigenous offenders have access to both criminogenic and non-criminogenic interventions. Indigenous participation in criminogenic programs is determined by their level of risk of re-offending, factors that have influenced offending behaviour and their assessed responsivity. Criminogenic programs are based on the cognitive behavioural therapy approach.
- Indigenous-specific programs delivered by QCS include the Indigenous-specific sexual offending program and programs targeting general offending (including substance misuse) and violence. These programs contain Indigenous content and are delivered in a culturally appropriate format.
- Eligible Indigenous offenders are also offered a broad range of mainstream criminogenic programs. These programs target sexual offending, violence and substance misuse.
- All Indigenous offenders in custody have access to adult and vocational education, the Advance2Work program and various types of transitional support.
- Culturally appropriate activities and services, such as the Indigenous Elders Visiting Scheme and Indigenous Cultural Centres complement the Indigenous rehabilitation interventions provided by QCS.

How do program completion rates of QCS programs compare between Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders?

- The completion rates of QCS programs vary over time, between program type, by gender and by Indigenous status.
- The completion rates for Indigenous offenders participating in the Indigenous-specific sexual offending program were slightly higher than the completion rates for Indigenous offenders participating in mainstream sexual offender programs. This finding provides some evidence to suggest that culturally responsive programs can increase program completion rates for Indigenous offenders.
- Indigenous offenders were under-represented in literacy and numeracy courses and Vocational and Educational Training and less likely than non-Indigenous offenders to gain and sustain employment after completing stage one of the Advance2Work program.

How can QCS and other government agencies enhance their response to the rehabilitation needs of Indigenous offenders?

There is a clear need for a whole-of-government approach in attending to Indigenous rehabilitation and over-representation in the criminal justice system. This includes raising education and vocation skill levels, providing effective health care, ensuring appropriate housing and developing opportunities for labour market participation for the Indigenous population. Building the capacity of Indigenous communities will strengthen their ability to support Indigenous offenders after their release from custody. Early interventions that reduce the likelihood of Indigenous offenders being placed on remand (such as bail support) are likely to decrease Indigenous over-representation in custody.

Findings from the project highlighted the importance of:

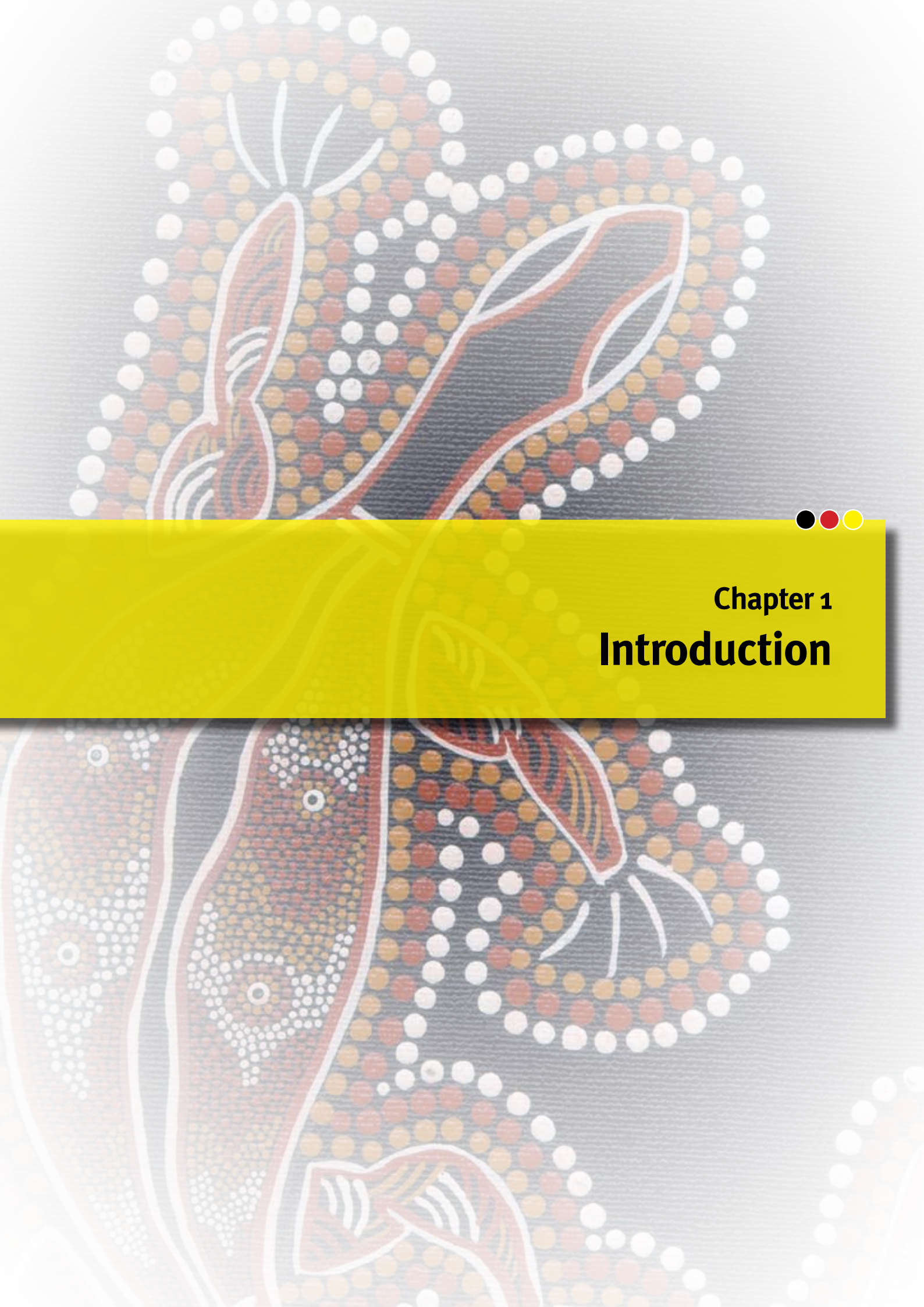
- Understanding the historical and socio-cultural factors contributing to Indigenous offending and rehabilitation needs.
- Delivering culturally relevant rehabilitation programs that recognise and incorporate traditional Indigenous values and complement Indigenous learning and communication styles.
- Delivering programs that respond to the criminogenic needs of Indigenous offenders. For example, programs should address violent behaviour, sexual offending and substance misuse. These programs should ideally be high in frequency and duration.
- Ensuring that Indigenous offenders have access to adult education to address their low literacy and numeracy levels.

- Providing post-release support to Indigenous offenders to facilitate employment and community reintegration. This is especially true for offenders from rural or remote Indigenous communities.
- Building relationships with industry and Indigenous communities to assist with the post-release employment and reintegration of Indigenous offenders.
- Providing training to enhance the cultural competencies of non-Indigenous program facilitators and QCS staff in general.
- Increasing the number of Indigenous staff working within QCS.
- Undertaking further research to establish the best-practice characteristics of Indigenous offender rehabilitation programs.

Considering the findings presented in this report, QCS is planning to do the following activities to enhance its Indigenous rehabilitation efforts:

- Continue to monitor research that focuses on the rehabilitation of Indigenous offenders in order to maintain best-practice development and implementation of Indigenous offender rehabilitation. Further information on best-practice program delivery modes for Indigenous offenders will be of significant value.
- Develop and implement a motivational program for Indigenous offenders. This program will aim to increase program responsiveness among Indigenous offenders which will increase Indigenous access to programs.
- Evaluate the Indigenous general offending and family violence programs in order to determine and improve program outcomes. These programs focus on substance misuse and violence.
- Develop and implement enhanced Indigenous general offending and family violence programs based on evaluation findings. Enhancing these programs is likely to involve examining whether or not increasing the frequency and duration of these programs is feasible and beneficial.
- Develop a cultural supervision framework for program delivery staff. This will increase the cultural-competency of program facilitators.
- Examine the feasibility of developing and implementing a sexual offending program for Indigenous offenders from remote communities. This program will attend to the specific needs of these offenders.
- Examine the viability of implementing a residential diversion initiative for Indigenous offenders placed on a community corrections order. It is

- Develop and implement an Indigenous-specific offender management strategy for Indigenous offenders in custody.
- Revise the Transitions Release Preparation program to better meet the needs of Indigenous participants to assist with offender reintegration.
- Review the Offender Reintegration Support Service to ensure its appropriateness for Indigenous clients to assist with offender reintegration.
- Continue to develop and maintain partnerships with other government agencies and links with industry and Indigenous communities. These partnerships include QCS representation at various stages of the criminal justice system (such as the Murri Courts) and will assist with post-release reintegration efforts.
- Continue to develop initiatives at the local level that respond to local needs and capacity. These initiatives will complement rehabilitation interventions offered by QCS across the state.



Chapter 1
Introduction

Chapter 1 Introduction

Much has been written about the over-representation of Indigenous persons in the criminal justice system. Indigenous persons represent four per cent of Queensland's general population (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2006), nearly 30 per cent of the prisoner population and approximately 20 per cent of offenders under community supervision (QCS 2009)

Research demonstrates that Indigenous offending behaviour is the most significant cause of Indigenous over-representation, rather than biased criminal justice responses (Snowball & Weatherburn 2006). However, researchers also note that historical factors, such as poor health, low education, limited social connectedness and family cohesion, poor parenting, high unemployment, physical and sexual abuse and drug misuse, have increased Indigenous persons' exposure to risk factors associated with crime.

This report provides information on the rehabilitation needs and treatment of Indigenous offenders in Queensland. It is anticipated that the information in this report will facilitate the development of strategies and interventions designed to address Indigenous recidivism and the over-representation of Indigenous persons in the criminal justice system. While this report focuses on tertiary responses to Indigenous over-representation, it is acknowledged that early intervention or primary responses play a critical role in efforts to reduce Indigenous contact with the criminal justice system.

The report has been prepared as part of the Indigenous Criminal Justice Research Agenda (ICJRA). The ICJRA was established as a means of setting the Queensland Government's strategic direction regarding research into Indigenous justice issues following recommendations outlined in an independent evaluation of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement. The ICJRA is co-ordinated by the Queensland Department of the Premier and Cabinet.



Chapter 2
Methods

Chapter 2

Methods

This chapter outlines the objectives of the Rehabilitative Needs and Treatment of Indigenous Offenders in Queensland project and the methods used to address these objectives. Project scope and data limitations are also discussed.

Project Objectives

The project sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is known about the rehabilitation needs of Indigenous offenders?
2. What are some considerations in delivering programs to Indigenous offenders?
3. How is QCS responding to the rehabilitation needs of Indigenous offenders?
4. How do program completion rates of QCS programs compare between Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders?
5. How can QCS and other government agencies enhance its response to the rehabilitation needs of Indigenous offenders?

Methods

The project used both primary and secondary information to address key research questions. Primary information was developed using quantitative and qualitative research strategies.

A literature review has provided information on the rehabilitative needs of Indigenous offenders. Quantitative data sourced from the QCS Integrated Offender Management System (IOMS) was analysed in order to provide a profile of Indigenous offenders in Queensland custody and measure rehabilitation program completion rates. Qualitative data gathered as part of the QCS External Delivery Services Review was analysed to highlight issues around Indigenous program delivery. Information about the QCS rehabilitation efforts was collected via consultation with internal stakeholders (including Offender Intervention Services, Custodial Operations and Probation and Parole) and a review of QCS documents.

QCS Integrated Offender Management System

IOMS is the administrative data-base used to support the management of offenders under the supervision of QCS. This includes offenders in custody and offenders on community-based orders. IOMS has been developed for operational purposes which structures and limits what type of information can be extracted for reasons of research. The accuracy of information in IOMS reflects how reliably information is entered into the system by QCS Officers. It is understood that information extracted from IOMS is likely to underreport program participation and program waiting lists due to the possible inaccurate recording of this information. QCS is currently improving processes to promote more reliable information in the future.

QCS Criminogenic Programs

A new suite of criminogenic programs was introduced by QCS in 2006. These programs are outlined in Chapter five.

QCS External Services Delivery Review

The QCS Indigenous Service Delivery Review was undertaken by the QCS Throughcare and External Services Unit in 2008.

The review involved surveying approximately 350 Indigenous offenders from urban, rural and remote areas of Queensland. Seventeen per cent of survey participants are female.

The review also involved holding focus group sessions with 114 QCS staff and external service providers across the state. QCS staff included custodial management and officers, Probation and Parole Officers, Cultural Liaison Officers and Cultural Development Officers. Service providers included community-based groups and services that work directly with Indigenous offenders such as Indigenous Elders, Community Justice Groups, legal services, medical services, community health professionals and welfare support services. Service providers and groups consulted were from across the state including remote communities such as Aurukun, Doomadgee, Woorabinda and Palm Island. All correctional centres are represented in the review.

Project Scope and Data Limitations

- The project did not focus on identifying differences between Indigenous offenders from urban areas and Indigenous offenders from rural and remote areas of Queensland.
- The project was unable to measure what proportion of the Indigenous offender population participates in QCS rehabilitation interventions due to the structure and reliability of information held in IOMS. However, while these data are unavailable it is worth noting that the QCS program resource model is structured to prioritise the delivery of

- The project focused on the rehabilitative needs and treatment of offenders in custody. However, some reference to the rehabilitative needs and treatment of offenders under community supervision is provided in this report.
- The project is not intended to represent an evaluation of rehabilitative interventions delivered by QCS.
- The relatively recent introduction of new criminogenic programs by QCS means that the project was not able to provide a reliable measure of recidivism for program participants. This is because recidivism is usually measured as a return to custody within two years of release. More time needs to elapse before a statistically significant number of program graduates have been in the community for two years or more after being released from their custodial sentence.

Report Structure

This report is structured by eight chapters:

- Chapter three reviews literature on the offender rehabilitation programs and establishes the rehabilitation needs of Indigenous offenders.
- Chapter four provides information on selected characteristics of Indigenous offenders in custody.
- Chapter five provides an overview of QCS offender rehabilitation interventions provided in custody.
- Chapter six outlines the enrolments and completions of QCS rehabilitation programs from 2006-07 to 2008-09.
- Chapter seven summarises some of the key observations made by participants in the QCS Indigenous Service Delivery Review regarding Indigenous offender rehabilitation.
- Chapter eight concludes the report.



Chapter 3

Literature Review of Indigenous Offender Rehabilitation

Chapter 3

Literature Review of Indigenous Offender Rehabilitation

This chapter reviews international and national literature on Indigenous offender rehabilitation needs and programs. The literature review begins with a discussion about the concept of 'rehabilitation' and the need to build the capacity of Indigenous communities in order to assist reintegration efforts. Examination of best-practice principles as they apply to rehabilitation programs generally and more specifically for Indigenous offenders is also included.

The Scope of Rehabilitation

The term rehabilitation is commonly referred to as restoring something to its proper condition or normal state. When used in the criminal justice context, this understanding implies that the offender at some time has been living in normal conditions. Because such conditions may never have existed in many of the homes and communities of offenders, rehabilitation in its normative sense is difficult to achieve in custody (Willis & Moore 2008).

The idea that rehabilitation should restore people to a normal condition is especially problematic in the case of Indigenous people. Often Indigenous offenders are from communities where economic disadvantage, violence and fragmented social networks are common features (Chamberlain & Mackenzie 2009; Bryant 2009). When Indigenous offenders are released back to these communities the restorative goals of rehabilitation are severely hampered.

The disadvantage that often characterises Indigenous communities means that imprisonment can have little deterrent against offending for some Indigenous persons, because time in custody can offer relief from dysfunctional situations. It has been observed that some Indigenous offenders see incarceration as a rite of passage and others have reported that custody is viewed as a second home for Indigenous offenders (Chantril 1997). Indeed, for some Indigenous people, incarceration may be the only time that they have access to their own room, medical care, clean clothes and bedding and regular meals (Turgeon 2001).

There is considerable research on the gap between Indigenous persons and non-Indigenous persons. The most recent Queensland Closing the Gap Report: 2008/09 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnership [ATSIP] 2010) shows that when compared to non-Indigenous persons, Indigenous persons:

- have a lower life expectancy;
- have a higher child mortality;
- are less likely to attend school;
- are less likely to achieve Year 12 or equivalent;
- have a higher mortality rate;

- are more likely to have been admitted to hospital within the previous 12 months;
- are more likely to be hospitalised for a mental or behavioural disorder;
- are more likely to abstain from alcohol in the last 12 months, but also more likely consume alcohol at risky levels;
- have a higher unemployment rate;
- are five times more likely to live in an over-crowded household;
- have children subject to child protection orders;
- are nine to ten times more likely to have a domestic violence order imposed;
- and are eight times more likely to have been charged by the police.

Other research shows significant disparity between the gross median incomes for Indigenous persons compared with non-Indigenous persons (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2006). One in every two Indigenous households receives some form of government housing assistance (such as public housing or rent assistance), in addition to which Indigenous people are over-represented in homeless rates (Chamberlain & Mackenzie 2009; AIHW 2008). Indigenous persons are also more likely to be victims of violence than the general population. Moreover, the severity of violence experienced by Indigenous persons is greater than that experienced by non-Indigenous victims (Bryant 2009).

Many of the factors outlined above are known risk factors for participation in crime. These risk factors include poor socio-economic status, social disconnectedness, misuse of substances, previous involvement in crime, exposure to physical and sexual abuse, poor education and lack of suitable housing. There is a clear need for a multi-faceted, multi-agency response to Indigenous rehabilitation. Building healthy Indigenous communities will facilitate the successful reintegration of Indigenous offenders once they leave custody, while also reducing the likelihood of Indigenous people commencing a criminal trajectory. Closing the social and economic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders is critical in reducing the over-representation of Indigenous persons in the criminal justice system.

The Delivery of Programs and Best-Practice

Time in custody provides offenders with access that would not otherwise be available to programs and services designed to address their offending behaviour.

The literature on best-practice models for the rehabilitation of offenders indicates that programs should address the risk of re-offending, respond to the needs of the individual offender and be responsive to the specific characteristics of offenders (Howells et. al. 2004). The *risk principle* suggests that effective programs should target high-risk offenders for rehabilitation since programs have been demonstrated to have the most impact among this group. The *needs principle* suggests that programs should address known criminogenic needs of offenders.¹ More specifically, program content should target factors that significantly influence offending behaviour, such as substance addiction or inappropriate fantasies and feelings towards children. Effective rehabilitation programs incorporate the *responsivity principle*, which has the aim to minimise barriers to participation by ensuring that program content and delivery are tailored to the learning styles of the target group.

Meta-evaluations support the use of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) to effect positive rehabilitation outcomes for offenders. The theoretical basis for the CBT approach is that “cognitive deficits and distortions characteristic of offenders are learned rather than inherent” (Lipsey, Landenberger & Wilson 2007, p.4). CBT programs emphasise individual responsibility and teach offenders about the thinking processes that lead to decisions resulting in criminal behaviour. Following this self-reflective thinking, offenders are taught skills to identify and correct risky or destructive thinking to avoid criminal behaviour. In this way, all CBT programs use a structure to develop and improve an offender’s behaviour and cognitive skills. Some techniques include cognitive skills training, moral development, relapse prevention, anger management and components aimed at correcting social skills.

A number of meta-evaluations of cognitive behavioural therapy interventions for criminal offending have found the approach to be effective in reducing recidivism among offenders (Pearson et. al. 2002; Wilson et. al. 2005; Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; Lipsey, Landenberger & Wilson 2007). However, an Australian-based meta-evaluation of offender rehabilitation programs is yet to be undertaken. Only a handful of studies have reviewed Australian offender rehabilitation programs (Kassan 1999; Borzycki 2005).

Programs for Indigenous offenders

In Australia, Indigenous offenders generally participate in universal or mainstream programs due to government resource limitations and the recognition that the criminogenic needs of Indigenous offenders are similar to

¹ Criminogenic needs are dynamic offender risk factors related to recidivism such as violence, substance misuse and sexual assault. Non-criminogenic needs in offender rehabilitation literature generally refer to factors that have little impact on recidivism such as health, welfare and material needs of offenders.

those of non-Indigenous offenders (Howells et. al. 2004; Borzycki 2005). However, there is little evidence exploring whether the best-practice offender intervention principles of risk, need and responsivity are applicable to Indigenous offenders and some researchers have questioned the suitability of CBT approaches for Indigenous offenders (Gilbert & Wilson 2009).² For example, Willis and Moore (2008) assert that therapeutic offender programs emphasising individual self-awareness and self-disclosure have little relevance to Indigenous offenders because their cultures place emphasis on collective values and the inter-dependence of community and kin members. Their study found that Indigenous offenders associate self-disclosure in a peer group setting with shaming.

The literature also emphasises that programs delivered to Indigenous offenders need to recognise the importance of understanding Indigenous-specific disadvantage. The historical, systematic and wholesale intervention into the lives of Indigenous people has contributed to the deculturation, separation, displacement, discrimination and disconnection from heritage among Indigenous persons (Jones 2001).³ Colonisation has contributed to a separation from ancestral lands, the fragmenting of family and kin structure, near elimination of language and cultural practices and marginalisation of Indigenous people from the market economy (Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission [AHREOC] 1997).

The deculturation of Indigenous people is a constant theme in Indigenous offender literature. Jones describes the contemporary manifestation of deculturation as follows:

Aboriginal people are caught betwixt and between, living in a marginalised kind of limbo land...isolated from their own culture... [but] neither fully accepted in the non-Indigenous culture, nor...wanting to identify with it. This sense of being lost has a huge negative impact on the identity, sense of self worth, development of values, purpose in life...which would normally allow people to have fulfilling and satisfying lives (Jones 2001, p.7).

Relevant literature indicates that culture in relation to the formation of personal identity and social connectivity is integral to the rehabilitation of Indigenous offenders. One of the key advantages of providing Indigenous-specific programs is that they provide an opportunity to reinforce and rebuild the identity of Indigenous offenders and maintain cultural links with their ancestral lands and communities.

² A national review of Australian offender programs by Heseltine, Day and Sarre (forth coming) will also examine the responsivity of programs to the needs of Indigenous and women offenders across Australia (Bartels, 2010)

³ Enculturation is a term used within the social sciences to refer to a process by which individuals learn behaviours and norms of the surrounding and dominant culture. Deculturation is often used to describe the experience of colonised people under going a systematic process to deny or alter their Indigenous culture in order to assimilate into a dominant culture.

A greater understanding of Indigenous culture as it relates to colonisation will also assist program facilitators deliver programs to Indigenous offenders. It has been argued that some non-Indigenous therapeutic practitioners in correctional agencies do not acknowledge appropriately their own cultural filters when working with Indigenous offenders (Jones 2001). An example of this is when non-Indigenous professionals dismiss Indigenous distrust of government agencies and their representatives (Day et. el. 2006). Misconceptions about Indigenous culture can also further marginalise Indigenous offenders and reinforce cultural stereotypes. Willis and Moore (2008) have pointed out that some program facilitators need better to understand the socio-historical origin of violence that occurs in some Indigenous communities rather than accept violence as an Indigenous cultural characteristic. The recognition that most Indigenous offenders are also victims of crime is also of significant importance.

Best-practice offender rehabilitation literature demonstrates that interventions targeting criminogenic risks of offenders will have more impact on reducing re-offending than social or non-criminogenic programs. However, there is debate in the literature about making the distinction between offence-specific or criminogenic needs and social or non-criminogenic needs for Indigenous offenders. Howells et. al. argue that when addressing Indigenous rehabilitation needs, it is vital that programs in correctional settings take into account the socio-economic disadvantage of Indigenous offenders. They claim that it is arbitrary to assert that distress, trauma and mental disorders are non-criminogenic needs to be treated as subordinate to criminogenic needs when there is evidence linking these factors to criminal behaviour (Howells et. al. 1999; Howells et. al. 2004).

The development of best-practice program principles for Indigenous offenders in Australia is hindered by the lack of research on the rehabilitation of Indigenous offenders (Gilbert & Wilson 2009).

Culturally-Specific Approaches to Indigenous Rehabilitation

There is some evidence demonstrating that culturally-specific programs for Indigenous offenders can reduce recidivism. For example, an evaluation of two male sex offender programs in New Zealand showed that both programs reduced recidivism, but the recidivism rates for Maori's participating in the culturally-specific program were lower than for those participating in the mainstream program. The culturally-specific program was based on the CBT approach, but incorporated a Maori world view by using Maori concepts and terminologies (Bakker, et. el. 1998; Nathan, et. al. 2003).

The results from another study hold promise for effective rehabilitation of violent Indigenous offenders. A New Zealand study utilising the "Good Lives Model" with a risk management approach to treating violent male Maori offenders finds that the therapeutic model is able to shift offender attitude about violence, thereby reducing their violent offending behaviour post-release. Reduced re-offending is achieved by addressing violent behaviour

through incorporating Maori perspectives and the needs of offenders (Whitehead et. al. 2007).

An alternative approach to the culturally-specific CBT approach to rehabilitating Indigenous offenders is strength-based therapy. This approach places emphasis on positive culture and personal identity as a driver of motivation for behavioural change and promotes a holistic view of rehabilitation.

Strength-based therapy underpins the 'Healing Lodge' model found in Canada which addresses offending behaviour in conjunction with personal issues such as trauma experienced from physical and sexual abuse, substance addiction, and emphasises Indigenous heritage (Crutcher & Trevethan.2002).

Research measuring the efficacy of Healing Lodges is extremely limited and inconclusive. One study finds that offenders referred to a Healing Lodge during the early years of its operation are more likely to re-offend within one year of their release than the control group. However, although not statistically significant, recidivism is less prevalent among Healing Lodge participants as the Healing Lodge became more established. The research also identifies other benefits associated with the Healing Lodge. The Healing Lodge is viewed to promote close ties between staff and offenders and facilitating greater involvement of local Aboriginal communities in the reintegration process. Residents take pride in their accomplishments at the Healing Lodge and the use of escorted temporary absences assists with offender reintegration (Trevethan et. al. 2007).

The strength-based approach also underpins the 'Good Lives Model' currently operating in New Zealand. This model takes a holistic approach to Indigenous rehabilitation and places an emphasis on Indigenous cultural identity by including Indigenous perspectives and concepts in program content (Whitehead et. al. 2007).

The Importance of Offender Education and Vocational Training in Rehabilitation

Studies have linked offending to high levels of unemployment suggesting that employment is an important protective factor against offending. Research on offender education suggests that a substantial number of offenders have significant educational, cognitive and health issues that directly affect their prospects of gaining employment (Harlow 2003; Committee on Community Supervision and Desistance from Crime & the National Research Council 2008).

Numerous studies have shown that education and training are linked to positive outcomes for offenders. A study by Steurer, Smith and Tracey (2001) finds that correctional education programs reduce recidivism and increase post-release employment outcomes for ex-offenders. Chavez and Dawe (2007) also conclude in their overview of international studies that successful transition from prison to community requires the incorporation of education,

training and support in rehabilitation programs. A further study by Callan and Gardner (2007) examines the links between offender participation in Queensland correctional Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs and the likelihood of re-admission into custody. After controlling for education, sentence length, and type of offence, participation in VET was found to have a positive impact on reducing recidivism. For instance, they find 32 per cent of offenders who did not participate in VET before their initial release returned to custody within two years, compared with 23 per cent of VET participants who returned to custody during the same period.

In other Australian studies, Graffam and Hardcastle (2007) find that critical factors to achieving employment outcomes for offenders post-release include participation in VET combined with employment assistance and employer willingness to employ ex-offenders. A qualitative study by Giles et. al. (2007) examines factors affecting Western Australian offenders' decision to choose between education, training and work in prisons. Their study finds that offenders who participate in VET courses are more optimistic about their employment prospects compared with those undertaking non-vocational education courses or prison work alone.

Research demonstrates that strong ties to work can help offenders avoid offending (Ryan and Woodard 1987). Furthermore, informal social control associated with work has been found to be more effective than formal sanctions in desisting from offending.⁴ It is clear that offender education and training are important components of offender rehabilitation.

Targeting Gender Differences

Criminological studies of female offenders, mainly in the US and the United Kingdom, have found that female inmates have distinct needs from male offenders (Carlen & Worrall 2004). For instance, female offenders are more likely to be the main care giver for their children prior to imprisonment. Consequently, being in custody has a significant impact on children's lives and their relationship with their mothers. For female offenders with infant children in custody, correctional facilities are not usually designed to accommodate the caring roles of inmates, such as a room for breast-feeding and child friendly visiting areas. Other issues faced by many female inmates are the care arrangements for children while they are in custody and the maintaining of a relationship with their children over an extended period of separation.

Research also demonstrates that female offenders are more likely than male offenders to have an offending pathway involving substance misuse. Female offenders also tend to have had experienced higher rates of victimisation, such as intimate and sexual violence prior to imprisonment than male offenders (Johnson 2004). Reliving the experience of victimisation can be

⁴ Informal work controls can include regulated work hours, employer conditions, performance expectations and professional conduct. Formal criminal justice sanctions to deter criminal offending include fines, orders and custody.

triggered by procedures for monitoring and managing offenders, such as strip searches and urine testing where an officer is required to be present.

The rehabilitative needs of female Indigenous offenders are likely to be different from those of female non-Indigenous offenders. Studies have shown that female Indigenous offenders report higher rates of violent offending as their most serious offence than do female non-Indigenous offenders (Johnson 2004). Drug dependency is found to be common among all female offenders, although female Indigenous offenders tend to have higher levels of alcohol dependency (Loxley & Adams 2009).

A general lack of female Indigenous offender programs has meant little is known about the impact of culturally appropriate and gender specific programs in Australia. The limited literature on female Indigenous offenders highlights a need for further investigation in this area. Particularly relevant is research examining female Indigenous offender experience of incarceration, effective interventions and post-release support (Weiser- Easteal 1992).

Summary

This chapter has highlighted the need to recognise the impact of colonisation on Indigenous peoples in the development and delivery of rehabilitation programs. Colonisation has led to Indigenous deculturation, separation, displacement, discrimination and disconnection from ancestral lands and traditional heritage.

Greater demand on correctional agencies to address Indigenous recidivism means that rehabilitation programs need to be effective and innovative. However, the literature review identifies a lack of information on the efficacy of Indigenous-specific programs, particularly in the Australian context. More investigation is needed to illuminate the characteristics of Indigenous offender programs that produce positive effects.

Some research demonstrates that offender rehabilitation programs based on best-practice principles have a net positive effect on reducing Indigenous offender recidivism. The CBT approach to offender behaviour change has been found to be effective when combined with Indigenous concepts, perspectives and culturally appropriate modes of delivery. The literature also supports re-conceptualising Indigenous offender risks. It supports the need for a holistic approach, rather than relying on exclusive spheres of intervention. This includes attending to both criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs of Indigenous offenders. It is also noted that some researchers have questioned the suitability of group-based cognitive behavioural therapy for Indigenous offenders, as self-disclosure in a group setting can lead to a sense of shame.

The complexity of Indigenous offender needs means that improving the capacity of Indigenous communities is likely to assist with the effective reintegration of Indigenous offenders and contribute to a reduction in Indigenous over-representation in the criminal justice system.

The next chapter provides a demographic and offence profile of Indigenous offenders. This information is provided in order to establish a better understanding of Indigenous offenders in Queensland custody.



Chapter 4

Indigenous Offender Profile in Queensland

Chapter 4

Indigenous Offender Profile in Queensland

This chapter provides an overview of selected characteristics of Queensland Indigenous offenders. It is observed that Indigenous offenders are over-represented in custody and have a different offence profile from non-Indigenous offenders. These differences are likely to impact on the rehabilitation needs of Indigenous offenders.⁵

Indigenous Over-Representation in Queensland Custody

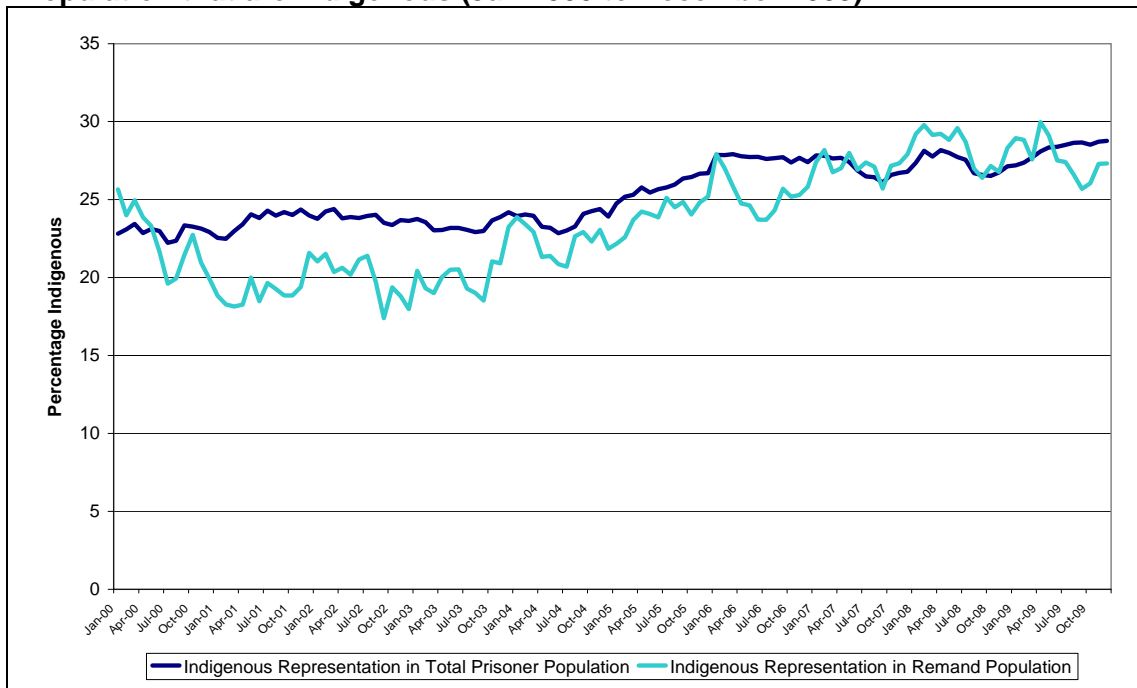
Indigenous persons currently represent three per cent of Queensland's general population, nearly 30 per cent of the prisoner population and approximately 20 per cent of offenders under community supervision. Indigenous over-representation is also evident in imprisonment rates. In 2008, Indigenous persons were 11 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Indigenous persons (ABS 2008). The over-representation of Indigenous offenders in custody is evident in other Australian jurisdictions (ABS 2008).

Figure 4.1 shows how the over-representation of Indigenous offenders has increased since 2000. This increase occurred despite the signing of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice Agreement in 2000 which set out to reduce the rate of Indigenous persons coming into contact with the criminal justice system to at least the same rate as non-Indigenous persons. Indigenous offenders represented approximately 23 per cent of the total prisoner population at December 2000 compared with approximately 29 per cent at December 2010. The Indigenous offender population increased by 59 per cent in the period between December 2000 and December 2009 while the total prisoner population increased by 27 per cent. The over-representation of Indigenous offenders in custody is driven in part by a rise in the number of Indigenous offenders on remand.⁶ Increases in Indigenous over-representation are greatest after June 2004. The number of Indigenous offenders on remand increased by 65 per cent between December 2004 and December 2009 compared with a 24 per cent increase for the total prisoner population.

⁵ The information provided in this chapter is derived from various sources. Some data is admissions-based, while other data refer to a point in time. Admissions-based data produces a higher number of offenders than 'as at' data because it counts the total number of offenders admitted into custody during a certain time period; 'as at' data counts the number of offenders in custody at a certain point in time. Admissions-based data is sensitive to the turnover of short-term offenders entering and exiting custody.

⁶ Readers are advised the remand information provided in this report is likely to over-state the remand population size due to data issues outlined in Chapter two.

Figure 4.1: Proportion of Total Prisoner Population and Total Remand Population that are Indigenous (Jan 2000 to December 2009)



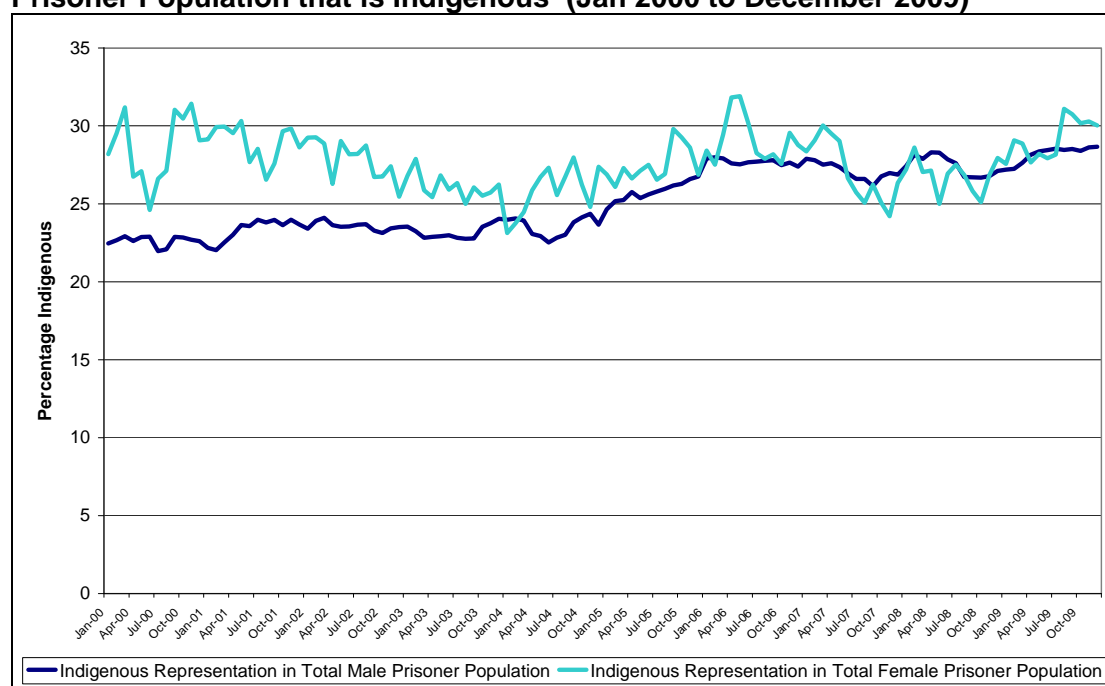
Source: QCS, IOMS ('As at' last day of month)

Gender

More male Indigenous offenders enter custody than female Indigenous offenders. Indigenous male offenders represented approximately 26 per cent of the total prisoner population at December 2009, while female Indigenous offenders represented around 2 per cent. Male non-Indigenous offenders accounted for just under 65 per cent of the prisoner population and approximately 5 per cent were female non-Indigenous.

Figure 4.2 shows some gender difference in Indigenous over-representation over time. A greater proportion of female offenders are Indigenous in the earlier part of this decade compared to male offenders. However, this gender difference has reduced in recent years and 30 per cent of the female offender population are Indigenous, while 29 per cent of the male offender population are Indigenous at December 2009.

Figure 4.2: Proportion of Total Male Prisoner Population and Total Female Prisoner Population that is Indigenous (Jan 2000 to December 2009)



Source: IOMS, QCS ('As at' last day of month)

Age Groups of Offenders

Table 4.1 shows the number of male Indigenous and female offenders in custody at June 2009 by age group. Indigenous offenders in custody tend to be younger than non-Indigenous offenders. Nearly one in three male Indigenous offenders are under 25 years of age (30%) compared with 20 per cent male non-Indigenous offenders. One in four female Indigenous offenders is younger than 25 years compared to 14 per cent of female non-Indigenous offenders.

Of male Indigenous offenders, 40 per cent are aged between 25-34 years compared with 33 per cent of male non-Indigenous offenders. Among female Indigenous offenders, almost half (48%) are aged between 25-34 years, compared with 38 per cent of female non-Indigenous offenders.

Conversely, non-Indigenous offenders are older than Indigenous offenders. Male non-Indigenous and female offenders aged between 45-54 years comprise over 13 per cent in their respective groups. In contrast, Indigenous male offenders in this age group comprise nine per cent and only four per cent of female Indigenous offenders are in this age group.

Indigenous offenders aged over 55 years account for approximately two per cent amongst Indigenous males and females, compared with 8 per cent of male non-Indigenous offenders and 6 per cent of female non-Indigenous offenders.

Table 4.1: Age of Offenders by Gender and Indigenous Status at 30 June 2009

Age group	Male					Female				
	Indigenous	%	Non Indigenous	%	Total	Indigenous	%	Non Indigenous	%	Total
17	12	0.8	24	0.6	36	1	0.9	0	0.0	1
18 - 24	424	29.0	720	19.0	1144	28	24.2	41	13.7	69
25 - 34	524	35.9	1264	33.4	1788	55	47.4	115	38.3	170
35 - 44	341	23.4	976	25.7	1317	26	22.4	86	28.7	112
45 - 54	128	8.8	495	13.1	623	4	3.5	40	13.3	44
55+	31	2.1	312	8.2	343	2	1.7	18	6.0	20
Total	1460		3791		5251	116		300		416

Source: QCS, IOMS

Most Serious Offence

The majority of offenders in custody are incarcerated for relatively serious offences. Nearly 70 per cent of offenders in custody at 30 June 2009 had a most serious offence of homicide and related offences (11%), acts intended to cause injury (21%), sexual assault and related offences (16%), unlawful entry with intent/burglary (13%) or illicit drug offences (9%) (see Table 4.2).

The most serious offence profile of male Indigenous offenders is different to that of male non-Indigenous offenders. Within the different most serious offence categories, male Indigenous offenders are over-represented in the acts intended to cause injury, abduction, public order, road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory and offences against justice procedures categories, while male non-Indigenous offenders are over-represented in the homicide, sexual assault, robbery and extortion, illicit drug, weapons, and explosive property damage offence categories. Male Indigenous offenders are only slightly over-represented in the sexual assault category.

Similar to male Indigenous offenders, female Indigenous offenders are over-represented in acts intended to cause injury and public order offences. They are also over-represented in the dangerous and negligent acts, weapons and property damage categories. The most serious offence profile of female Indigenous offenders is different to the most serious offence profile of female non-Indigenous offenders. Female non-Indigenous offenders are over-represented in the homicide, dangerous and negligent acts, theft, deception and illicit drug most serious offence categories.

Male Indigenous offenders are especially over-represented in offences relating to a breach of justice procedure. Male Indigenous offenders account for approximately 26 per cent of the prisoner population, but 49 per cent of offenders with a breach of justice procedure as their most serious offence. Interestingly, female Indigenous offenders are not over-represented for breaches of justice procedure. However, readers are reminded that information discussed here relates to an offender's most serious offence only. A greater proportion of offenders will have an offence relating to breach of justice procedures than recognised in Table 4.2 (4%).

Further analysis shows that both male and female Indigenous offenders are more likely than non-Indigenous offenders to have a sentence that involves a breach of Domestic Violence Order or a breach of *Bail Act* offence. For sentenced offenders admitted into custody after 30 June 2004, 10 per cent of female Indigenous offenders and one per cent of female non-Indigenous offenders are in custody at 30 June 2009 for offences that include a breach of a Domestic Violence Order. Twenty-five per cent of male Indigenous offenders and 10 per cent of male non-Indigenous offenders are in custody for offences that include a breach of a Domestic Violence Order. The same data analysis also shows that 32 per cent of female Indigenous offenders and 18 per cent of female non-Indigenous offenders have a breach of Bail Act offence at 30 June 2009. The figures for male Indigenous offenders and male non-Indigenous offenders are 17 per cent and 29 per cent respectively.

Table 4.2: Most Serious Offence as at 30 June 2009

Most Serious Offence/Charge	Male (%) Within MSO		Female (%) Within MSO		Total MSO (%)
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	
Homicide and related offences	16.9	75.7	1.3	6.0	10.6
Acts intended to cause injury	40.9	51.5	5.1	2.5	20.9
Sexual assault and related offences	26.6	72.7	0.1	0.6	15.5
Dangerous and negligent acts endangering persons	25.7	65.3	3.0	5.9	1.8
Abduction and related offences	35.0	60.0	0.0	5.0	0.4
Robbery, extortion and related offences	20.4	75.0	2.0	2.7	9.0
Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter	28.0	66.7	1.8	3.5	13.0
Theft and related offences	26.1	57.0	1.9	15.0	3.7
Deception and related offences	3.5	60.8	1.8	33.9	4.0
Illicit drug offences	3.7	87.7	0.4	8.2	9.0
Weapons and explosives offences	0.0	89.5	5.3	5.3	0.3
Property damage and environmental pollution	16.5	77.1	2.8	3.7	1.9
Public order offences	29.6	63.0	3.7	3.7	0.5
Road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences	29.5	64.6	0.7	5.2	4.7
Offences against justice procedures, government security and government operations	48.8	44.5	1.9	4.8	3.7
Miscellaneous offences	14.8	81.5	0.0	3.7	1.0
Total Indigenous Status (%)	25.8	66.9	2.0	5.3	100.0
Total Indigenous Status (n)	1460	3791	116	300	5667

Source: QCS, IOMS

NB: For sentenced prisoners, the most serious offence is the offence for which the prisoner has received the longest sentence in this episode.

For unsentenced prisoners, the most serious charge is the charge which carries the longest statutory maximum penalty.

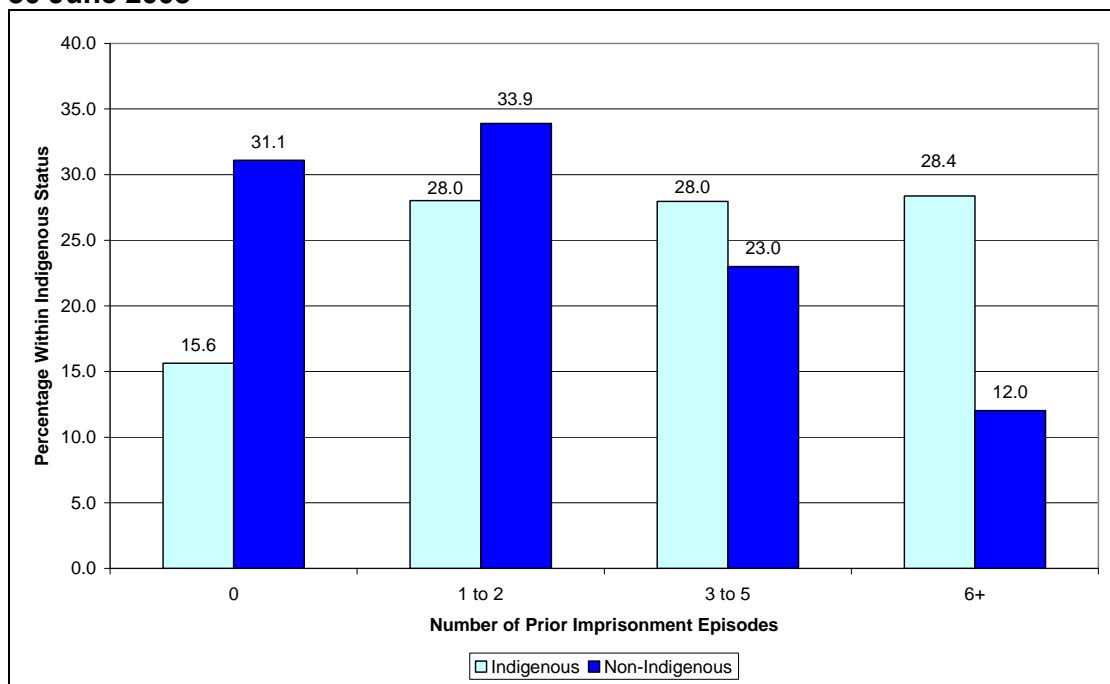
Where sentences or penalties are equal, the most serious offence/charge is the offence/charge with the lowest Australian Standard Offence Classification (ASOC).

Prior Imprisonment History

Imprisonment history is a predictor of future re-offending and is strongly linked with sentencing decisions. Research has demonstrated that offenders with prior imprisonment episodes have an increased chance of receiving a custodial sentence rather than a community-based penalty (Fitzgerald 2009).

Figure 4.3 shows the number of prior imprisonment episodes for offenders in custody at June 2008 by Indigenous status. Indigenous offenders (84%) are more likely than non-Indigenous offenders (69%) to have been previously imprisoned. Indigenous offenders are also much more likely to have been previously imprisoned six or more times (28%) compared with non-Indigenous offenders (12%). Twenty-eight per cent of Indigenous offenders compared with 40 per cent of non-Indigenous offenders have previously been in custody either once or twice before. Twenty-eight per cent of Indigenous offenders compared with 23 per cent of non-Indigenous offenders have been incarcerated three to five times before their current term of imprisonment.

Figure 4.3: Number of Prior Imprisonment Episodes by Indigenous Status as at 30 June 2008



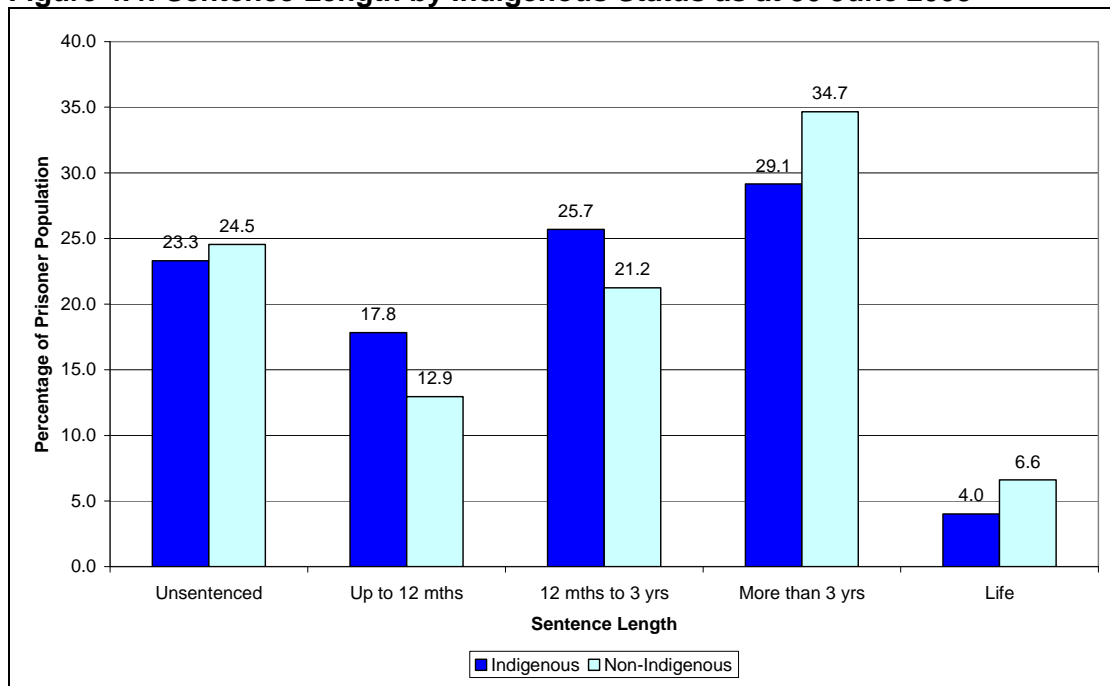
Source: QCS, IOMS

Sentence Length

Indigenous offenders are more likely to have shorter sentences than non-Indigenous offenders. Figure 4.4 shows the sentence profile of offenders in custody in June 2008. Eighteen per cent of Indigenous offenders have a sentence of 12 months or less and 26 per cent have a sentence length of one to three years – 13 per cent and 21 per cent respectively for non-Indigenous offenders. A greater share of non-Indigenous offenders (7%) have a life sentence compared with Indigenous offenders (4%). This finding is consistent with information provided in the previous section which showed that non-

Indigenous offenders are more likely than Indigenous offenders to have a most serious offence relating to homicide offences.⁷

Figure 4.4: Sentence Length by Indigenous Status as at 30 June 2008



⁷ Readers are advised the remand information provided in this report is likely to over-state the unsentenced population size due to data issues outlined in Chapter two.

Summary

This chapter reported on selected characteristics of Queensland Indigenous offenders in custody.

The over-representation of Indigenous offenders in custody recently increased despite the introduction of the Queensland Indigenous Justice Agreement. This suggests that initiatives that aim to reduce Indigenous contact with the criminal justice system have not been highly successful. The recent increase in Indigenous over-representation is driven partly by a growth in the number of Indigenous offenders on remand. This finding demonstrates a need for initiatives to support the diversion of Indigenous offenders from being placed on remand while waiting sentence outcomes. Such initiatives could include bail support, however it is noted that both male and female Indigenous offenders are more likely than non-Indigenous offenders to be in custody for offences that include a breach of *Bail Act*.

Indigenous offenders tend to be younger than non-Indigenous offenders and are more likely to have a longer imprisonment history. These findings indicate that Indigenous offenders commence their criminal career earlier than non-Indigenous offenders and highlight the need for targeted early intervention strategies.

The most serious offence profile of offenders showed that male Indigenous offenders are over-represented for particular types of offences including acts intended to cause injury, abduction, public order, road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory and offences against justice procedures. Female Indigenous offenders are over-represented in the offences relating to acts intended to cause injury, public order, dangerous and negligent acts, weapons and property damage categories. Very few Indigenous offenders have illicit drug offences as their most serious offence.

While male Indigenous offenders are not particularly over-represented in the sexual assault category, it is worth noting that offenders with a most serious offence of sexual assault or related offences represented 16 per cent of the total prisoner population. Both male and female Indigenous offenders are over-represented in acts intended to cause injury. This is significant given that this most serious offence category represents the largest share of the total offender population (21%). These findings highlight the need for criminogenic programs for Indigenous offenders that target violence and sexual offending.



Chapter 5

QCS Offender Rehabilitation Interventions

Chapter 5

QCS Offender Rehabilitation Interventions

This chapter outlines how QCS is responding to the rehabilitation needs of Indigenous offenders and offenders in general. The chapter provides information on how intervention participation is determined and the range of interventions delivered to offenders.

Previous chapters discussed a number of considerations with regard to Indigenous offender rehabilitation. Chapter one highlighted the need to develop culturally-sensitive programs for delivery by culturally-competent facilitators to Indigenous offenders. That chapter also discussed the importance of delivering programs that address the risk of re-offending, respond to the needs of offenders and are responsive to the specific characteristics of offenders. The offence profile of Indigenous offenders provided in Chapter four indicated that programs for Indigenous offenders should attend to violent behaviour and sexual offending. The prevalence of alcohol misuse was referred to in Chapter one. This chapter also highlighted how research has demonstrated that programs utilising the cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) approach and programs that target criminogenic needs are most effective in the reduction of recidivism.

The information provided in this chapter will demonstrate that the QCS rehabilitation framework is underpinned by best-practice principles. QCS provides a range of offender interventions that responds to the criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs of offenders. Interventions include literacy and numeracy courses, offence-specific CBT programs, vocational education and training and reintegration support. Other initiatives aimed at enhancing rehabilitation include employment in prison industries, cultural and religious activities and health services. These interventions are delivered according to offender risks, needs and responsivity.

Offender Assessment and Management Plan⁸

QCS determines the risks, needs and responsivity of offenders through a comprehensive assessment process. All sentenced offenders admitted into custody undergo a Risk of Re-Offending (ROR) assessment to determine their risk of re-offending. The assessment produces a ROR score that ranges from 1 to 22 – where a score of 16 and above is considered to represent a moderate to high risk of re-offending. Offenders with a score of 16 or above are eligible for criminogenic programs.

Offenders in prison under a sentence of more than 12 months are further assessed using the Offender Risk Need Inventory-Revised (ORNI-R). The purpose of the ORNI-R is to assist in the assessment of an offender's need and responsivity. The ORNI-R is used to match offenders with appropriate programs through the consideration of their offence history, motivation,

⁸ Although QCS delivers rehabilitative interventions in the custodial and community setting, this chapter focuses on the management of offenders in custody.

anxiety and intellectual capacity. An ORNI-R may also be administered to offenders with an extensive criminal history or those with sexual or violent offences serving a sentence of 12 months or less. Other specialised assessments may be used to complement the ORNI-R for certain types of offences.

Assessment outcomes inform the development of an Offender Management Plan (OMP). An OMP encompasses short and long-term management strategies for the duration of an offender's time in custody. The focus of an OMP is to detail effectively interventions to achieve the rehabilitative goals identified during the assessment process. Offenders are encouraged to take ownership of their needs and participate in the formulation of the OMP. All offender management is structured by the principle of throughcare which ensures a continuity of support from custody to community.

All offenders in custody have access to adult educational and vocational training and industries, transitional support programs, Advance2work and offender reintegration and support services.

Criminogenic Programs

QCS delivers a range of programs designed to target the criminogenic needs of offenders. These programs include sex offending programs, violent offending programs, substance misuse programs and general offending programs. These programs use motivation and cognitive behavioural approaches and involve sessions that are intense in duration and frequency. Some of these programs have been designed for specific delivery to Indigenous offenders. A summary of offender risk of re-offending programs is provided in Table 5.1 and each of these programs is discussed in more detail below.

Sexual Offending

Sexual offending programs aim to address issues related to sexual offending, such as motivation, arousal and offender accountability. Sexual offenders are referred to these programs after undergoing specialised assessment to determine their risk of sexual re-offending. A comprehensive range of intervention programs for sexual offenders is available, including preparatory programs (Getting Started), medium and high intensity programs (New Directions and Crossroads) and maintenance programs (Staying on Track). Maintenance programs ensure offenders continue to sustain the progress they have achieved from the programs. In addition, the Inclusion Program is available for intellectually low functioning sexual offenders.

The assessment process and delivery of sexual offender programs is monitored by a dedicated Sexual Offender Programs Unit to ensure consistency with best-practice principles. Sexual offending programs are delivered across custodial and Probation and Parole locations.

Table 5.1: Summary of QCS Criminogenic Programs (2009)

Target	Program	Duration	Delivery Site [∞]	Conditions	I [≈]	W [∅]
General Offending	Turning Point: Preparatory	20 hrs	C and P&P	16+ ROR score; ORNI-R assessment; presenting with responsivity barriers to intensive treatment.		
	Making Choices, Moderate Intensity	100 hrs	Custodial	16 + ROR score; ORNI-R assessment; undertaken Cognitive Self Change Program.		√
	Making Choices, Maintenance	24 hrs	C and P&P	16 + ROR score; ORNI-R assessment; Completion of Moderate Intensity program.		
Substance Misuse	Pathways: High Intensity	120 hrs	Custodial	16 + ROR score; ORNI-R assessment; High level of substance misuse and sufficient time to complete; undertaken/ completed other programs or activities recommended.		
	Getting Smart: Moderate Intensity	20 hrs	C and P&P	ORNI-R assessment; High level of substance misuse but not sufficient time to complete <i>Pathways</i> ; undertaken/completed other programs or activities recommended.		
	Smart Recovery Maintenance Groups	24 hrs	C and P&P	16 + ROR score; have 6- 12 months left on their sentence; Completed <i>Getting Smart</i> and <i>Pathways</i> programs.		
	DO IT	24 hrs	C and P&P	Treatment program provided by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation Queensland.		
	Ending Offending: Alcohol Abuse	12 hrs	C and P&P	Indigenous identified; Less than 16 ROR score; offenders with a ROR of 16+ who have insufficient time to complete an intensive program.	√	√
Violence Program	Cognitive Self Change: High intensity	100-120 hrs*	Custodial	16 + ROR score; four or more violent offences across two or more offending periods; recommended referral to <i>Making Choices</i> after completion of this program.		
	Ending Family Violence	20 hrs	C and P&P	Indigenous identified; less than 16 ROR score; offenders with a ROR of 16+ who have insufficient time to complete an intensive program.	√	√
Sexual Offending	Getting Started: Preparatory	24-28 hrs*	C and P&P	Sexual Offending Assessment.		
	Crossroads: High Intensity	234-351 hrs*	Custodial	16 + ROR score; sexual offending assessment at appropriate point in sentence, completed recommended activities.		
	New Directions: Medium Intensity	78-132 hrs*	C and P&P	Sexual offending assessment at appropriate point in sentence; completed activities recommended.		

[∞] "C" Custodial Centre; "P&P" Probation and Parole Office.

[≈] "I" Indigenous-specific program/ service.

[∅] "W" Women-specific program/ service.

* The duration (hours) of participation for each offender is varied and dependant on assessed risk, need, motivation and capacity of offender.

Staying on Track: Maintenance	18-26 hrs*	C and P&P	Completed a sexual offending program		
Inclusion: Intellectually and Socially Low Function Sexual Offender	108 hrs	Custodial	Sexual offending and adult intelligence assessments at appropriate point in sentence; completed recommended activities.		
Indigenous Sexual Offending: Moderate and High Intensity	78-234 hrs*	Custodial	Sexual offending assessment; adult male offender; appropriate point in sentence; completed recommended activities.	√	

QCS also provides a culturally-specific sexual offending program for Indigenous offenders. The Indigenous Sexual Offending program accommodates offenders with both high and moderate risks. The program targets the psychological, social and lifestyle factors associated with sexual offending, and it has been specifically designed to accommodate cultural, custom or language considerations relevant to Indigenous offenders.

This Indigenous specific program is only offered at the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre in northern Queensland, where there is the most demand. In most cases, Indigenous sex offenders in custody at other Queensland centres will be moved to Lotus Glen correctional centre for the duration of the program. The program runs between three and nine months (depending on individual treatment needs and risk levels). Lotus Glen offers a rolling version of the program to accommodate new participants throughout the year, but also offers closed versions of the program, to be completed by the same individuals with similar needs and risk levels.

Substance Misuse

Substance misuse treatment programs are available to offenders in all QCS centres and offenders serving community-based orders. There are three programs treating substance misuse. This includes a high intensity program (Pathways), moderate intensity program (Getting Smart) and a maintenance program (Smart Recovery).⁹

The Ending Offending program is a cognitive behavioural program designed to meet the needs of Indigenous offenders in a culturally appropriate manner. The overall aim of this program is to modify the drinking and offending behaviour of Indigenous offenders. Furthermore, it can prepare Indigenous offenders for additional intensive intervention appropriate to their level of risk of re-offending. An Indigenous Peer Education program is also available in northern Queensland to support early referral and access to substance misuse treatment.

The Ending Offending program is a 12 hour intervention, made up of six sessions, and delivered over three to six weeks (but can be delivered in as little as three days). Due to the short length of the Ending Offending program, Indigenous prisoners in custody for less than 12 months can be enrolled. However, this is dependent on the program demands of high risk offenders (generally in prison under sentence for longer than 12 months). The program is run through a number of Queensland correctional centres and Probation and Parole offices. Indigenous offenders may be transferred to another correctional centre for the program if it is not available where they are serving their sentence.

⁹ The Getting Smart program replaced the Substance Abuse: Preventing and Managing Relapse program in 2007.

Violence

The Cognitive Self Change program addresses the thinking patterns, attitudes and beliefs that support, promote or precipitate violent behaviour. Offenders learn to recognise non-violent ways of responding to situations, feelings, people and events. Offenders who have completed this program can be referred to the Making Choices program to address outstanding needs related to violent offending.

The Ending Family Violence program is a program for Indigenous offenders who have been convicted of offences related to domestic or family violence. Using a cognitive behavioural model, it aims to raise participants' awareness of the impact of violence on the family unit and to investigate options to assist offenders to change their behaviour. The program targets attitudes that support this type of offending, cognitive distortions, anger/hostility issues and awareness of how substance misuse can contribute to family violence. Furthermore, it can prepare Indigenous offenders for additional intensive intervention appropriate to their level of risk of re-offending.

The program is made up of 10 sessions and is generally delivered over five weeks. As with the Ending Offending program, the Ending Family Violence program is delivered over a short timeframe and may therefore be offered to Indigenous offenders in prison under sentence for less than 12 months (but this is dependent on the program demands of high risk offenders). The Ending Family Violence program is available at a number of Queensland correctional centres and Probation and Parole offices. If required, Indigenous offenders can be relocated to a centre where the program is run.

General Offending

Making Choices is available and designed to address aspects of offending, substance misuse and violent behaviour. The program aims to reduce recidivism by developing problem solving skills, techniques to regulate impulses and thinking processes. Making Choices is based on a New Zealand program that incorporates Indigenous concepts within the program content. There are male and female specific versions of this program.

The Making Choices program runs for 100 hours. Dependent on the number of sessions per week, the program runs over ten to 13 weeks. The program is available at all Queensland correctional centres.

Interventions Targeting Offender Needs and Reintegration

QCS delivers interventions that focus on offender needs and post-release reintegration. These interventions aim to address social needs (such as education, health, cultural and welfare issues), complement criminogenic programs and provide transitional support for offenders during their post-release reintegration into the community. They are provided by QCS, or in partnership with Queensland Health or non-government organisations. These interventions are summarised in Table 5.2 and discussed in more detail

below. Some interventions specifically target Indigenous and female offenders.

Education and Vocational Training

QCS delivers nationally-accredited adult vocational education and training (VET) to offenders. The training is provided through a partnership between QCS and the Queensland Department of Education and Training and enables participants to acquire nationally recognised and accredited vocational skills. The training aims to improve work skills and enhance employment prospects of offenders upon release. Eligible offenders have access to VET courses in all QCS centres.

The VET Integrated Program provides offenders with accredited on-the-job training while they are employed in the prison industry. For instance, offenders enrolled in the VET Integrated Program at the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre that participate in the clothing production workshop receive accredited on-the-job training in clothing production. These offenders will attain a Certificate II in Clothing Production upon completion of their VET course.

Offenders serving a sentence longer than 12 months undergo a literacy and numeracy assessment. Offenders assessed as having literacy and numeracy needs are offered the literacy and numeracy program. Secondary distance education is available to offenders wishing to continue their schooling. Centre-based education officers can also assist offenders to access and enrol in tertiary education courses; however the cost for this is borne by offenders.

Advance2Work is an employment assistance service that supports offenders to become work ready and gain and maintain employment post-release. The intervention represents a partnership between QCS and the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation. Advance2Work is delivered in all centres by non-government organisations.

QCS has established a 12 hour operational day for prison industries. In practice, prison work is undertaken in two 6-hour shifts during the day, seven days a week. The 12-hour day enables more offenders to work in prison industry, receive training and also access programs during the time they are not working. This provides offenders with the opportunity to address their offending behaviour through offending programs and support their

Table 5.2: Summary of QCS Offender Needs Interventions (2009)

Target	Program/Service	Delivery Site [∞]	Description	I [≈]	W [∅]
Health	Prison Health Services	Custodial	Mainstream service		
	Prisoner Mental Health	Custodial	Mental Health Assessment		
	Hepatitis C Awareness Project	Custodial	Health Education		
Education and Training	Literacy and Numeracy	Custodial	Education Assessment		
	Secondary Distance Education	Custodial	Education Assessment		
	VET/ Integrated VET	Custodial	Education Assessment		
	Tertiary Education	Custodial	Education Assessment		
	Advance2Work	C and P&P	Education Assessment; completed VET course		
Reintegration	Transitions Release Preparation Program	Custodial	Offender with high risk of re-offending and significant reintegration needs; 6months left of sentence	√	√*
	Transitional Support Service	Custodial	Offenders with lower risk of re-offending and reintegration needs; 6 months left on sentence		
	Offender Reintegration Support Service	C and P&P	Significant reintegration needs		*
	Visitor Transport	C and P&P	Free bus service for family and friends of offenders to and from custodial centres		
	Chaplaincy Service	Custodial	Mainstream and Murri pastoral care	√	
	Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous Support Group	C and P&P			
	Indigenous Elders Visitation Service	Custodial	Support to maintain connection with culture, family and community	√	√
	Wundurra Koolin Men's Group	Custodial	Support cultural identity and family reconnection	√	
	Sexual Assault Counselling Service	Custodial	Individual counselling		√
	Work Pathways: Women Exiting Prison	Custodial	Employment reintegration		√
	Parenting Programs	Custodial	Female offenders with children		√
	Play Groups	Custodial	Female offenders with children		√
	The Sing and Grow Program	Custodial	Female offenders with children		√
	Building on Women's Strength: Mothering in Custody	Custodial	Female offenders with children		√
Childbirth Education Program	Custodial	Antenatal education		√	

[∞] "C" Custodial Centre; "P&P" Probation and Parole Office.

[≈] "I" Indigenous-specific program/ service.

[∅] "W" Women-specific program/ service.

* The *Transitions Release Preparation Program* contains specific content and resources for female and Indigenous offenders.

* This service is also provided by a women-specific non-government organisation.

rehabilitation by gaining vocational skills and experience. All secure correctional centres operate a 12-hour day prison industry.

Health

Health and medical services are delivered by the Offender Health Services Branch within Queensland Health. Health professionals work in correctional centres across the state. Offender Health Services provide a range of services including primary health care, interventions for disease and chronic conditions, prevention and health education programs.

Reintegration

National and international evidence-based research has demonstrated that supporting ex-prisoners to address practical community re-settlement needs is an effective means of reducing recidivism.

QCS provides a structured system of support to ease the transition of offenders from custody into the community. Offender reintegration is framed by the Integrated Transitional Support Model. This model provides transitional support and assistance to offenders according to their level of reintegration need, assessed re-offending risk and their length of sentence. There are three components to this model: the Transitions Release Preparation program, Transitional Support Service and the Offender Reintegration Support Service (ORSS).

The Transitions Release Preparation program provides prisoners with an opportunity to address their practical re-settlement needs prior to release through the provision of information, planning assistance, emotional support and referrals to community-based services. The program targets offenders with a high risk of re-offending. Program content contains culturally and gender specific material for Indigenous and female offenders.

All offenders in the program work through a set of core modules that focus on developing realistic expectations for release, goal setting, problem solving and effective planning. After being assessed for post-release needs, offenders have an opportunity to attend a range of elective workshop modules that are co-facilitated at a local centre level by a relevant non-government organisation or government agency representative. The topics of the elective modules are:

- budgeting;
- Centrelink and ID;
- dealing with changes in relationships;
- employment and training;
- housing;
- managing addiction
- probation and parole;
- and staying healthy.

The key aim of the program is the completion of a personalised Transitions Plan. This plan details post-release goals, ways to achieve these goals and contains contact details of relevant support agencies.

The Transitional Support Service is available to prisoners who are not eligible for the Transitions program, including offenders sentenced to 12 months or less. It involves the completion of a Transitions Needs Assessment and referral to appropriate services. The nature of the referral will depend on the individual offender's level of re-settlement need, length of sentence and available services in the community. The program contains five core and 10 elective modules that focus on addressing the needs of offenders. The program is delivered in modules, making it flexible for offenders to attend over several weeks.

The Integrated Transitional Support Model operates in conjunction with other agency initiatives, such as Advance2work, a post-release employment program.

The ORSS aims to link eligible offenders with services upon their release. QCS provides funding to non-government organisations to deliver services at correctional centres and Probation and Parole offices. The eligible offender develops a post-release plan with ORSS worker within six months of being released. The worker continues to provide post-release support to the offender in the community.

A non-government organisation provides services to specifically assist female offenders. Services available to female offenders aim to assist with parenting and their re-settlement in the community. Examples of services provided by non-government organisations are parenting programs, play groups and counselling services.

Other Indigenous-Specific Interventions

QCS provides a range of initiatives and services specifically aimed at Indigenous offenders. They include the Elders Visitation Scheme, the Murri Chaplaincy, the Wundurra Koolin Men's Group, access to Indigenous Cultural Centres and the provision of Cultural Liaison and Cultural Development Officers.

The Elders Visitation Scheme provides an informal opportunity for Indigenous offenders to maintain positive cultural connections, receive culturally appropriate advice and counsel, and to "yarn" about family issues. The scheme was implemented in response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report, which highlighted the importance of supporting Indigenous offenders to maintain cultural and family linkages. The Murri Chaplaincy service provides spiritual care to Indigenous offenders.

Relationships Australia conducts the Wundurra Koolin Men's Group to assist male Indigenous offenders address personal issues such as cultural identity and family relationships in a supportive environment.

Indigenous Cultural Centres exist at selected correctional centres including Arthur Gorrie, Townsville Women's, Brisbane and Maryborough. A further centre is currently being built at the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre. These purpose-built centres provide indoor and outdoor areas to hold Indigenous events, meetings and activities (such as art workshops and traditional dances). Indigenous Elder visits also take place in these cultural centres. QCS encourages the use of this facility by all prisoners to promote cross-cultural understanding. Correctional centres without a purpose-built facility provide a dedicated area for Indigenous offenders to have visits from Elders and conduct other cultural activities such as National Aboriginal Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week.

Indigenous Cultural Liaison and Cultural Development Officers are employed by QCS to support Indigenous offenders. These officers provide culturally-relevant information and referrals to Indigenous offenders. They also co-ordinate centre activities and facilitate the Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence programs where needed.

Finally, many correctional centres have implemented initiatives to respond to the local needs of Indigenous offenders at the centre level. Some examples of these initiatives include working with local Indigenous Justice Groups to deter Indigenous youth from offending in the community, promoting healthy cooking skills and eating behaviours to reduce diabetes among Indigenous offenders, and conducting Indigenous prisoner induction sessions.

Delivery Capacity

QCS is committed to the Department of Community Safety's Indigenous Priority Statement 2009–2013 Action Plan (Department of Community Safety 2009) and aims to improve the service delivery and availability of programs. In recent times, cross-government partnerships have enhanced the delivery and availability of Indigenous programs, leading to specific training for program staff to expand delivery of the Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence programs in four remote far north Queensland Indigenous communities. Furthermore, a new program governance model for the delivery of programs was implemented in Queensland correctional centres in January 2008. Features of this enhanced model include oversight by the QCS criminogenic program steering committee and dedicated program delivery staff (who have undergone mandatory accredited training).

Whilst QCS is committed to offender rehabilitation, readers should be mindful that the ability of QCS to deliver rehabilitation interventions is influenced by a range of factors including intervention demand, available funding and the existence of qualified supervision staff, program facilitators and service providers. QCS also recognises that offenders have a significant role in their own rehabilitation. Rehabilitation interventions are most effective when offenders are motivated to change. In addition, a number of offender-based factors can effect eligibility for programs and other types of interventions.

These include offender and interfamily association issues, acute mental health problems and responsivity issues.

The importance of implementing whole-of-government community-based initiatives in order to support Indigenous offender rehabilitation efforts was highlighted in chapter one.

Summary

QCS Indigenous offender rehabilitation is consistent with best-practice literature. Indigenous offenders have access to both criminogenic and non-criminogenic interventions. Indigenous participation in criminogenic programs is determined by their level of risk of re-offending, factors that have influenced offending behaviour and their assessed responsivity. A range of validated assessments including the ROR and ORNI-R assist in the determination of offender risk of re-offending, need and responsivity. Offender management is underpinned by the principle of throughcare which emphasises the importance of continuity of care from custody to community.

While all QCS programs have been developed in a way to enhance participant relevance and participation, some Indigenous-specific programs have been developed to ensure that Indigenous offenders have access to programs that respond to their specific cultural needs. Eligible Indigenous offenders have access to the Indigenous Sexual Offending program and the Indigenous-specific Ending Offending program and Ending Family Violence program. The development of these programs reflects the offence profile of Indigenous offenders and it is noted that the later programs are short in duration which facilitates their implementation in the community context. Eligible Indigenous offenders also have access to all mainstream criminogenic programs including those targeting sexual offending, general offending, violent offending and substance misuse. All criminogenic programs offered by QCS are framed by the CBT approach.

Criminogenic programs are supported by non-criminogenic programs and interventions that focus on the educational, vocational, health and integration needs of offenders. A range of Indigenous-specific services and facilities such as the Indigenous Elders Visiting Scheme, access to Indigenous Cultural Liaison and Cultural Development Officers and Indigenous Cultural Centres provide further support to Indigenous offenders. The reintegration of Indigenous offenders is facilitated by community-based organisations such as Indigenous Community Justice Groups.



Chapter 6

Indigenous Offender Participation in Rehabilitation Interventions

Chapter 6

Indigenous Offender Participation in Rehabilitation Interventions

This chapter shows the number and completion rates of offenders that have participated in various QCS rehabilitation interventions. Readers are advised that the information presented in this chapter is likely to underreport the number of offenders involved in rehabilitation interventions due to data issues discussed in Chapter two.¹⁰

Sexual Offending Programs

Table 6.1 shows the completion number and rate of all sexual offending programs (Getting Started; Crossroads; New Directions; Staying on Track; Inclusion and Indigenous Sexual Offending) for 2006-07 to 2008-09 by Indigenous status. The figures include the number of offenders completing these programs in custody and in the community.

Male Indigenous offender enrolments in the Indigenous sexual offending and mainstream sexual offending programs have steadily increased since 2006-07. In 2006-07, there are 30 Indigenous offender enrolments, followed by 65 in 2007-08 and 82 in 2008-09. A significant proportion of Indigenous sex offenders completed their program. In 2006-07, 73 per cent of Indigenous offenders completed the program, 94 per cent completed in 2007-08 and 84 per cent completed in 2008-09.

The number of non-Indigenous offender enrolments in sexual programs is higher than Indigenous offender enrolments. In 2006-07, there are 268 male non-Indigenous offenders enrolled in sexual offending programs, followed by 250 and 335 in the subsequent financial years. A significant proportion of program participants completed their program – with 88 per cent completing in 2006-07, 90 per cent completing in 2007-08 and 84 per cent completing in 2008-09.

Overall, there is little difference between the completion of sexual offending programs between Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. The combined completion rate across the three year period for Indigenous participants in sexual offending programs is 86 per cent compared to 89 per cent for non-Indigenous participants.

Further analysis shows that the completion rate for Indigenous offenders participating in Indigenous-specific sexual offending programs is higher than the completion rate for Indigenous offenders completing non-Indigenous

¹⁰ It is recognised that meeting program demand is a reflection of QCS's ability to deliver treatment and rehabilitation services to offenders. Whilst this chapter provides data on program enrolments, the number of offenders eligible for programs has not been used due to data reliability issues. Furthermore, program eligibility in itself is complex and can be impacted by other factors (discussed in chapter 5). Processes have been put in place to improve the reliability of program data entered into IOMS and to improve QCS's delivery capacity (see chapter 5).

specific programs. In 2006-07, completions for the Indigenous sexual offending program is 78 per cent compared with 71 per cent for Indigenous offenders enrolled in mainstream sexual offending programs. In 2007-08 and 2008-09 completion rates for the Indigenous sexual offending program is 100 per cent. This compares to a completion rate of 93 per cent for Indigenous offenders enrolled in mainstream sexual offending programs in 2007-08 and 82 per cent in 2008-09. This finding suggests that culturally-specific programs delivered to Indigenous offenders encourage completion, however without a larger Indigenous sample, no firm conclusions can be drawn in this respect.¹¹

Table 6.1: Sexual Offending Programs – Male Offenders

	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
Complete	22	73%	237	88%	61	94%	221	88%	69	84%	302	90%
Incomplete	8	27%	31	12%	4	6%	29	12%	13	16%	33	10%
Total Enrolments	30		268		65		250		82		335	

Source: QCS, IOMS

Violent Offending Program

Table 6.2 shows the number and completion rate of male offenders participating in the Cognitive Self Change – High Intensity Violent Offending program between 2007-08 and 2008-09 by Indigenous status.¹² Enrolment numbers for male Indigenous and male non-Indigenous offenders increased slightly after the program's introduction – increasing from four in 2007-08 to five in 2008-09 for Indigenous offenders and from eight to 13 for non-Indigenous offenders over the same time period. A more extended period of time in which to measure program enrolments and completions rates is required if trends are to be identified.

Table 6.2: Violent Offending Programs – Male Offenders

	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
Complete	0	- %	0	- %	3	75%	8	100%	2	40%	11	85%
Incomplete	0	- %	0	- %	1	25%	0	0%	3	60%	2	15%
Total Enrolments	0		0		4		8		5		13	

Source: QCS, IOMS

¹¹ No analysis of statistical significance was able to be conducted on these data. Therefore, there is no confirmation that variance in completion rates between populations is not by chance.

¹² The Cognitive Self-Change – High Intensity Violence Offending Program was introduced by QCS in 2007.

General Offending Programs

General offending programs include Turning Point: Preparation, Making Choices: Moderate Intensity, Maintenance, Anger Management and Cognitive Skills programs.¹³ These programs aim to change offender behaviour by developing skills in cognitive thinking processes, self regulation of moods and attitudes and interpersonal communication skills.

Table 6.3 shows a downward trend for the number of males enrolled in general offending programs. In 2006-07 there are 72 Indigenous offender enrolments, followed by 55 in 2007-08 and 60 in 2008-09. The number of non-Indigenous offender enrolments in each year declined from 188 in 2006-07 to 123 in 2008-09. This decline partly reflects the phasing out of the Anger Management and Cognitive Skills programs.

The completion rate for general offending programs fluctuated for both Indigenous male and male non-Indigenous participants. Seventy-one per cent of Indigenous offenders participating in general offending programs completed their program in 2006-07, compared to 60 per cent in 2007-08 and 72 per cent in 2008-09. Only half of non-Indigenous offending participating in general offending programs completed their program in 2006-07. This increased to 84 per cent in 2007-08 and decreased to 79 per cent in 2008-09.

Overall, the completion rate for Indigenous offenders (68%) compared to non-Indigenous offenders (69%) participating in general offending programs in 2006-07 to 2008-09 is similar.

Table 6.3: General Offending Programs – Male Offenders

	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
Complete	51	71%	94	50%	33	60%	118	84%	43	72%	97	79%
Incomplete	21	29%	94	50%	22	40%	22	16%	17	28%	26	21%
Total Enrolments	72		188		55		140		60		123	

Source: QCS, IOMS

General offending programs available to female offenders include Making Choices - Women's, Turning Point Preparation, Anger Management and Cognitive Skills programs.

Significantly fewer female offenders participated in general offending programs than male offenders, but more female Indigenous participants completed their program than female non-Indigenous participants. The lower number of female participants will reflect the relatively low number of female offenders in custody.

¹³ The Anger Management and Cognitive Skills programs were phased out by 2008 and replaced with the Making Choices programs.

Table 6.4 shows that 32 female Indigenous offenders participated in general offending programs in 2006-07, followed by 8 in 2007-08 and 19 in 2008-09. This is consistently higher than the number of female non-Indigenous participants which numbered 17 in 2006-07, five in 2007-08 and 13 in 2008-09.

The completion rate for general offending programs for female Indigenous participants during 2006-07 and 2007-08 is higher than that for non-Indigenous participants and relatively similar in 2008-09. Sixty-three per cent of female offenders participating in general offending programs in 2006-07 completed their program compared to 41 per cent for female non-Indigenous participants. The completion rate for female Indigenous participants in 2007-08 is 75 per cent compared to 40 per cent for female non-Indigenous participants, while the completion rate in 2008-09 is similar for female Indigenous participants (89%) and female non-Indigenous participants (92%).

Table 6.4: General Offending Programs – Female Offenders

	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
Complete	20	63%	7	41%	6	75%	2	40%	17	89%	12	92%
Incomplete	12	37%	10	59%	2	25%	3	60%	2	11%	1	8%
Total Enrolments	32		17		8		5		19		13	

Source: QCS: IOMS

Substance Misuse Programs

Substance misuse programs include Pathways, Getting Smart, Substance Abuse: Preventing and Managing Relapse, Smart Recovery and Do It programs. These programs are not Indigenous-specific and vary in intensity to suit the needs of offenders.

Table 6.5 shows that male Indigenous offender enrolment numbers in substance misuse programs increased steadily between 2006-07 and 2008-09, while completion rates decreased. In 2006-07 there are 64 male Indigenous enrolments, compared to 81 in 2007-08 and 198 in 2008-09. The completion rates decline from 84 per cent 2006-07 to 79 per cent in 2007-08 and 67 per cent in 2008-09. Information about factors that may have contributed to decreased completion numbers is not available in IOMS.

Significantly more male non-Indigenous offenders than male Indigenous offenders participate in substance misuse programs. This is partly explained by the greater number of non-Indigenous offenders in custody and the higher likelihood of non-Indigenous offenders to misuse illicit drugs than Indigenous offenders.

The number of male non-Indigenous offender enrolments in substance misuse programs doubled in 2008-09 (657) when compared with enrolments in 2006-07 (323) and 2007-08 (321).

The completion rates for male non-Indigenous participants in substance misuse programs remained relatively stable between 2006-07 and 2008-09 – with approximately three in every four participants completing their program. The combined total substance misuse program completion rate during the three year period for male Indigenous participants is 73 per cent compared to 77 per cent for male non-Indigenous offenders.

Table 6.5: Substance Misuse Programs, Male Offenders

	2006-07		2007-08		2008-09							
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous						
Complete	54	84%	238	74%	64	79%	258	80%	132	67%	502	76%
Incomplete	10	16%	85	26%	17	21%	63	20%	66	33%	155	24%
Total Enrolments	64		323		81		321		198		657	

Source: QCS, IOMS

Female offenders participate in substance misuse programs including Getting Smart, Do It, Substance Misuse, Preventing and Managing Relapse and Smart Recovery.

Table 6.6 shows that similar to male participation, the number of females participating in substance misuse programs increased between 2006-07 and 2008-09. There are eight female Indigenous offender enrolments in substance misuse programs in 2006-07, nine in 2007-08, and 20 in 2008-09. In comparison, female non-Indigenous offenders have 30 enrolments in 2006-07, 51 in 2007-08 and 63 in 2008-09.

The completion rate for female Indigenous participants declined over time, while increasing for female non-Indigenous participants, however Indigenous offender numbers for completion/incompletion per year were too small to make any significant inferences. The combined total completion rate for female Indigenous participants for the three years is 60 per cent, compared with 76 per cent of female non-Indigenous participants.

Table 6.6: Substance Misuse Programs, Female Offenders

	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
Complete	7	88%	16	53%	5	56%	41	80%	10	50%	52	83%
Incomplete	1	12%	14	47%	4	44%	10	20%	10	50%	11	17%
Total Enrolments	8		30		9		51		20		63	

Source: QCS, IOMS

Indigenous Offender Programs

Indigenous-specific programs include the Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence programs. These programs address offending behaviour such as alcohol misuse and family violence by using Indigenous-specific content and resources. These programs are mainly delivered to offenders under community supervision and are low intensity in format. A small number of non-Indigenous offenders participated in these programs due to cultural immersion or cultural similarities (e.g. offenders from Papua and New Guinea).

Table 6.7 shows that the number of Indigenous male offender enrolments in Indigenous-specific programs is considerably higher than other programs offered by QCS. In 2006-07, there are 249 enrolments compared to 371 in 2007-08 and 431 in 2008-09.

The completion rate for male offenders participating in Indigenous-specific programs varies over time – ranging from 68 per cent in 2007-08 to 77 per cent in 2006-07. The combined total completion rate for male Indigenous offender enrolments for the three year period is 72 per cent.

Table 6.7: Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence Programs, Male Offenders

	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
Complete	191	77%	6	86%	252	68%	4	67%	313	73%	6	75%
Incomplete	58	23%	1	14%	119	32%	2	33%	118	27%	2	25%
Total Enrolments	249		7		371		6		431		8	

Source: QCS, IOMS

Table 6.8 also shows that the number of female Indigenous enrolments in Indigenous-specific programs was higher than that for other types of programs. In 2006-07, there are 22 female Indigenous enrolments compared to 56 in 2007-08 and 81 in 2008-09. The completion rates for these participants vary considerably over time, reducing from 91 per cent in 2006-07 to 68 per cent in 2007-08. The completion rate increased to 73 per cent in

2008-09. The combined total completion rate for female Indigenous offenders participating in Indigenous-specific programs for the three year period is 74 per cent. This is similar to the male Indigenous completion rate at 72 per cent.

Table 6.8: Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence Programs, Female Offenders

	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
Complete	20	91%	3	100%	38	68%	2	40%	59	73%	1	100%
Incomplete	2	9%	0	0%	18	32%	3	60%	22	27%	0	0%
Total Enrolments	22		3		56		5		81		1	

Source: QCS, IOMS

Literacy and Numeracy Program

QCS provides literacy and numeracy courses which assist offenders further to access other courses or programs during custody and which aim to contribute to successful reintegration post-release. Individual offenders may enrol in more than one literacy or numeracy course in any given financial year.

Indigenous offender enrolments in literacy and numeracy courses have increased since 2006-07. As a proportion of all enrolments, Indigenous offender enrolments account for 11 per cent in 2006-07, 12 per cent in 2007-08 and 15 per cent in 2008-09.

Table 6.9 shows that Indigenous offenders represent 10 per cent of total male enrolments in literacy and numeracy courses in 2006-07 compared to 11 per cent in 2007-08 and 13 per cent in 2008-09. Female Indigenous representation in literacy and numeracy courses is higher than male Indigenous representation and increases over time. In 2006-07 female Indigenous offender enrolments comprise 17 per cent of all female offender enrolments. This grows to 22 per cent in 2007-08 and 23 per cent in 2008-09.

It is important to note that although Indigenous offender participation in literacy and numeracy courses has increased over time, such offenders are still under-represented in these courses. Male Indigenous offenders account for 13 per cent of male enrolments in 2008-09, but represent 28 per cent of the total male prisoner population at 30 June 2009. Female Indigenous offenders account for 23 per cent of female enrolments in 2008-09 compared to 28 per cent of the total female prisoner population at 30 June 2009.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Correctional Centres

QCS provides training and employment in a variety of industries to enhance post-release employment opportunities for offenders. All vocational education and training (VET) delivered by QCS are accredited.

The number of Indigenous offenders participating in VET has increased significantly (see Table 6.9). Nearly 1,500 male Indigenous offenders participated in VET in 2006-07, compared to 1,933 in 2007-08 and 2,225 in 2008-09. Male Indigenous offenders also account for a greater proportion of total male VET enrolments over time – increasing from 16 per cent in 2006-07 to 21 per cent in 2008-09. Conversely, the number of male Indigenous offenders participating in the Integrated VET has diminished over time.

The number of female Indigenous offenders participating in VET is consistent throughout 2006-07 and 2007-08 financial years (121 and 129 respectively), but nearly doubles for the 2008-09 financial year (251). The representation of female Indigenous offenders in VET as a proportion of total female participation has also grown, increasing from eight per cent in 2006-07 to 17 per cent in 2008-09. No female Indigenous offenders participated in Integrated VET in the 2006-07 to 2008-09 period.

Again, the representation of Indigenous offenders (both male and female) in VET is lower than their representation in the total prisoner population.

Table 6.9: Indigenous Enrolments in Literacy, Numeracy and VET Units

	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male	
	(n)	% Total Female	(n)	% Total Male	(n)	% Total Female	(n)	% Total Male	(n)	% Total Female	(n)	% Total Male
Literacy & Numeracy	106	17%	1,001	10%	110	22%	1,076	11%	262	23%	554	13%
VET	121	8%	1,446	16%	129	13%	1,933	17%	251	17%	2,255	21%
Integrated VET	0	0%	169	17%	0	0%	104	16%	0	0%	127	12%

Source: QCS

N.B. The figures represent the number of and proportions of enrolments and not offenders during each financial year. Offenders can enrol in more than one unit or module.

Offender Employment

Advance2work is an employment assistance service that supports sentenced offenders to become work ready and to gain employment after their release.

Advance2work provides assistance in three stages. Stage one involves offenders undertaking a course to prepare them for post-release employment. Offenders from this group progress to stage two, where they are assisted to gain employment and access other services to support their reintegration in the community. In stage three, offenders with employment are further supported for a minimum of 13 weeks.

Table 6.10 shows that the number of male Indigenous offenders participating in stage one of Advance2Work decreased slightly in the period 2006-2008 (920) to 2008-09 (841). The proportion of stage one Advance2Work participants that are male Indigenous also decreased slightly, but importantly male Indigenous offenders are not underrepresented in this stage of the intervention.

The number of female Indigenous offenders participating in stage one of Advance2Work steadily increased from 91 in 2006-07 to 126 in 2008-09. Female Indigenous offenders are also not under-represented in this intervention with approximately 30 per cent of total female participants identifying as Indigenous across the three years.

Not all offenders involved in stage one of Advance2Work progress to stages two and three. Significantly, Indigenous offenders are less likely to progress to these stages than non-Indigenous offenders. For example, further analysis shows that over the three year period, of all offenders in stage one, 15 per cent (429) of Indigenous offenders and 27 per cent (1,776) of non-Indigenous offenders advance to employment in stage two.

Table 6.10: Advance2Work Participation

Indigenous Offender Participation in <i>Advance2work</i> by Gender												
<i>Advance2Work</i>	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Stage 1	91	29	920	34	107	29	831	29	126	30	841	30
Stage 2	3	10	147	23	9	12	131	16	13	20	126	22
Stage 3	3	12	116	23	5	10	95	16	10	28	75	18

Source: QCS, IOMS

N.B. The figures represent the proportion of offenders during each financial year.

Reintegration

The Transitions program provides offender reintegration support to offenders to assist with their transition from custody into the community. The following two tables provide information on participation in the core modules of the Transitions program (excluding elective modules).¹⁴

Table 6.11 shows that the number of male Indigenous offenders who participated in the core modules of the Transitions program fluctuated in the period 2006-07 to 2008-09. Participation increased from 60 in 2006-2008 to 76 in 2007-08 and then decreased to 53 in 2008-09. While participation numbers varied, the proportion of Indigenous participants completing the core modules steadily increases from 55 per cent in 2006-07 to 68 per cent in 2008-09.

¹⁴ A substantial number of offenders have enrolled in the electives component of the Transition Program. This information is not provided as it has not been recorded reliably in IOMS.

The number of male non-Indigenous offenders participating in the core modules of the Transitions program is greater than that for male Indigenous offenders. This difference is particularly notable in 2008-09 where 238 male non-Indigenous offenders participated in the core modules of the program compared to 53 male Indigenous offenders. The completion rate for male non-Indigenous participants is also higher compared with male Indigenous participants. Again, this is particularly the case in 2008-09 where 83 per cent of male non-Indigenous participants completed the core modules compared to 68 per cent of male Indigenous participants.

Table 6.11: Transitions Program - Male Offenders

	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
Complete	60	55%	123	68%	76	62%	139	61%	53	68%	238	83%
Incomplete	49	45%	59	32%	46	38%	89	39%	25	32%	49	17%
Total Enrolments	109		182		122		228		78		287	

Source: QCS, IOMS

The Transitions program was made available to female offenders in 2007. Table 6.12 shows that very few female offenders have since participated in the program since its introduction. Twelve Indigenous and seven non-Indigenous offenders participated in 2007-08 and three Indigenous and 13 non-Indigenous offenders participated in 2008-09. Completion rate data should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of female participants.

Table 6.12: Transitions Program - Female Offenders

	2006-07				2007-08				2008-09			
	Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous		Indigenous		Non-Indigenous	
Complete	0	- %	0	- %	4	33%	5	71%	3	100%	11	85%
Incomplete	0	- %	0	- %	8	67%	2	29%	0	0%	2	15%
Total Enrolments	0		0		12		7		3		13	

Source: QCS, IOMS

Summary

This chapter provides information on the number of and completion rate for offenders participating in various QCS rehabilitation interventions for the period 2006-07 to 2008-09.

Overall, there is high variability in the number of offenders participating in different interventions and their associated completion rates across time, gender and Indigenous status. Participation is greatest for literacy and numeracy courses, VET and core modules of the Transitions program for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders. However, Indigenous offenders are under-represented in literacy and numeracy courses and VET. This is significant given that the Indigenous population is characterised by poor access to education and training which is a risk factor for involvement in crime (see Chapter one). Although Indigenous offenders are just as likely to participate in Advance2Work as non-Indigenous offenders, they are less likely to gain employment after their release from custody. These findings suggest that greater effort is required to involve Indigenous offenders in literacy and numeracy courses and VET during their time in custody and to assist these offenders to find post-release employment. This action is not insignificant given that a proportion of Indigenous offenders will return to communities where employment opportunities are especially low. The findings also highlight the importance of a multi-tiered, inter-agency response to Indigenous rehabilitation.

In relative terms, a significant number of Indigenous offenders participated in and completed the Indigenous-specific Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence programs. Furthermore, the number of Indigenous offenders involved in these programs increased considerably in the years 2007-08 and 2008-09 and the proportion of offenders completing these programs is slightly higher than the proportion of Indigenous offenders completing the general offending programs offered to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders. While these findings are encouraging, it is noted that the Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence programs are short in duration and best-practice literature suggests that criminogenic programs should involve sessions that are intense in duration and frequency (see Chapter one).

Importantly, this chapter showed that the completion rates for male Indigenous offenders participating in the male Indigenous-specific sexual offending program are slightly higher than the completion rates for male Indigenous offenders participating in mainstream sexual offender programs. This finding provides some evidence to suggest that culturally responsive programs can increase program completion rates for Indigenous offenders.

Finally, this chapter focused on the number and completion of various QCS interventions. Further research is required to measure the impact of these interventions on recidivism.



Chapter 7

Perspectives on Indigenous Offender Rehabilitation Interventions

Chapter 7 Perspectives on Indigenous Offender Rehabilitation Interventions

This chapter summarises some of the key observations made by participants involved in the QCS Indigenous Service Delivery Review (ISDR) regarding Indigenous offender rehabilitation. ISDR participants discussed how the social and economic disadvantage can contribute to Indigenous offending and some of the barriers that impede Indigenous offender participation in rehabilitation interventions and post-release reintegration. Ways to enhance Indigenous offender participation and rehabilitation strategies as offered by ISDR participants are also outlined.¹⁵

Indigenous Offender Perspectives on Rehabilitation Programs

The ISDR involved asking Indigenous offenders about their experience of participating in QCS offender programs. Most Indigenous offenders reported that participating in a program is a positive experience. They stated that they liked participating in offender programs because they provide an opportunity for self-improvement, to develop communication skills and access employment. Many offenders also reported that program participation enabled them to reflect on problems relating to their life, relationships and offending.

Indigenous ISDR participants remarked that the completion of a program is more feasible in custody than in the community. One Indigenous offender referred to the advantages of completing a program in custody:

...changing my life around and...getting courses done [in prison] that you could not do on the outside 'cause you have children and busy with them most of the time.

The above quote illustrates how program participation in custody does not have to compete with the social responsibilities and priorities that impact on offenders when living in the community.

Some male Indigenous offenders reported that participation in a program assisted them to identify their personal problems in a broader social context. This is evident in the following quote:

I learnt more about myself and what problems I have in the community and how to address my problems.

Frequently reported reasons for participating in programs include compliance with court orders, demonstrating good behaviour and occupying time. These views are apparent in the following:

¹⁵ See Chapter two for an overview of the methods used for the QCS Indigenous Service Delivery Review. The information provided in this chapter is not intended to represent an evaluation of QCS programs and services or other community-based services offered by government agencies and non-government organisations.

[The] men's programs help me in court...

[Participation will] better my chances of getting parole.

...keeps my mind off [being in] jail.

The above quotes highlight how program participation can be viewed as a way to negotiate the correctional system.

A small number of offenders expressly stated they did not believe offender programs are relevant to them as they do not attend to cultural and social differences. The perceived lack of cultural-relevance is evident in the following:

[Programs] are not cultural.

Core programs are usually facilitated by people who have never been in jail or in the predicament [described in] the program...It's hard to listen to a facilitator who is running a course by the textbook, not experience.

Living and growing up on a mission, I find that non-Indigenous [people] have no [understanding] of me, my upbringing, the way I think, feel and act.

Not surprisingly, these offenders identified the need for more Indigenous-specific programs and/or the culturally-competent delivery of programs by non-Indigenous facilitators.

Providing Culturally-Sensitive Indigenous Programs

The need for culturally-sensitive programs and services for Indigenous offenders was also identified by other IDRS participants including QCS staff and community-based service providers. These views are consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter one.

Best-practice literature suggests that culturally-appropriate delivery of programs must take into account factors such as language, protocols around conduct and concepts such as time, gender, self and community. Some participants reported that non-Indigenous facilitators of mainstream offending programs do not understand that the world views of Indigenous offenders may differ from Western world views. A Custodial Officer from the central region explained:

[Indigenous] needs are different...language plays an important role. We are not mindful enough how language affects programs. [Offenders] don't understand wording and concepts delivered by white facilitators. Concepts...based on Western culture.

Some Indigenous offenders acknowledged that they had difficulty with the concepts and modes of delivery used in QCS offender programs. For instance it was stated that:

Our culture isn't the same as white man.

Where we come from and our background, this is who we are, an oral culture therefore it's hard for some [Indigenous people] to grasp material [in the program].

An expected form of participation in mainstream offending programs is to self-disclose in a group setting. However, ISDR participants acknowledged that this type of social interaction is not necessarily culturally appropriate for Indigenous offenders. It was observed that many Indigenous offenders associate self-disclosure with 'shaming' or being reprimanded. This is evident in the following:

Putting them on a pedestal is a shaming thing to Indigenous people.

Indigenous prisoners don't like to be put on show...

Indigenous offenders also reported that they felt shame and embarrassment when talking about themselves in a group session. This is apparent in the following comments made by Indigenous offenders involved in the ISDR:

Sitting with other people, it's shameful...

A lot of us have a low self esteem and we get shame and won't ask questions when we don't understand.

In addition, disclosing past traumas and personal difficulties in a group setting compounds feelings of shame, as an Indigenous male offender explains:

Having to share so much with strangers about my past childhood [makes it] hard to cap the internal can of worms.

Some participants believed that the number of Indigenous program facilitators employed by QCS should be increased in order to assist with culturally-sensitive program delivery. As one Custodial Officer commented:

[Indigenous] offenders will relate better to Indigenous facilitators, they can adapt the program to suit the learning styles [of offenders].

The greater likelihood of Indigenous facilitators being able to connect with Indigenous offenders due to shared world views and experiences was also frequently observed by Indigenous offenders participating in the ISDR. This is apparent in the following comments which emphasise not just cultural understanding, but cultural empathy:

Someone with an Indigenous background will find it easier to approach another Indigenous [person] about sensitive issues

related to culture...and someone from the [local Indigenous] community can talk about what goes on...

[Indigenous facilitators] relate to our pain, suffering, hardship, if not been there or have family members who find life hard.

...it's easier to listen to an Indigenous person talking about cultural issues than coming from the white man.

They know black fella's background if they come from a community they should understand there's a bigger picture to our problems.

Indigenous facilitators were also perceived to be in a better position to have access to and share knowledge about Indigenous heritage and language. One Indigenous offender commented:

Some of us grew up not knowing about our backgrounds and beliefs...Indigenous facilitators would know culture and history.

It was understood that Indigenous facilitators could 'translate' Western world views and program concepts in a way that was meaningful to Indigenous participants. This is evident in the following:

...most Indigenous can't read and write or [have a] problem understanding English...[Indigenous facilitators] can explain it and word it appropriately..

QCS staff and service providers also acknowledged the role Indigenous staff have in liaising between Indigenous offenders and mainstream services:

Murri faces in counselling are important as many Indigenous offenders don't trust non-Indigenous counsellors and men can't talk to women counsellors about 'men's business'.

Although ISDR participants recognised that there are several advantages associated with the delivery of offender programs by Indigenous facilitators, it was also acknowledged that it could be difficult to recruit and retain suitably qualified Indigenous persons to implement rehabilitation interventions. A number of strategies was suggested as ways to develop the skills of Indigenous staff and overcome the limited availability of Indigenous program facilitators. This includes the involvement of local Indigenous community members in program delivery and developing the capacity of existing Cultural Liaison Officers (CLOs) employed by QCS.

The possible role community members could play in the delivery of offender programs is evident in the following:

We need a good mix of people to deliver services and programs, that is, men and women. Probation and Parole don't have any male or Indigenous staff...we use local Indigenous people to help co-facilitate the program and to work with offenders while they are on an order.

Involve an Elder in programs, as a support in program sessions to make the delivery more [culturally] appropriate.

Have a mentoring system with [sic] older offenders talk to younger Indigenous offenders about the positive effects of programs.

The possible role CLOs could have in program delivery and co-ordination is apparent in the following comments:

CLOs should co-ordinate programs and activities for Indigenous offenders to assist their journey from the gate to release.

The centre had to pay for the CLO training to deliver Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence because there are no Indigenous facilitators.

CLO's to be more involved in the co-ordination of Ending Offending Program and Ending Family Violence Program.

ISDR participants also understood that culturally-competent non-Indigenous facilitators are very important in the delivery programs to Indigenous offenders. Indigenous offenders reported that it was more important to have facilitators skilled in cross-cultural communication and program content than being Indigenous alone. A female Indigenous offender pointed out the importance of having skilled facilitators:

Unless an Indigenous person was qualified and sensitive and had the community background, then...a non-Indigenous would also be considered as appropriate to deliver programs.

The support for culturally-specific programs was accompanied by support for mainstreaming cross-cultural practices. ISDR participants highlighted many examples of localised activities within centres and communities that promote Indigenous culture and cross-cultural understanding.

Centre Management is supportive [of Elder's visits].

The Centre provides Custodial Awareness training to Elders out in the community.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders celebrate NAIDOC. The [Cultural] Centre is for Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders.

It was also believed that the promotion of cross-cultural understanding could be enhanced by enabling existing Indigenous and non-Indigenous program officers to co-facilitate programs and other rehabilitative interventions. One participant offered:

Indigenous and non-Indigenous facilitators can model respectful relationships...

This co-facilitation would also promote the development of other skills required for intervention delivery.

Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence Programs

The perceived importance of delivering culturally-relevant programs to Indigenous offenders by culturally-competent facilitators is highlighted above. The next section explores some of the comments made by ISDR participants in relation to the Indigenous-specific programs – Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence.

The Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence programs were generally viewed positively by ISDR participants. These programs elicited the following types of comments:

Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence work well.

Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence are the most important programs...I'd put them on a scale of 4 or 5 out of 5.

The perceived key benefits of the Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence programs are their motivational and preparatory qualities. ISDR participants often commented that these programs represent a pathway to further education and intensive offending programs. They also provide an opportunity for offenders to discuss their personal issues with other Indigenous offenders. These benefits are evident in the following comments:

Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence are a good link to other programs and help to breakdown the myth that programs are like being back at school. These programs create positive experiences for those that participate and that gets back to other offenders.

Indigenous programs act as preparatory programs. They're a good tool to talk about culture and identity and talk about things [offenders] don't normally talk about.

While the motivational and preparatory benefits of the Ending Offending and Ending Family Violence programs were acknowledged, ISDR participants also expressed a need for intensive Indigenous-specific programs to address Indigenous patterns of offending and family violence.

Access to and Availability of Health Services

Issues relating to Indigenous offender health were raised by QCS Custodial Officers, Probation and Parole Officers, non-government service providers and health professionals. These ISDR participants recognised that among Indigenous offenders, alcohol and drug misuse, diabetes, poor mental health and cognitive impairment are highly prevalent health issues that contribute to offending behaviour and impede rehabilitation. Identified mental health issues

ranged from psychological responses to traumatic experiences, depression, grief and psychiatric disorders.

A key issue for QCS staff and many service providers was the reluctance of Indigenous offenders to access health services in the community. This was perceived to be caused by a lack of cross-cultural understanding by medical practitioners or offenders feeling shame about their criminal record and/or inability to fill in forms due to poor literacy skills.

Some ISDR participants also referred to the limited availability of health services in the rural and remote areas of Queensland. One Probation and Parole Officer commented that:

The major contributor to offending in the Indigenous community is alcohol and drug use, there are not sufficient resources to assist our offenders or the [community]. One community health worker [is available] to deal with all referrals.

Another Probation and Parole officer stated:

There has not been a psychologist [here] for two years until two months ago.

The need for health information, health education and post-release continuity of care was also raised by ISDR participants. One Custodial Officer observed:

[Offenders] don't understand how important it is to let [staff] know that they have diabetes when they first come in. When they are in here they are put on a proper diet and the diabetes is managed. When [offenders] are released all that [information] goes.

The above views suggest that more effort is required to ensure that Indigenous offenders access or have access to medical services in the community. The gap between Indigenous offender health demand and community-based supply may be minimised by the promotion and expansion of culturally-sensitive health services.

Substance Misuse

The link between substance misuse, poor health and offending is well established. All ISDR participants commented on the high prevalence of substance misuse among Indigenous offenders in one way or another.

Although the misuse of alcohol and other drugs was recognised as an issue for many Indigenous offenders prior to their imprisonment, most ISDR participant discussion focused on the need for post-release substance misuse treatment. It was observed that alcohol, marijuana and volatile substance use is particularly prevalent in some Indigenous communities. This makes it difficult for Indigenous offenders to avoid such substances when they return to their communities after time in custody. One Probation and Parole Officer described a common situation:

When offenders go back home, the families celebrate them coming home and the drinking starts all over again.

It was reported that the excessive consumption of alcohol increases an Indigenous offender's likelihood of being involved in assaults, public disorders and breaching orders. A non-government organisation worker believed:

Alcohol and illicit drug consumption impacts on relationships within the family and results in violence.

Indigenous ISDR participants also cited substance misuse as one of the main reasons for re-offending.

Health professionals, Indigenous Elders and non-government organisation workers referred to the lack of substance misuse treatment programs in the community – especially in regional and rural areas. The waiting lists for drug rehabilitation programs in areas of high service concentration (such as Brisbane) were also viewed to be too long for offenders with high needs.

It is worth noting that a few ISDR participants reported that involvement in a QCS substance abuse program provided benefits to some program participants. This included cessation of substance misuse and access to treatment otherwise not available in the community.

Offender Education, Vocation and Employment Programs

The low level of education attained by Indigenous offenders was frequently reported as a barrier to offenders participating in QCS programs as well as contributing to poor offender rehabilitation and reintegration.

Custodial staff across various centres, Indigenous Elders and service providers reported that Indigenous offenders who declined to participate in VET programs felt shame and embarrassment about their levels of literacy and numeracy. A Custodial Officer explained:

[Indigenous] offenders won't attend because of the shame and white faces trying to teach them.

Some custodial staff and service providers suggested that the implementation of compulsory literacy and numeracy programs could reduce the shame that may be experienced by Indigenous offenders due their low literacy and numeracy skills. Access to an education television channel in prison cells was also advocated.

Indigenous Elders and workers from the health, legal and welfare sectors reported that low skills among Indigenous offenders reduce their likelihood of finding employment after their release from custody. ISDR participants also acknowledged that post-release employment for Indigenous offenders is hindered by a lack of employment opportunities in rural and remote areas of

Queensland and the social stigma associated with having a criminal record. An Aboriginal Community Justice Group member commented:

[Offender] criminal history is a major factor...as employees see them as unreliable and a risk of further offending.

All participants identified the need for developing better links between QCS, VET and the employment sector across the state to increase the employment opportunities for Indigenous offenders and assist with offender rehabilitation. It was also noted that VET courses should be relevant to the local economies to which Indigenous offenders were expected to return.

Partnering with Indigenous Elders

The importance of creating and maintaining links with Indigenous Elders to assist with the reintegration of Indigenous offenders was commonly raised by ISDR participants.

It was previously noted that ISDR participants believed that Indigenous community members may be able to assist with the culturally-appropriate delivery of QCS programs. Correctional Officers also described how Indigenous Elders are facilitating post-release employment for some Indigenous offenders by liaising with local employers and assisting with the induction process for Indigenous offenders. This is evident in the following:

Having contacts with the [Aboriginal] Justice Groups and Elders are very important as they can assist in the management of the offender, and they can sit in on the initial interviews and be part of the assessment process.

Although working with Indigenous Elders is not consistently practiced across the state, there is some evidence to suggest that adequately supported Indigenous Elders can provide a valuable bridge between custody and the community for Indigenous offenders.

The Effect of Social and Economic Disadvantage on Rehabilitation and Recidivism

The social and economic disadvantage that can characterise the Indigenous population was discussed in Chapter one of this report. This disadvantage was a common theme in ISDR participant discussions which is seen to affect the ability of Indigenous family groups and communities to provide material and social support to Indigenous offenders after their release from custody. The lack of post-release support was viewed as a major obstacle in the effective reintegration and rehabilitation of Indigenous offenders which in turn affects offender recidivism. It was also noted that the social and economic disadvantage experienced by many Indigenous persons contributes to the normalisation of imprisonment. The view that imprisonment can be normalised or considered a 'rite-of-passage' is evident in the following comments made by ISDR participants:

If [offenders] are from a family that has been through the [prison] system, the whole process [of going to prison] is seen as the 'norm'.

For some, it's not a big deal to re-offend, because their family is often in jail.

Jail can be a safe haven.

The last comment provided above describes how some ISDR participants believed that imprisonment can represent a pseudo support system for Indigenous people who would otherwise exist in highly dysfunctional situations. These views are consistent with research findings discussed in chapter three (Ogilvie & Zyl 2001).

Despite acknowledging the disadvantage that can characterise Indigenous communities, ISDR participants recognised the crucial role Indigenous Elders and workers play in offender reintegration. Their involvement is seen to highlight the strength of Indigenous communities.

Geographical Differences in Social and Economic Disadvantage

ISDR participants recognised that the issues faced by offenders from rural and remote communities can be different from those faced by urban-based offenders. The social and economic disadvantage experienced by Indigenous offenders from rural and remote communities is generally viewed to be more pronounced than that experienced by Indigenous offenders from urban communities.

Service providers frequently identified the lack of services and transport (public and private) in rural and remote communities. A lack of services is apparent in the following:

There's no Aboriginal offender services here, the nearest available services are in Toowoomba or Brisbane [over 200km away].

Offenders with family and social networks in rural and remote communities face difficulty returning home upon their release. QCS staff and Indigenous service providers reported that offenders without the means to return home often become homeless in the town or city in which they are released. This lack of transport also limits how often family and friends can visit offenders during their period of imprisonment.

Summary

Many of the views expressed by ISDR participants are consistent with previous research and findings presented in this report.

It is clear that ISDR participants perceived that low literacy and numeracy pose a significant impediment to Indigenous offender involvement in QCS rehabilitative interventions (such as criminogenic programs and VET) and access to health services in the community. Participants believed that the delivery of culturally-sensitive interventions by culturally-competent facilitators would increase both the number of Indigenous persons accessing rehabilitative interventions (including literacy and numeracy courses) and the effectiveness of these interventions. Importantly, Indigenous offenders expressed an interest in (re-)connecting with Indigenous culture, history and heritage.

It was suggested that the delivery of culturally-relevant rehabilitation interventions could be promoted by increasing the number of Indigenous facilitators and improving the cultural-awareness of non-Indigenous offenders. Despite positive comments regarding the Indigenous-specific Ending Offending and Ending Violent Offending programs, participants believed that Indigenous offenders need access to more intensive Indigenous-specific programs. It was also believed that Indigenous community members, such as Indigenous Elders, play a vital role in developing transitional links for Indigenous offenders leaving custody. It is worth noting that some Indigenous offenders reported that they felt shame and embarrassment when talking about themselves in a group session. Other Indigenous offenders suggested that one of the benefits in participating in Indigenous-specific programs is the ability to discuss personal issues with offenders with a similar background.

The impact of colonialism and social/economic disadvantage on Indigenous offending was also discussed. The displacement and breakdown of familial and community networks was viewed by ISDR participants to have significant bearing on the personal identity of Indigenous offenders and the possibility of community-based support. The high prevalence of social and economic disadvantage within the Indigenous population was perceived to contribute to the normalisation of imprisonment and high health needs. The inability of community-based health service providers to meet the significant health needs of Indigenous communities was also highlighted. These findings draw attention to the importance of strengthening Indigenous communities to facilitate their ability to support pro-social choices among Indigenous offenders after their release from custody.

The research findings discussed in this chapter demonstrate that Indigenous rehabilitation requires a multi-tiered approach. This includes strengthening Indigenous interventions within QCS, improving links with Indigenous communities and ensuring the cultural-competency of non-Indigenous QCS officers. The need for a community-based multi-government agency approach to Indigenous offender rehabilitation is also evident.



Chapter 8
Conclusion

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This report has provided information on the rehabilitation needs and treatment of Indigenous offenders in Queensland.

Findings from the project highlighted the importance of:

- Understanding the historical and socio-cultural factors contributing to Indigenous offending and rehabilitation needs.
- Reducing the number of Indigenous offenders placed on remand.
- Delivering culturally relevant rehabilitation programs that recognise and incorporate traditional Indigenous values and complement Indigenous learning and communication styles.
- Delivering programs that respond to the criminogenic needs of Indigenous offenders. For example, programs should address violent behaviour and substance misuse.
- Ensuring that Indigenous offenders have access to adult education and programs to address their low literacy and numeracy levels.
- Providing post-release support to Indigenous offenders to facilitate employment and community reintegration. This is especially true for offenders from rural or remote Indigenous communities.
- Building relationships with industries and Indigenous communities to assist with the post-release employment and reintegration of Indigenous offenders.
- Providing training to enhance the cultural competencies of non-Indigenous program facilitators and QCS staff in general.
- Increasing the number of Indigenous staff working within QCS.
- Undertaking further research to establish the best-practice characteristics of Indigenous offender rehabilitation programs.

QCS is planning to do the following activities to enhance its Indigenous rehabilitation efforts:

- Consider the findings presented in this report. This includes research that demonstrates that Indigenous offenders are under-represented in literacy and numeracy courses and VET, and are less likely to gain employment after participating in the Advance2Work program than non-Indigenous offenders.

- Continue to monitor research that focuses on the rehabilitation of Indigenous offenders in order to maintain best-practice development and implementation of Indigenous offender rehabilitation. Further information on best-practice program delivery modes for Indigenous offenders will be of significant value.
- Develop and implement a motivational program for Indigenous offenders. This program will aim to increase program responsiveness among Indigenous offenders which will increase Indigenous access to programs.
- Evaluate the Indigenous general offending and family violence programs in order to determine and improve program outcomes. These programs focus on substance misuse and violence.
- Develop and implement enhanced Indigenous general offending and family violence programs based on evaluation findings. Enhancing these programs is likely to involve examining whether or not increasing the frequency and duration of these programs is feasible and beneficial.
- Develop a cultural supervision framework for program delivery staff. This will increase the cultural-competency of program facilitators.
- Examine the feasibility of developing and implementing a sexual offending program for Indigenous offenders from remote communities. This program will attend to the specific needs of these offenders.
- Examine the viability of implementing a residential diversion initiative for Indigenous offenders placed on a community corrections order. It is anticipated that this initiative would be underpinned by the strength-based model of Indigenous offender rehabilitation. It would aim to assist offenders in the completion of their order, focus on making connections with Indigenous culture and communities and improve employment opportunities.
- Revise the Transitions Release Preparation program to better meet the needs of Indigenous participants to assist with offender reintegration.
- Review the Offender Reintegration Support Service to ensure its appropriateness for Indigenous clients to assist with offender reintegration.
- Develop and implement an Indigenous-specific offender management strategy for Indigenous offenders in custody.
- Continue to develop and maintain partnerships with other government agencies and links with Indigenous communities and industry. These partnerships include QCS representation at various stages of the

- Continue to develop initiatives at the local level that respond to local needs and capacity. These initiatives will complement rehabilitation interventions offered by QCS across the state.

The need for a whole-of-government response to Indigenous rehabilitation and Indigenous over-representation in the criminal justice system was also highlighted. A whole-of-government response is required in order to minimise Indigenous representation in risk factors associated with criminal behaviour. Risk factors include poor socio-economic status, social disconnectedness, misuse of substances, previous involvement in crime, exposure to physical and sexual abuse, poor education and lack of suitable housing. Early interventions that reduce the likelihood of Indigenous offenders being placed on remand (such as bail support) are likely to decrease Indigenous over-representation in custody.

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