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## 8 Corrective services

In this Report, corrective services comprise prison custody (including periodic detention) and a range of community correctional orders and programs for adult offenders. Both public and privately operated facilities and services are included.

This report divides corrective services into two categories: prisons and community corrections. This provides a simplified overall reporting system. Within the category of community corrections, more detailed reporting by type of order is presented where possible. (Previous reports divided corrective services into three categories; prisons, community custody and community supervision.) A framework of performance indicators is outlined in section 8.3, and data are discussed in section 8.5. There have been no other major changes to the framework or scope of the data collections, but there have been significant improvements in data quality. Changes to reporting are detailed in sections 8.2 and 8.4.

### 8.1 Profile of corrective services

As discussed in the justice preface, corrective services interact with, and are affected by, the wider justice arena. Corrective service functions in some jurisdictions are diversified to include responsibilities that are dealt with by different justice sector agencies in other jurisdictions — for example, prisoner escorts, management of prisoners held in court cells, management of prisoners in police cells and prosecution of order breaches. These functions do not fall within the scope of the chapter and are excluded from the data collection.

Corrective services include both prison custody and a range of community based correctional orders. The scope of this chapter does not extend to:

- juvenile offenders (who are generally the responsibility of community services agencies);
- persons held in institutions to receive psychiatric care (who are generally the responsibility of health services);
- prisoners held in police facilities or custody (who are covered in the police services chapter); and
- persons held in facilities such as immigration and military detention centres.

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Corrective services are the responsibility of State and Territory Governments, which deliver services directly or purchase them through contractual arrangements or operate a combination of both arrangements.

Each jurisdiction maintained prison facilities during the reporting period. The ACT only maintained a remand prison; prisoners sentenced in the ACT were held in NSW prisons under agreement between the two jurisdictions. Four jurisdictions (NSW, Victoria, Queensland and SA) operated private prisons in 1997-98. NSW and the ACT provided for periodic detention of prisoners (discontinuous periods of imprisonment — for example, prisoners sentenced to weekend detention in prison but allowed to return home during the week).

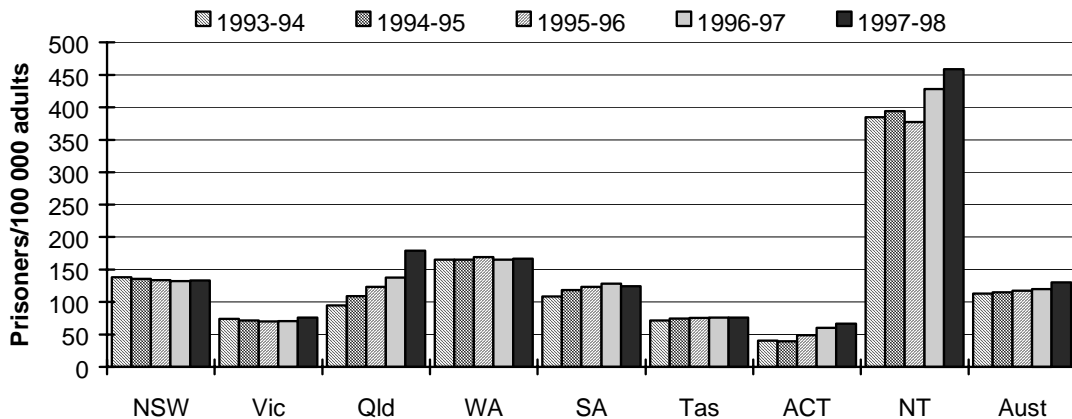
In 1997-98 there were 12 periodic detention facilities and 108 prisons (including 15 privately operated prisons) across Australia. The number of prisons and the number of privately operated prisons were higher than in previous years because Queensland's Community Custody Centres and Outstations (which are privately operated) were previously included within the community custody category.

On average, 18 344 people per day were held in Australian prisons during 1997-98 (excluding periodic detainees) — up 17 per cent over the five-year period from 1993-94. Additionally, 1573 people on average were serving periodic detention orders in NSW and the ACT. Almost 28 per cent of prisoners (excluding periodic detainees) were held in open prisons (facilities containing prisoners classified as low security) in 1997-98 and 72 per cent were held in secure facilities. The proportion of prisoners held in secure custody ranged from 87.8 per cent in Victoria to 43.8 per cent for ACT prisoners (including ACT prisoners held in NSW facilities). A total of 2833 prisoners (or 15.4 per cent of the total prisoner population, excluding periodic detainees) were held in privately operated facilities in 1997-98, compared with 7.9 per cent in 1996-97.

Nationally, the daily average number of prisoners was comprised of 17 180 males and 1011 females (94.6 per cent and 5.4 per cent of the prison population respectively) in 1997-98. The proportion of females varied across jurisdictions from 3 per cent in Tasmania to 8.5 per cent in the ACT (including ACT prisoners held in NSW facilities). Females made up 9 per cent of periodic detainees in NSW and 5 per cent of periodic detainees in the ACT in 1997-98. The proportion of prisoners of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent ranged from 5.2 per cent of Victorian prisoners to 72.3 per cent of NT prisoners. The number of indigenous prisoners in NSW and the ACT for 1997-98 are currently not available due to conversion from the Offender Records System to the Offender Management System. 1997-98 data will be available in 1998-99

The rate of imprisonment (that is, the number of prisoners, excluding periodic detainees, per 100 000 of the general population aged over 17 years) ranged from 66.5 in the ACT to 458.6 in the NT in 1997-98. The national imprisonment rate was 130.3, having steadily increased over the previous five years from 113.0 in 1993-94 (figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1 Imprisonment rates<sup>a, b</sup>

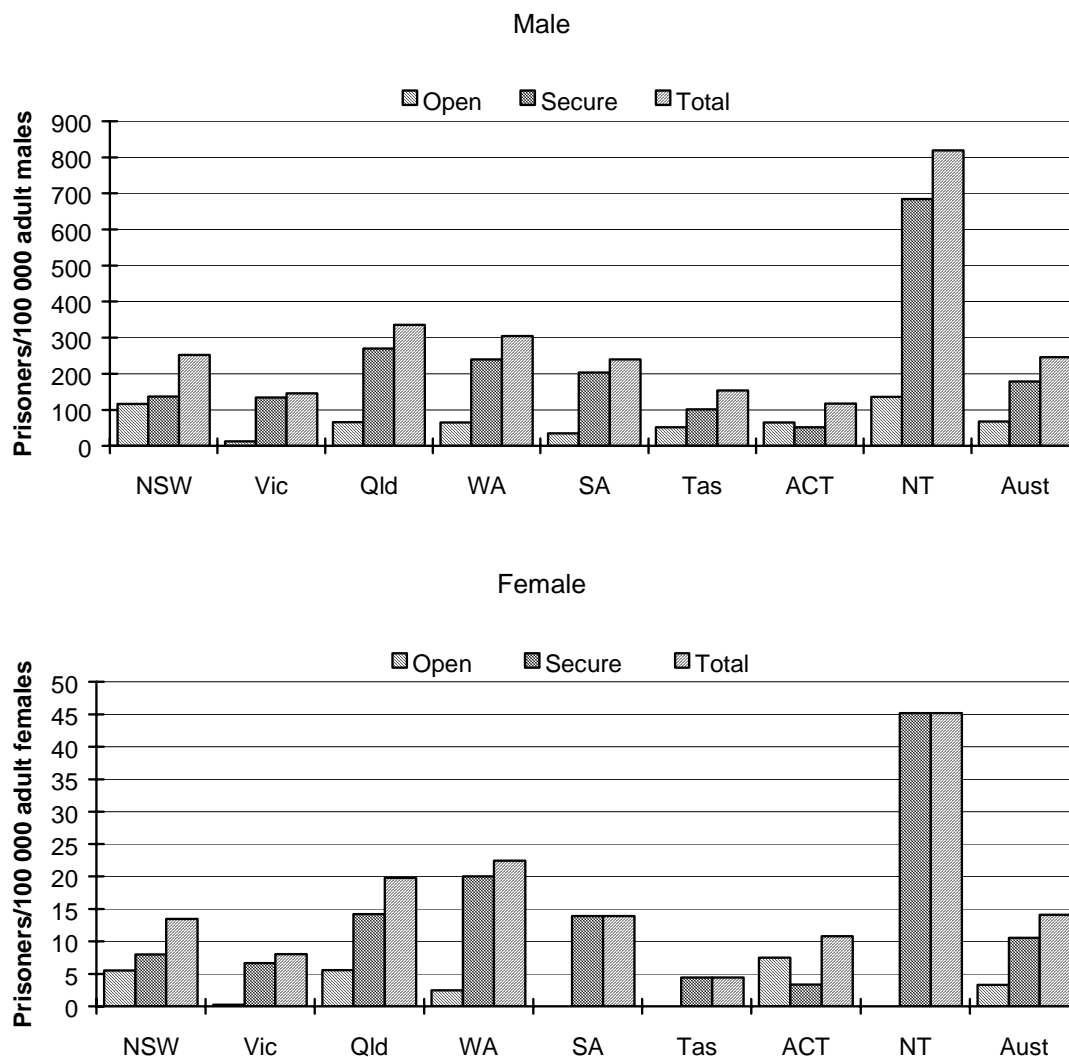


<sup>a</sup> ACT data included prisoners held on remand in ACT and ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.  
<sup>b</sup> Imprisonment rates for all prisoners were based on the daily average prisoner population supplied by States and Territories.

Data source: table 8A.5.

The total rate of imprisonment for males ranged from 116.7 in the ACT (including ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons) to 819.7 in the NT, in 1997-98. The rate of imprisonment of males in secure prison custody ranged from 51.7 in the ACT to 684.5 in the NT, and the rate for open custody ranged from 12.6 in Victoria to 135.2 in the NT. The total rate of imprisonment for females ranged from 4.4 in Tasmania to 45.2 in the NT. The rate of imprisonment of females in secure custody ranged from 3.3 in the ACT to 45.2 in the NT, and the rate for open custody ranged from zero in SA, Tasmania and the NT to 7.5 in the ACT (figure 8.2).

Figure 8.3 Imprisonment rates, by gender, 1997-98<sup>a, b</sup>

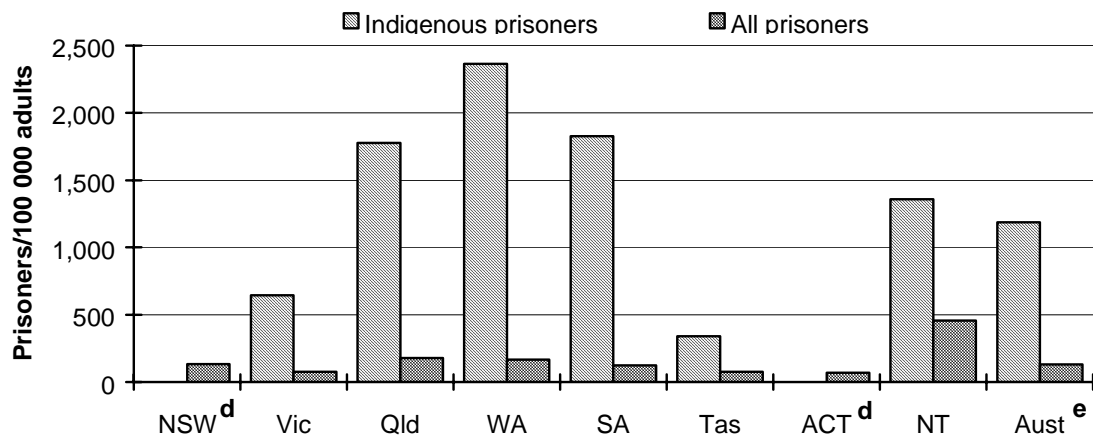


<sup>a</sup> ACT data included prisoners held on remand in ACT and ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.  
<sup>b</sup> Imprisonment rates were based on the daily average prisoner population supplied by States and Territories.

Data source: table 8A.5.

The imprisonment rate per 100 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults was between three times (in the NT) and fifteen times (in SA) the rate for the total population (indigenous plus non-indigenous prisoners) in 1997-98 (figure 8.4). (The relatively high proportion of indigenous people in the NT meant that the ‘all prisoner’ imprisonment rate was strongly influenced by the number of indigenous prisoners. A ‘non-indigenous’ imprisonment rate would be significantly lower than the ‘all prisoner’ imprisonment rate.) NSW and ACT data for 1997-98 are currently not available due to conversion from the Offender Records System to the Offender Management System. 1997-98 data will be available in 1998-99.

Figure 8.5 **Imprisonment rates for indigenous people and total population, 1997-98<sup>a, b, c</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Imprisonment rates are calculated per 100 000 adults (17+) for 'All prisoners' and per 100 000 indigenous adults (17+) for 'indigenous prisoners'. <sup>b</sup> Imprisonment rates for all prisoners were based on the daily average prisoner population supplied by States and Territories. <sup>c</sup> Indigenous imprisonment rates were drawn from the ABS corrective services data collection and were rates as at June each year. <sup>d</sup> NSW and ACT data on indigenous imprisonment rates are currently not available due to conversion from the Offender Records System to the Offender Management System. 1997-98 data will be available in 1998-99. <sup>e</sup> NSW and the ACT were excluded from the calculation of the Australian indigenous imprisonment rate.

Data source: table 8A.5.

All jurisdictions operate community corrections programs. Community corrections comprise a variety of noncustodial programs (listed for each jurisdiction in table 8A.18). These programs vary in the extent and nature of supervision, the conditions of the order (such as a community work component or personal development program attendance), and the restrictions on the person's freedom of movement in the community (as with home detention).

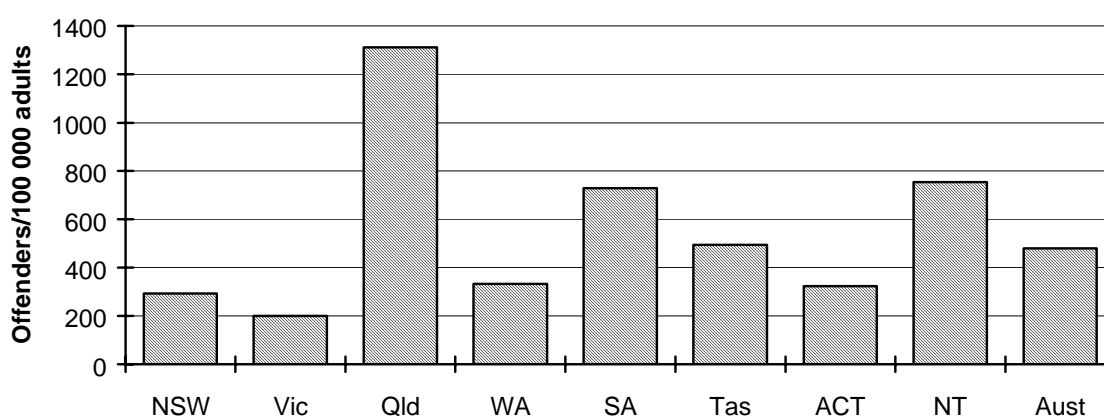
Community corrections include post-custodial programs under which prisoners released into the community continue to be subject to corrective supervision (as with parole, release on licence, pre-release orders and some forms of home detention). They also include orders imposed by the court as a sentencing sanction, such as suspended sentences, court-imposed home detention, community service orders, probation, intensive supervision orders and recognisance. In most jurisdictions, fine default orders fall under community corrections. In some jurisdictions, bail supervision also fall under community corrections.

There is no single objective or set of characteristics common to all community corrections programs, other than that they generally provide either a noncustodial sentencing alternative or a post-custodial mechanism for re-integrating prisoners into the community under continued supervision.

Supervision orders and community service bonds/orders are common categories of community corrections across all jurisdictions, as are fine option orders (except in the ACT and the NT). Home detention is available in all jurisdictions except Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT. Home detention is a court initiated program in NSW (aimed at diverting offenders from custody); only a post-custodial program in Queensland; and both a post-custodial program and a court initiated program for bail in WA and SA.

On average 54 893 offenders per day were serving community correction orders across Australia in 1997-98. The rate (that is, the number of offenders serving community corrections orders per 100 000 of the general population aged over 17 years) varied from 200.1 in Victoria to 1312.3 in Queensland (figure 8.6). Jurisdictions with higher imprisonment rates also tend to report higher community correction rates.

Figure 8.7 **Community corrections rate, 1997-98<sup>a, b</sup>**

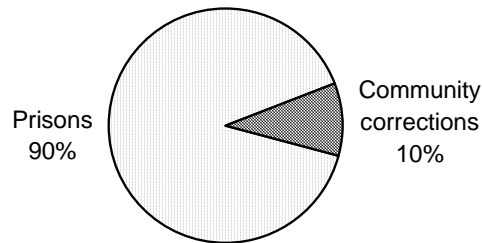


<sup>a</sup> Offender rates are calculated per 100 000 adults (17+). <sup>b</sup> Community corrections offender rates were based on offender population data supplied by States and Territories.

Data source: table 8A.5.

Total recurrent expenditure on corrective services nationally amounted to \$1064 million in 1997-98 — \$955 million (90 per cent) for prisons and \$110 million (10 per cent) for community corrections (figure 8.8).

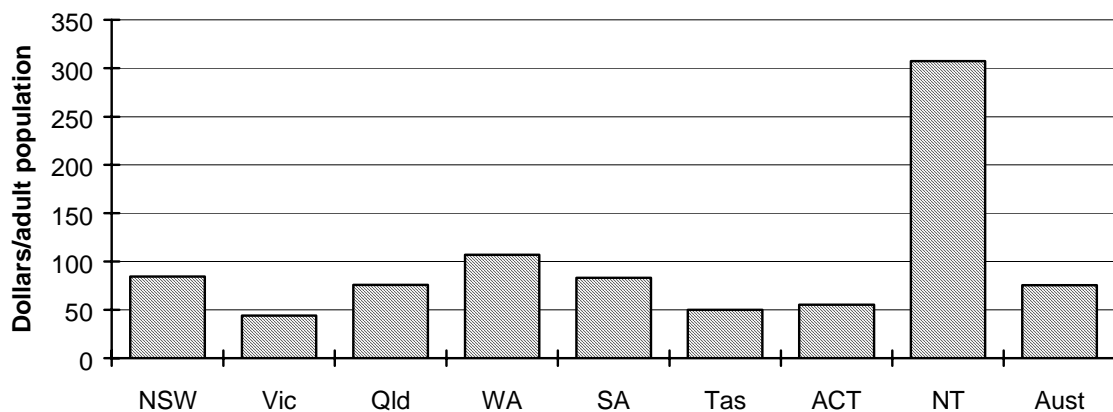
Figure 8.9 Recurrent expenditure by type of sanction, 1997-98<sup>a, b</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Recurrent expenditure included expenditure by umbrella departments on behalf of corrective services and is net of recurrent receipts (own source revenues). <sup>b</sup> All prisons expenditure included expenditure by umbrella departments on behalf of corrective services that could not be allocated separately to open or secure prisons.  
*Data source:* table 8A.6.

Total recurrent corrective services expenditure per head of adult population ranged from \$43.95 in Victoria to \$307.41 in the NT (figure 8.10).

Figure 8.11 Recurrent expenditure per head of adult population, 1997-98<sup>a,b,c</sup>



<sup>a</sup> Recurrent expenditure on all corrections (prisons plus community corrections) per adult (17+). <sup>b</sup> Recurrent expenditure included expenditure by umbrella departments on behalf of corrective services and is net of recurrent receipts (own source revenues). <sup>c</sup> All prisons expenditure included expenditure by umbrella departments on behalf of corrective services that could not be allocated separately to open or secure prisons.  
*Data source:* table 8A.6.

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Additional information on prisoners, drawn from the 1997 National Prisoner Census, is reported in box 8.1. The 1997 census also provided a ten year comparison of prisoner censuses (box 8.2).

It should be noted that the census presents information on prisoners in custody on 30 June 1997, and that this 'snapshot' information is not necessarily comparable to annual data drawn from jurisdictional databases reported elsewhere in this chapter.

### **Box 8.3 Prisoners in Australia, 1997**

#### *Prisoners*

There were 19 082 prisoners in Australia on the night of 30 June 1997 — an increase of 889 (4.9 per cent) on the previous census, at 30 June 1996. Increases in Queensland (8.8 per cent), NSW (3.5 per cent), Victoria (8.3 per cent), the NT (25.7 per cent) and SA (1.2 per cent) were partly offset by small decreases in Tasmania (7.7 per cent), WA (0.4 per cent) and the ACT (2.6 per cent).

#### *Gender*

The majority (94.3 per cent) of prisoners were male; thus the statistical characteristics of the total prisoner population were essentially those of the male prisoners, although female prisoners showed different patterns of offences, court of sentence and sentence length.

#### *Age*

The average age of prisoners was 31.9 years, with half of all prisoners aged less than 30 years. The distribution patterns were similar for males and females. Both males and females aged 20–24 years had the highest age-specific imprisonment rates.

#### *Legal status*

Of those in prison, 86.6 per cent were serving a sentence. The remaining 13.4 per cent were remanded in custody awaiting trial or sentence, or were being held under a deportation order.

#### *Previous imprisonment*

More than half the prisoners (57.9 per cent) were reported as having previously been imprisoned under sentence.

#### *Sentence length and period held on remand*

The average aggregate sentence was 4.5 years. The average time that prisoners were expected to serve in custody was 3.4 years. The average time spent in custody on remand was 4.2 months, but 90 per cent of remandees in custody had spent 10.1 months or less in custody as at 30 June 1997.

*Source:* NCSSU (1998).

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#### **Box 8.4 Prisoners in Australia, 1987 to 1997**

The following major changes occurred between the 1987 and 1997 prisoner censuses:

- The prisoner population increased by 57.5 per cent, from 12 113 in 1987 to 19 082 in 1997.
- All States and Territories recorded increases in prisoner numbers except Tasmania, which recorded a fall of 6.1 per cent. Increases in other States and Territories varied significantly from 74.8 per cent in NSW to 29.8 per cent in the NT.
- State and Territory proportions of the total number of prisoners changed marginally. NSW increased from 37.6 per cent of the total to 41.7 per cent, and Victoria decreased from 16.1 per cent of the total to 13.9 per cent.
- The proportion of prisoners aged less than 25 years decreased from 35.7 per cent to 28.4 per cent.
- The proportion of female prisoners increased marginally, from 4.7 per cent to 5.7 per cent.
- The number of prisoners known to have previously served a prison sentence decreased from 60.6 per cent to 57.9 per cent.
- The proportion of prisoners who were indigenous increased from 14.6 per cent to 18.8 per cent.

*Source:* NCSSU (1998).

## **8.2 Policy developments in corrective services**

### **Changes in purchaser–provider arrangements**

The delivery of elements of corrective services under corporatised, privatised or other contractual arrangements is a major policy issue for the sector. Only two jurisdictions operated private prisons in 1993-94; on average, 1212 prisoners were held in privately operated facilities each day. In 1997-98 over double that number of prisoners (2833) were held in such facilities across four jurisdictions; the number of privately operated prisons had increased from nine to fifteen over the five-year period.

Alongside privatisation, there has been a move to corporatisation. Corporatisation may allow the public sector component of corrective services to more openly compete with the private sector for delivery of the full range of correctional services. Both privatisation and corporatisation have affected the correctional environment, not only through the introduction of a new system of service delivery, but through the higher demands being placed on existing public sector providers.

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Jurisdictions are continuing to explore contracting out of specific service components in publicly operated facilities. Current examples include perimeter security and delivery of health services in prisons. Some jurisdictions also contract out the delivery of particular components of community corrections programs.

### **Addressing diverse objectives**

Corrective services are responsible for carrying out the sanctions and orders imposed by courts or other relevant legal authorities. Sentencing objectives may include deterrence, punishment, rehabilitation, reparation and containment. Corrective services have developed and operated programs to meet these court-imposed requirements within policy standards set by government and community expectations. There is a continual need to balance diverse objectives and expectations such as the need to maintain prisoner security as well as minimum standards of prisoner care. There is also a balance between respect for prisoner rights and community expectations of compensation and reparation for crimes committed.

These diverse objectives raise policy issues both in the management of prisoners and offenders, and in the wider criminal justice sector. The wider sector in various jurisdictions is exploring and implementing different sentencing options with implications for corrective services. Examples include mandatory sentencing, periodic detention (now operating in two jurisdictions), noncorrectional sentencing alternatives (for example, confiscation of property for fine default) and noncustodial options for offenders who would formerly have served a prison term (for example, home detention). Comparable indicators can assist in evaluating the relative effectiveness and unit costs of these diverse options.

Many jurisdictions are increasingly focusing on a case management approach to prisoner and offender management and rehabilitation. Need and risk assessment based programs (often applying an integrated multidisciplinary approach) are intended to address educational, vocational, personal, social and other needs relevant to encouraging rehabilitation and personal development and to reducing the likelihood of re-offence; for example, many jurisdictions are developing and operating comprehensive strategies for sex offender treatment, violence prevention, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Greater flexibility in court sentencing options across jurisdictions enhances this approach by providing sentencing options that more effectively target and address prisoner and offender needs. The approach also places greater demands on cooperation between areas of government (for example, integration of health,

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community and welfare service delivery to prisoners and offenders across the range of community correction orders).

### **Prisoner numbers and characteristics**

Corrective service populations are determined by factors outside the control of corrective services, including changes in court sentencing patterns, police activity and socioeconomic factors. Available prison accommodation in most States and Territories has been under pressure from over a decade of steady increases in imprisonment rates. Queensland and the NT in particular showed marked increases over the five-year period to 1997-98.

The number of female prisoners is increasing at a much higher rate than the number of male prisoners. In 1993-94, an average 747 women were held in Australian prisons each day. In 1997-98, the figure had risen by 35.3 per cent to reach 1011. In comparison, male prisoner numbers increased by 16.2 per cent over the same period. However, the overall proportion of female prisoners remained small at 5.5 per cent of the total prisoner population in 1997-98.

A combination of changing prison populations and increasing prisoner numbers has placed increasing pressure on corrective services facilities and programs. Demands by government for greater accountability and increased efficiency across the justice sector have also affected services. Additional resources or improved efficiency of the police and court services, for example, can result in more offenders coming to corrective services more quickly. Changes in police and courts policy and practice (such as charging and sentencing practices) can result in prisoners being sentenced for longer periods. Given the long lead time necessary to construct new prison accommodation, such trends can exacerbate the effects of long term increases in prisoner numbers.

## **8.3 Framework of performance indicators**

Given continuing State and Territory review of indicators and data quality, the 1997-98 dataset includes both improved indicators and more detailed breakdowns of ongoing indicators (such as the rate of successful completion of community corrections orders by category of order). This Report adopted revised counting rules and definitions, significantly enhancing the national consistency of many indicators. Past years' data have been updated where possible in accordance with the revised counting rules and definitions. Therefore, this Report presents historical data on some indicators that may be different to data published in previous Reports for a number of jurisdictions; in other cases, it has not been possible to recalculate

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historical data so any conclusions about changes within individual jurisdictions need to be considered in this context.

Performance is reported against five key result areas based on the five common objectives for corrective services (box 8.5).

**Box 8.6 Objectives for corrective services**

Corrective services' *effectiveness* indicators relate to the objectives of:

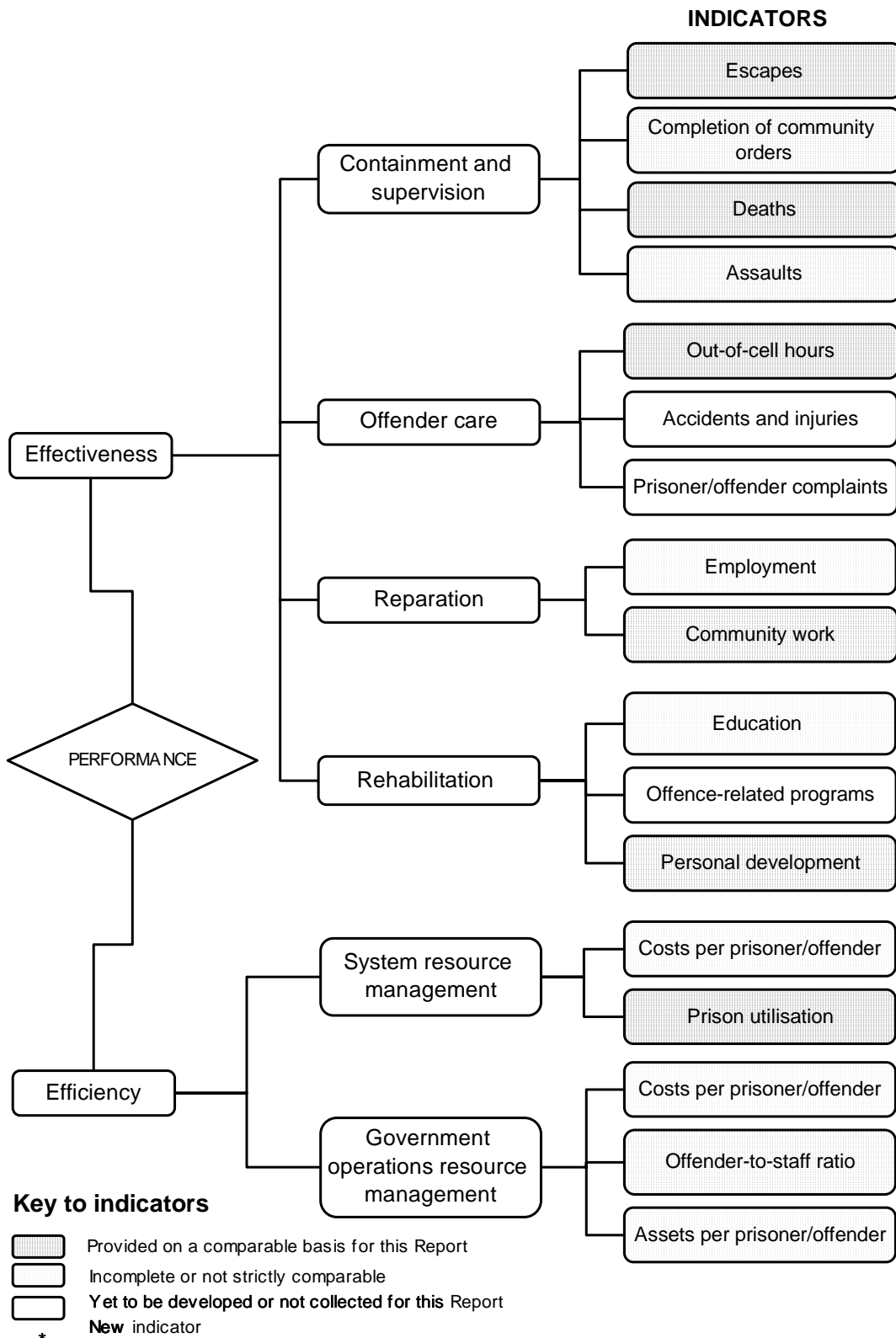
- containment and supervision — to protect the community by the sound management of prisoners and offenders commensurate with the risks they pose to the community;
- offender care — to ensure the environment in which prisoners are managed enables them to achieve an acceptable quality of life consistent with community norms and that this is facilitated for community corrections offenders through referral to social support agencies;
- reparation — to ensure that work undertaken by offenders benefits the community either directly or indirectly (by reduction in costs to the taxpayer); and
- rehabilitation — to provide programs and opportunities that address the causes of offending and maximise the chances of successful re-integration into the community.

Corrective services' *efficiency* indicators relate to the objective of:

- resource management — to manage resources so as to cost efficiently and effectively deliver correctional services.

Figure 8.7 provides a rating of comparability between States and Territories on each of the indicators. It should be noted that jurisdictions' continuing effort through the National Corrections Advisory Group to improve data quality has identified comparability issues that only ongoing analyses of data items and in-depth reviews of counting rules would uncover. Less intensive analysis would be likely to conclude that indicators are directly comparable. The ratings should be considered in this context.

Figure 8.12 Performance indicators for corrective services



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Data collection has been improved in a number of ways in 1997-98. The overall categories of performance indicators have been rationalised to provide a more simplified presentation of prisons and community corrections information. Individual indicators are reported at a greater level of disaggregation according to subtypes. Current indicators have been reviewed and refined. The introduction of a new data collection manual formalising agreed definitions and counting rules has resolved outstanding comparability issues between jurisdictions on some indicators, and identified areas for future work on other indicators. National comparisons of community work indicators for community corrections offenders are reported for the first time this year. A consistent framework has been adopted for reporting on periodic detainees and for addressing concerns about separate reporting of private and public prison indicators.

Some effectiveness indicators are reported here on a systemwide basis — that is, they are reported for combined service delivery methods, whether public, privatised, corporatised or contracted out. Other indicators have been reported for publicly operated prisons only, given commercial-in-confidence concerns with separately reporting privately operated services.

Relevant effectiveness indicators such as assaults and escapes are reported separately for periodic detainees. Relevant efficiency indicators such as unit cost and assets per prisoner include periodic detainees with prisoners, calculated on a 2/7 basis (given that prisoners in periodic detention spend two days a week in prison). According to which better reflects effectiveness and cost, ACT indicators have been presented either separately for remand prisoners and/or periodic detainees held in ACT centres, or as the total ACT prisoner population whether held in NSW or ACT facilities.

## **8.4 Future directions**

Jurisdictions will continue to refine definitions and counting rules to optimise comparability between States and Territories. A current detailed survey of correctional costs will provide an objective basis for further assessing comparability issues in financial reporting. Further, coordination mechanisms have been established between justice sector agencies to enhance data collection and interpretation of indicators across the wider criminal justice system. New indicators are also being developed and explored.

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## Improving the treatment of superannuation

Next year's data collection will treat superannuation costs more consistently in line with the Steering Committee's recommendations in *Superannuation in the Costing of Government Services* (SCRCSSP 1998). This should improve the comparability and accuracy of unit cost information in future Reports.

## 8.5 Key performance indicator results

### Effectiveness

#### *Containment and supervision*

Prison indicators of containment and supervision are particularly vulnerable to the effects of small numbers, especially when expressed as a rate of total prisoner populations in jurisdictions with relatively small average daily prisoner populations. Given small absolute numbers in many cases, care should be used in comparing effectiveness indicators across jurisdictions and over time within jurisdictions; for example, a single death in the smallest jurisdiction can double the rate of deaths in custody, but six deaths in the largest jurisdiction would change the rate by only one percentage point.

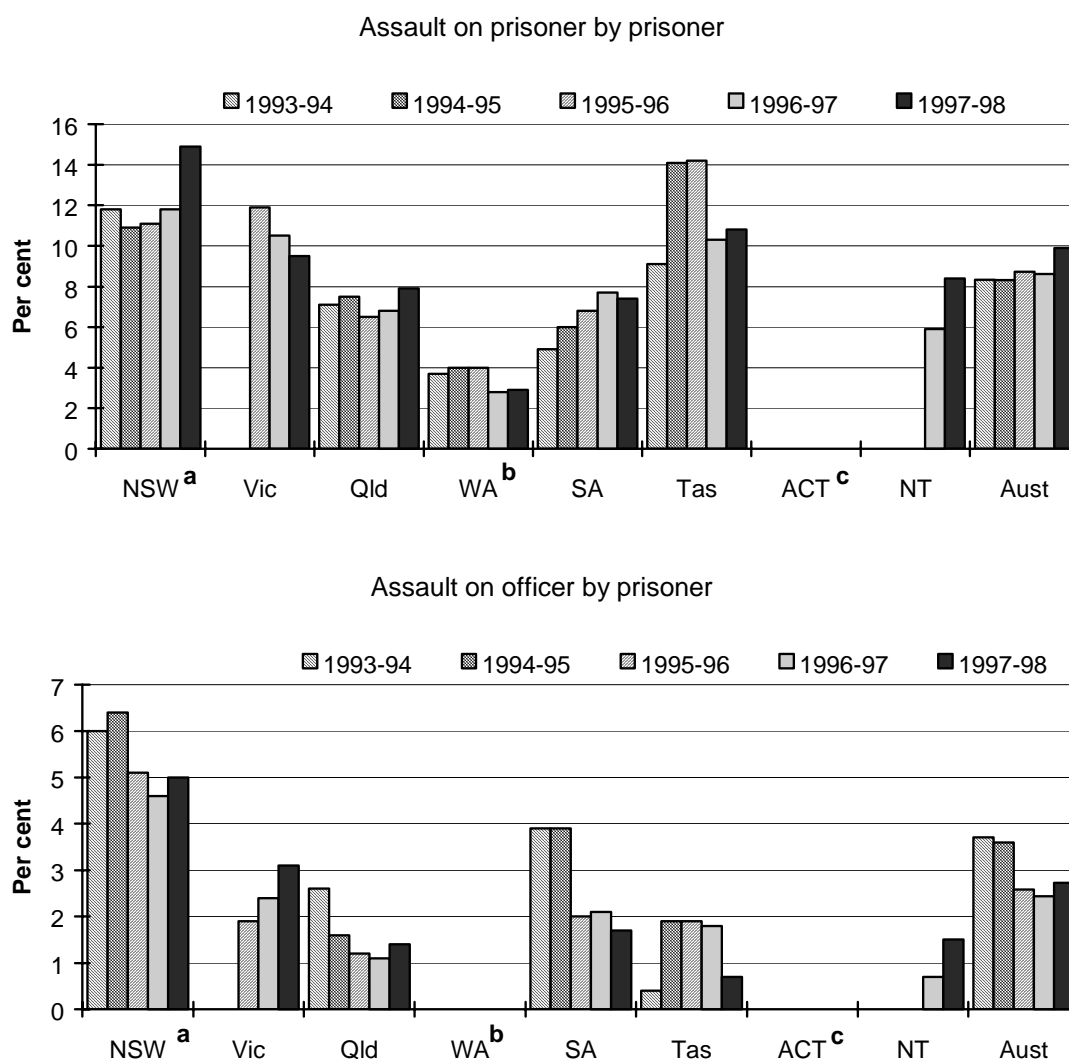
#### *Assaults*

This is the second year that assaults data have been included in the Report. These data should be interpreted with caution — definitions are still being refined and results should be regarded as indicative rather than strictly comparable. It should also be noted that recorded assaults are not weighted for severity and may range from relatively minor incidents (a single punch, for example) to sexual assaults or injuries resulting in death.

The reported rate of assaults by prisoners on other prisoners (number of assaults per 100 prisoners) in 1997-98 ranged from 7.4 in SA to 14.9 in NSW. The reported rate of assaults by prisoners on officers ranged from 0.7 in Tasmania to 5.0 in NSW (figure 8.13). NSW stated that it employed a broader definition of assault to that adopted for the national indicators. WA reported a rate of 2.9 for total assaults against all persons. The ACT did not report on either indicator in 1997-98. There are no consistent trends for either indicator over the five-year period to 1997-98 but the rate tended to be higher in 1997-98 than in the immediately preceding year for most States and Territories (figure 8.14).

In NSW, the rate of assaults on periodic detention prisoners by other periodic detention prisoners was 2.2 and the rate of assaults on officers by periodic detention prisoners was 0.4. The ACT did not report on this indicator.

Figure 8.15 Prison assaults



<sup>a</sup> NSW stated that it employed a broader definition of assault to that adopted for the national indicators.

<sup>b</sup> WA reported total assaults against all persons. These are included in the prisoner on prisoner assaults chart. <sup>c</sup> The ACT did not report on this indicator.

Data source: table 8A.7.

## Deaths

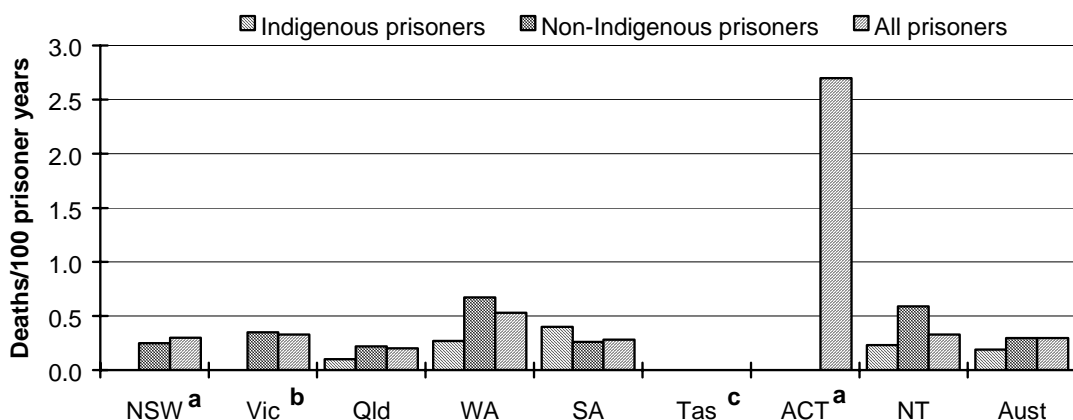
The lowest overall rate of prisoner deaths (per 100 prisoner years) in 1997-98 was reported at 0.24 in Queensland and the highest rate at 2.70 was reported in the ACT (as a result of one death) (figure 8.16). Death from apparent natural causes ranged

from zero in the ACT to a rate of 0.37 (one death) in Tasmania. Death by apparent unnatural causes ranged from zero in Tasmania to 2.70 (one death) in the ACT. The number and rate of deaths had increased from previous years in WA and Victoria. WA exhibited a rise in deaths from apparent natural and unnatural causes, while the increase in Victoria primarily occurred in deaths from apparent unnatural causes.

The lowest indigenous death rate (that is, the number of deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners per 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners) from apparent natural causes was reported at zero in Victoria, Queensland, SA and Tasmania. The highest natural death rate for indigenous prisoners was 0.27 (two deaths) in WA. The equivalent rate for non-indigenous prisoners ranged from zero in the NT to 0.41 (one death) in Tasmania. Victoria and Tasmania reported the lowest indigenous death rates from apparent unnatural causes (zero) and SA reported the highest rate (0.40, with one death). The equivalent rates for non-indigenous prisoners ranged from zero in Tasmania to 0.67 in WA (figure 8.17). NSW and the ACT were unable to report on the *rate* of indigenous and non-indigenous deaths in 1997-98 but provided the *number* of deaths in each group.

There were no marked differences according to cause of death or indigenous/non-indigenous prisoner status within jurisdictions, and no consistent pattern appeared across jurisdictions when accounting for the small numbers in individual categories.

Figure 8.18 Prisoner death rates, by unnatural causes, 1997-98



<sup>a</sup> Data on the rate of indigenous deaths were not available for NSW and the ACT. <sup>b</sup> There were no unnatural indigenous deaths in Victoria in 1997-98. <sup>c</sup> There were no unnatural prisoner deaths in Tasmania in 1997-98.

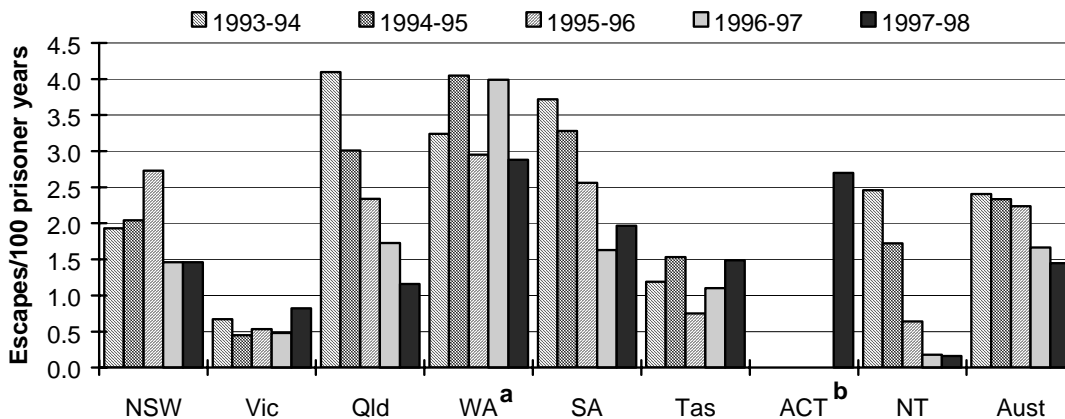
Data source: table 8A.8.

## Escapes/abscondments

The NT reported the lowest rate of total prisoners escaping or absconding (0.16 prisoners escaping or absconding per 100 prisoner years) in 1997-98, and WA reported the highest rate (2.88 per 100 prisoner years) (figure 8.19). The escape rate from secure custody ranged from 0.0 in Tasmania to 2.7 (one escape) in the ACT (figure 8.20); the rate for open custody ranged from 0.0 in the NT to 7.5 in WA. A third category was introduced in 1997-98 to account for prisoners who abscond or fail to return from unescorted absences such as work release and day leave, or who escape from a court complex where corrective services are responsible for court cell security. This rate ranged from zero in Victoria and the NT to 0.99 in SA in 1997-98. Rates for periodic detainees were 0.59 for NSW and 2.38 (one escape/abscondment) for the ACT.

The total (open, secure and other) prisoner escape rate in 1997-98 declined from, or remained relatively constant with, that of previous years in most jurisdictions. Victoria's rate rose in 1997-98, primarily because escapes from open custody increased.

Figure 8.21 Total prisoner escape rate

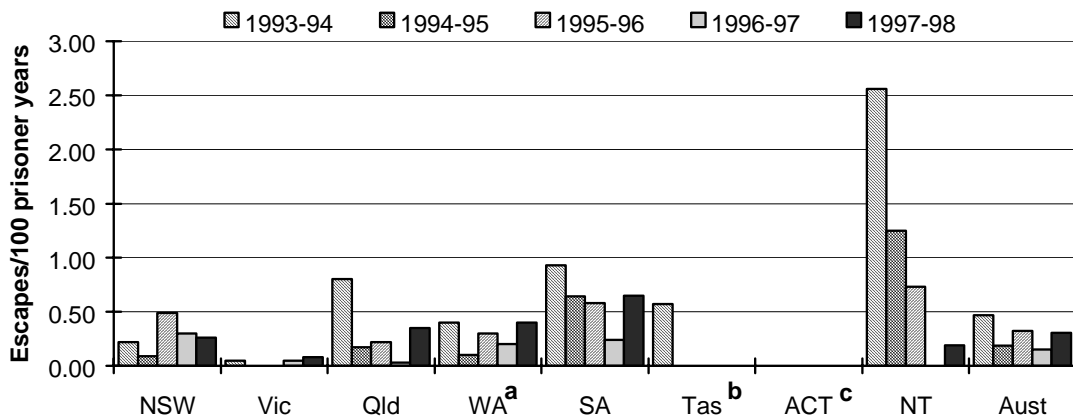


<sup>a</sup> WA data for escapes have been adjusted from previous years to more accurately conform with definitions.

<sup>b</sup> The ACT reported zero escapes between 1993-94 and 1996-97. In 1997-98 one prisoner escaped while on escort outside the Remand Centre.

Data source: table 8A.11.

Figure 8.22 **Escape rate of secure prisoners, 1997-98**



<sup>a</sup> WA data for escapes have been adjusted from previous years to more accurately conform with definitions.

<sup>b</sup> Tasmania reported zero escapes from secure custody from 1994-95 to 1997-98. <sup>c</sup> The ACT reported zero escapes from secure custody between 1993-94 and 1997-98.

Data source: table 8A.11.

### *Completion of community orders*

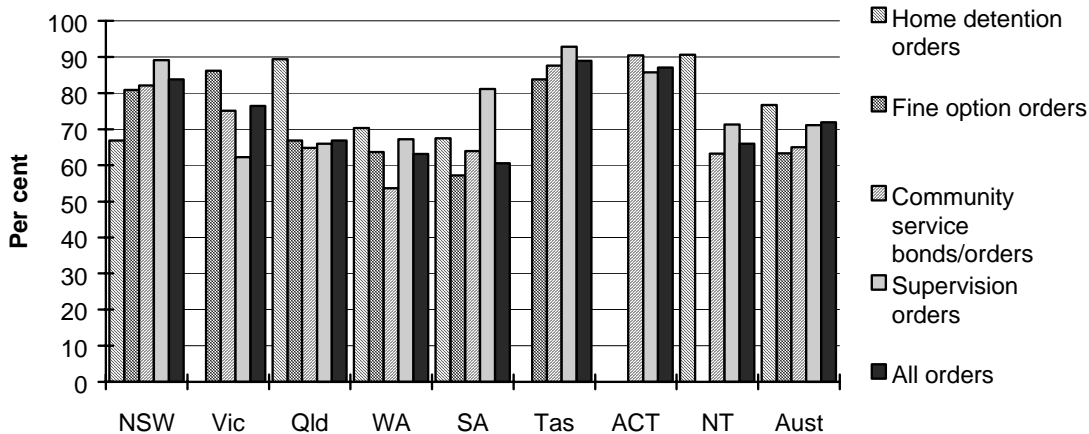
The key indicator of containment and supervision for community corrections is the successful completion of orders. This involves ensuring that offenders comply with order conditions and taking action where there is a breach of an order. A 100 per cent order completion figure could mean either exceptionally high compliance or a failure to detect or act on breaches of compliance.

Completion rates for total orders ranged from 60.6 per cent in SA to 89.0 per cent in Tasmania in 1997-98 (figure 8.23). The variability in community corrections programs and sentencing options across jurisdictions was noted earlier. The relative proportions of offenders on different orders and the requirements of these different types of orders affect the overall rate and comparability between jurisdictions. This indicator has also been reported according to broad categories of community correction order in 1997-98. However, even within these subtypes, there are still jurisdictional differences and comparisons should be made with caution.

Successful completion of home detention orders in 1997-98 (for those five jurisdictions in which this program operated) ranged from 66.8 per cent in NSW to 90.7 per cent in the NT. Completion rates for fine option orders ranged from 57.2 per cent in SA to 86.2 per cent in Victoria; those for community service bonds and orders ranged from 53.6 per cent in WA to 90.4 per cent in the ACT; and those for supervision orders ranged from 62.2 per cent in Victoria to 92.9 per cent in

Tasmania. Previous years' data could not be recalculated on a comparable basis to allow meaningful trend comparisons.

Figure 8.24 **Successful completion rate for community corrections, 1997-98<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT did not operate home detention programs. Data on fine option orders were not available for the ACT and the NT.

Data source: table 8A.12.

### Offender care

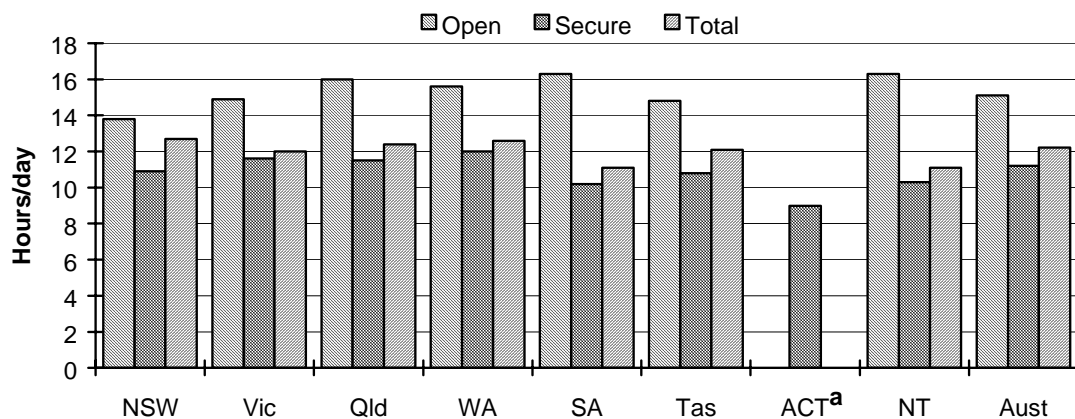
#### Out-of-cell hours

This indicator assumes that time in which prisoners are not restricted to their cells provides a more acceptable quality of life and therefore indicates offender care.

SA and the NT reported the lowest average daily out-of-cell hours for all prisons combined in 1997-98 (11.1 hours per day) and NSW reported the highest (12.7 hours). Out-of-cell hours for secure custody ranged from 9.0 in the ACT (remand prisoners only) to 12.0 in WA. The hours for open custody ranged from 13.8 in NSW to 16.3 in SA and the NT (figure 8.25). The average daily out-of-cell hours for total prisons increased from 1996-97 levels in all jurisdictions except NSW and the ACT (remand prisoners only).

Prison utilisation rates can be considered an indirect indicator of offender care, assuming that crowded living environments reduce quality of life. Prison use rates are discussed below under 'system resource management'.

Figure 8.26 Average out-of-cell hours, by type of prisoner, 1997-98



<sup>a</sup> The ACT had no open custody facilities. The secure rate is for the remand centre. A total rate was not calculated.

Data source: table 8A.13.

## Reparation

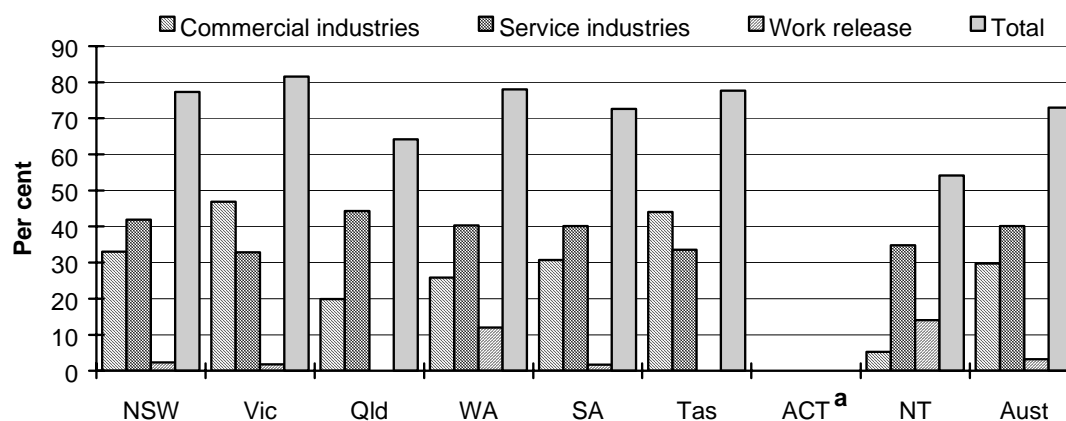
### Prisoner employment

Prisoner work provides reparation by generating income from prison industries (industries run on a commercial basis and aimed at an external clientele) and by offsetting expenditure through work in prison services (work undertaken to service the prison or in the form of unpaid community work by prisoners). All jurisdictions showed a significant number of prisoners employed in prison industries or services or, in a smaller number of cases, working in the community as part of a pre-release scheme whereby they are employed under industrial award conditions. The ACT was not included in this analysis because that jurisdiction holds only remand prisoners.

Victoria reported the highest percentage of prisoners eligible to work who were employed in 1997-98 (81.6 per cent) and the NT reported the smallest percentage (54.1 per cent) (figure 8.27). All jurisdictions except Victoria and Tasmania had proportionally more prisoners employed in prison services than in commercial industries; further, only a very small percentage were employed on work release (except in WA and the NT). Factors outside the control of corrective services (such as local economic conditions) affect capacity to attract commercially viable prison industries, particularly to prisons remote from population centres.

No trend analysis was provided on this indicator. Improvements to definitions and counting rules enhanced data quality in 1996-97, but comparable historical data are not available for all jurisdictions.

Figure 8.28 Proportion of prisoners employed, 1997-98



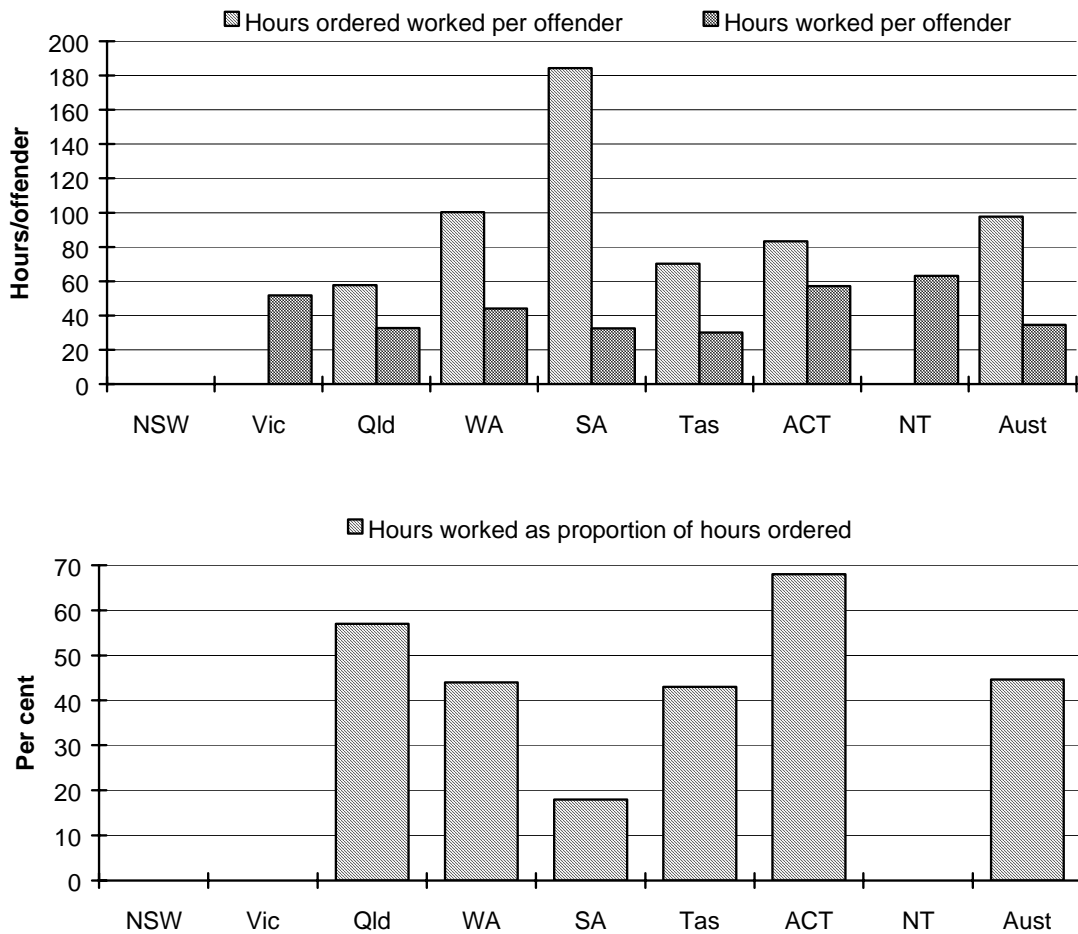
<sup>a</sup> The ACT held only remand prisoners.

Data source: table 8A.14.

### *Community work by community corrections offenders*

New indicators of community work were introduced in 1997-98 for community orders that have a work component, but information is available for only five jurisdictions. SA reported the highest average number of hours ordered to be worked per offender (184.3 hours) and Queensland reported the lowest (57.8 hours). However, the NT reported the highest average number of hours actually worked per offender (63.1 hours) and Tasmania reported the lowest (30.0 hours). The proportion of hours ordered to be worked that were actually worked ranged from 68 per cent in the ACT to 18 per cent in SA (figure 8.29). Hours actually worked and the proportion of hours ordered to be worked that were actually worked reflect corrective services' responses to court orders. Hours to be worked depend on jurisdictional legislation, court sentencing practices and, in particular, government policy on dealing with fine defaults.

Figure 8.30 Community corrections work rates, 1997-98<sup>a</sup>



<sup>a</sup> NSW, Victoria and NT did not report on all indicators.

Data source: table 8A.14.

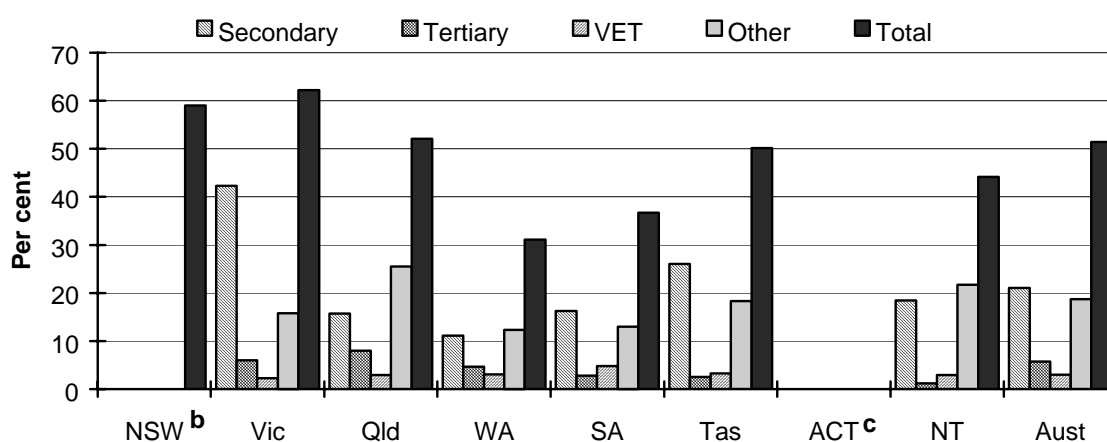
### Rehabilitation

### Education

Enhancing employment opportunities through vocational education and training is important for successfully re-integrating prisoners into the community and reducing of the risk of re-offence. The percentage of eligible prisoners undertaking education or training courses ranged from 31.1 per cent in WA to 62.2 per cent in Victoria in 1997-98. Victoria also had the largest percentage of prisoners in secondary education (42.3 per cent), while WA had the lowest (11.1 per cent). The proportion of prisoners engaged in tertiary education ranged from 8 per cent in Queensland to 1.2 per cent in the NT. Prisoners undertaking vocational education ranged from 2.3 per cent in Victoria to 4.8 per cent in SA. Queensland reported the highest

proportion (25.5 per cent) of prisoners undertaking other types of training (such as remedial or preparatory courses for basic skills of numeracy and literacy, or personal development courses), and WA reported the lowest (12.3 per cent) (figure 8.31). Breakdown by education type was not available for NSW, and education indicators were not applicable to the ACT.

Figure 8.32 **Proportion of prisoners enrolled in education and training, 1997-98<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Prisoners eligible to participate in education are defined differently in different jurisdictions. See tables 8A.21, 8A.29, 8A.35, 8A.41, 8A.47, 8A.53, 8A.59 and 8A.67 for details. <sup>b</sup> Breakdown by education type was not available for NSW. <sup>c</sup> The ACT held only remand prisoners. **VET** Vocational Education and Training.

Data source: table 8A.15.

### *Personal development*

The relevant indicator for community corrections is the number of offenders undertaking personal development courses provided by or on referral from corrective services. This indicator was introduced for the first time in the 1998 Report, and only Victoria and the NT were able to report on this indicator for 1997-98.

## **Efficiency**

### *System resource management*

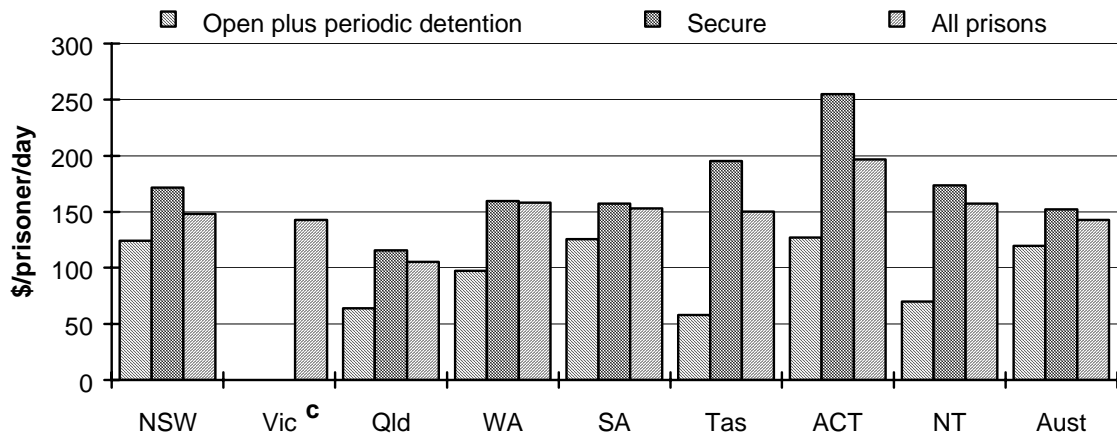
Financial indicators for 1997-98 remain vulnerable to comparability problems between jurisdictions, despite improvements in the collection of data on resource management. The treatment of annual recurrent costs still differs somewhat between

States and Territories, hindering interjurisdictional comparisons and analysis of trends over time. Even when based on comparable information, efficiency indicators are affected by factors other than differences in performance efficiency — for example, the composition of the prisoner population (such as security classification, the number of female or special need prisoners, or the number of periodic detainees), the size and dispersion of the area serviced, and the scale of operations.

*Recurrent costs per prisoner (all prisons)*

Average recurrent cost per prisoner per day (for open and secure prisons combined) ranged from \$105 per prisoner per day in Queensland to \$197 in the ACT in 1997-98. Calculating costs for open and secure custody separately, Queensland maintained the lowest unit costs for secure prisons at \$116 while the ACT reported the highest unit cost at \$255. Unit costs for prisoners in open custody (including periodic detainees on a 2/7 pro rata basis) ranged from \$58 in Tasmania to \$127 in the ACT (figure 8.33). Victoria did not report on open and secure prisoners separately for this indicator. The cost of capital for government owned prisons is discussed later.

Figure 8.34 **Cost of prisons, 1997-98<sup>a, b</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Recurrent expenditure included expenditure by umbrella departments on behalf of corrective services and is net of recurrent receipts (own source revenues). <sup>b</sup> All prisons expenditure included expenditure by umbrella departments on behalf of corrective services that could not be allocated separately to open or secure prisons. <sup>c</sup> Victoria did not report separately on open and secure prisoners for this indicator.

Data source: table 8A.6.

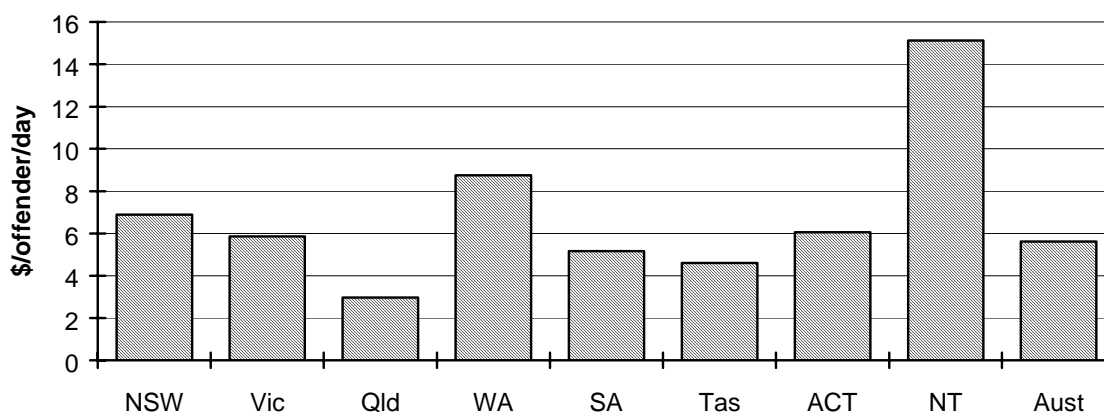
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### *Costs per offender (community corrections)*

Costs per offender per day in community corrections varied from \$2.97 in Queensland to \$15.13 in the NT in 1997-98 (figure 8.35). This indicator, as with prisoner costs, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of different offender populations (and associated supervision requirements), dispersion and size factors among jurisdictions.

No trend analysis was provided on this indicator. Improvements to definitions and counting rules enhanced data quality in 1997-98, but comparable historical data were not available for all jurisdictions.

**Figure 8.36 Cost of community corrections, 1997-98<sup>a</sup>**



<sup>a</sup> Recurrent expenditure included expenditure by umbrella departments on behalf of corrective services and is net of recurrent receipts (own source revenues).

Data source: table 8A.6.

### *Prison utilisation*

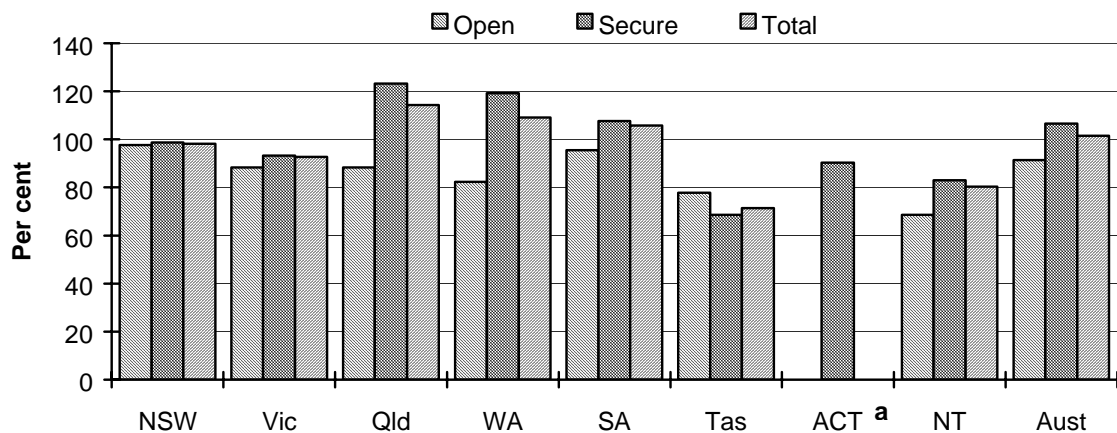
The prison utilisation rate is considered to be an indicator of the efficiency with which assets are employed. However, given the impact of prison crowding on prisoner living conditions, it could also be considered an indirect indicator of quality of life and thus of offender care. The optimum rate of prison utilisation is not 100 per cent, because facilities need to accommodate transfer of prisoners, provide special purpose accommodation such as hospital and protection units, provide separate facilities for males and females and different security levels, and deal with

short term fluctuations in prisoner numbers. The internationally accepted rate is 85–95 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

Prison utilisation for all prisons (open plus secure) ranged from 71.3 per cent in Tasmania to 114.2 per cent in Queensland in 1997-98 (figure 8.37). Rates in Queensland, WA and SA exceeded 100 per cent of current design capacity. (Rates may exceed 100 per cent where more prisoners are housed in a facility than allowed for in its design.) Tasmania maintained the lowest secure prison utilisation rate (68.5 per cent) and Queensland had the highest (123.2 per cent). Open prison utilisation rates ranged from 68.6 per cent in the NT to 97.6 per cent in NSW. The periodic detention rate was 147.4 per cent in NSW and 91.5 per cent in the ACT.

Total prison utilisation rates increased from those of the previous year in NSW, Queensland and WA, fell slightly in Victoria and Tasmania, and declined more substantially in the NT and SA (although to a level that still exceeded design capacity in the latter jurisdiction). The construction of new prisons in a number of jurisdictions increased prison capacity relative to daily numbers.

Figure 8.38 Prison capacity use rates, 1997-98



<sup>a</sup> The ACT does not operate open prisons.

Data source: table 8A.16.

<sup>1</sup> The Australian Institute of Criminology, the Council of Europe and the American Corrections Association have recommended a utilisation rate of 85–95 per cent in the industrialised world.

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## *Government operations resource management*

### *Prisoner-to-staff ratios*

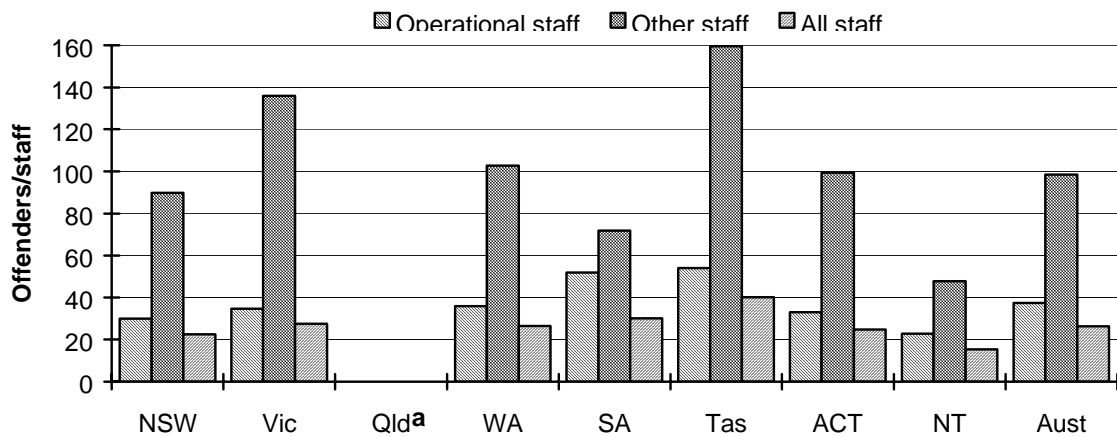
Previous Reports have reported prisoner-to-staff ratios as an indicator of the efficiency of government operated prisons. The Steering Committee decided not to report this indicator in 1997-98 because it was found to be a flawed measure of efficiency. Additional services provided by prison staff in some jurisdictions, such as court security and prisoner escort, meant that this indicator was not comparable across jurisdictions. The results for this indicator were also affected by factors which affect supervision resource requirements (for example, prison design — modern prisons incorporating video surveillance and electronic security require fewer staff).

The framework of indicators identifies the unit cost per prisoner day for government operated prisons as a preferred indicator of efficiency. Of the four jurisdictions that have private prisons, only Queensland provided data on the unit cost of government operations (\$129 per prisoner per day). This could be compared with the systemwide costs of WA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT, although the cost per prisoner may be sensitive to the mix of prisoners in public and private prisons. NSW, Victoria and SA were unable to provide these data.

### *Offender-to-staff ratios*

Offender-to-staff ratios for community corrections ranged from 40.3 offenders per staff member in Tasmania to 15.4 in the NT in 1997-98 (figure **8.39**). Tasmania and the NT maintain these relative positions when ratios are separately calculated against operational staff and other staff. Queensland did not report on this indicator in 1997-98. SA and the NT showed consistent decreases in the number of offenders to total staff over the five-year period to 1997-98.

Figure 8.40 Community corrections offender-to-staff ratio, 1997-98



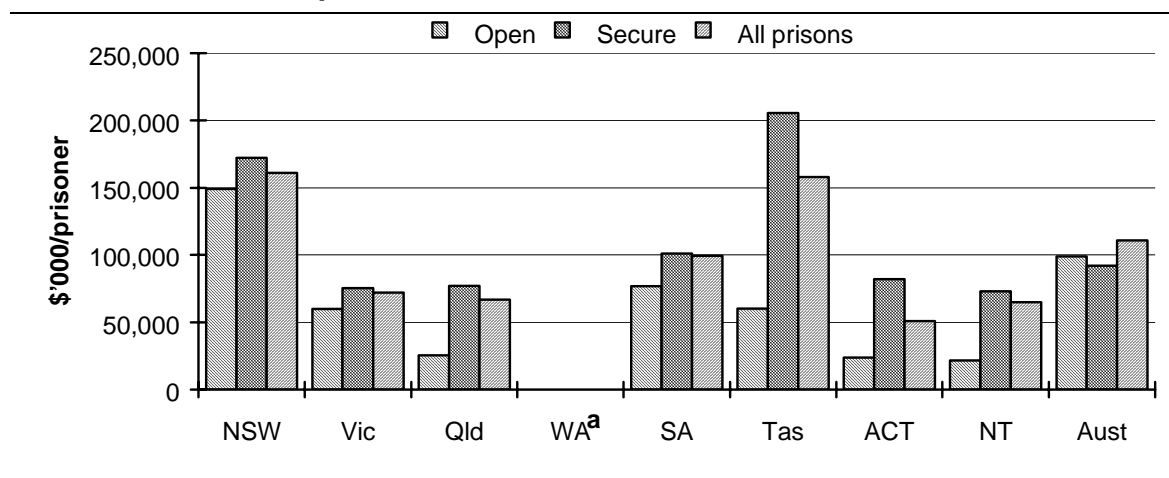
<sup>a</sup> Queensland did not report on this indicator.

Data source: table 8A.17.

#### *Assets (publicly owned prisons)*

Value of assets per prisoner is an indicator of the capital inputs to corrective services. It is limited to publicly owned and operated prisons and to government owned assets in privately operated prisons, calculated against the relevant prisoner population. The ACT reported the lowest asset value per prisoner and periodic detainee (calculated on a 2/7 proportional basis) held in publicly operated prisons in 1997-98 (\$50 850) and NSW reported the highest value (\$160 940) (figure 8.41). WA did not report on this indicator in 1997-98. These figures need to be interpreted with care, because the indicator is particularly sensitive to the method of asset valuation and the accounting policies applied.

Figure 8.42 Value of government owned assets per prisoner in government owned prisons, 1997-98



<sup>a</sup> WA did not report on this indicator.

Data source: table 8A.18.

### *User cost of capital*

This year's Report includes data on the user cost of capital as part of the costs for each government service reported (where possible). The user cost of capital for government services is the cost of the funds tied up in the capital used to deliver services (for example, the land and buildings used to house prisoners). The user cost of capital makes explicit the opportunity cost (the return forgone by using the funds to deliver services rather than investing them elsewhere or using them to retire debt) of this capital.

When comparing costs of government services, it is important to take full account of the cost of capital because:

- it is often a significant component of the cost of services; and
- it is currently treated inconsistently (included in the costs of services delivered by many non-government service providers, but effectively costed at zero for most budget sector elements).

Failing to account for a user cost of capital can lead to significant underestimating of costs for those services for which government capital is a major input.

The user cost of capital has been calculated by applying a jurisdiction cost of capital rate to the value of government assets. Therefore, it is sensitive to the method and accuracy of asset valuation in each jurisdiction. Although asset valuation information is currently imperfect, the Steering Committee considers that the use of imperfect data is preferable to not costing government capital at all.

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The Steering Committee agreed to apply a user cost of capital notified by State and Territory Treasuries to each jurisdiction's assets. Where no rate was advised for a jurisdiction, the average of the rates provided would be applied to the assets of that jurisdiction. Victoria had been the only jurisdiction to advise a rate to date, so this rate (8 per cent) has been applied to the value of each jurisdiction's average total assets.

A number of complex issues will require further consideration to refine reporting in future Reports:

- whether the user cost of capital rate should differ across services;
- whether the rate should differ across jurisdictions;
- the most appropriate rate/s; and
- the most appropriate asset base on which to apply the user cost of capital.

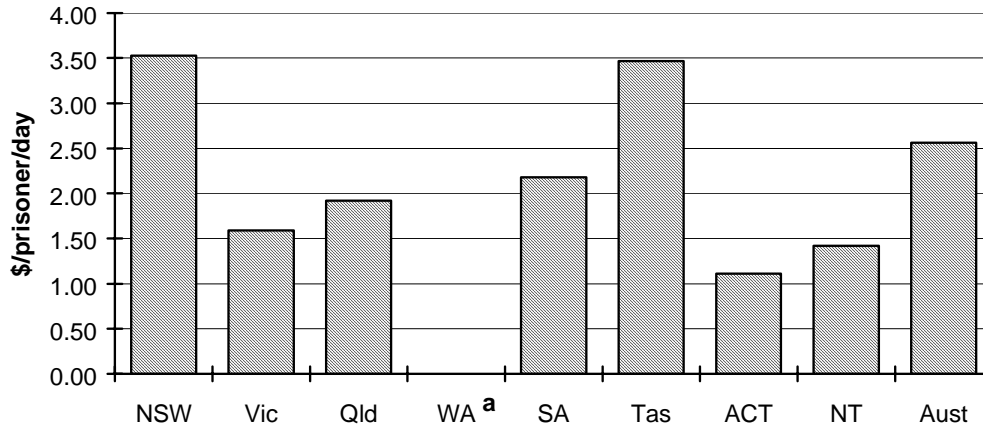
The user cost of capital per day per prisoner in government owned prisons ranged from \$1.11 in the ACT to \$3.53 in NSW. (WA did not report a value of assets for 1997-98 and therefore a user cost of capital could not be calculated) (figure **8.43**).

Conceptually, the user cost of capital per prisoner day could be added to the recurrent cost per prisoner day for government operations. However, further work is necessary to ensure that current data do not include double counting — for example, where an agency makes interest payments on assets that are debt financed. The user cost of capital per prisoner in government owned prisons could also be added to the total system recurrent cost per prisoner day to derive the full cost (weighted according to the proportion of prisoners in government owned prisons).

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Figure 8.44 **User cost of capital per prisoner in government owned prisons, 1997-98**

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<sup>a</sup> WA did not report a value of assets for 1997-98.

Data source: table 8A.18.

## 8.6 Jurisdictions' comments

This section provides comments from each jurisdiction on the services covered in this chapter. Appendix A contains detailed statistics and short profiles on each State and Territory, which may assist in interpreting the performance indicators presented in this chapter. The information covers aspects such as age profile; geographic distribution of the population; income levels; education levels; tenure of dwellings; and cultural heritage (such as aboriginality and ethnicity).

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### **New South Wales Government comments**

NSW confirms its continuing commitment to the development and collection of national performance indicators for correctional services.

In 1997-98 the Department's plans for the modernisation of correctional facilities and improvements in the provision of correctional services throughout NSW came to fruition. For example:

- in July 1997 the 900 bed purpose-built Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre at Silverwater was opened, followed by the closure of some historic facilities (for example, Cooma and Maitland);
- therapeutic centres providing residential programs for special categories of prisoners (for example, sex offenders, HIV and Hepatitis C positive prisoners, violent and at-risk offenders) became operational; and
- the assumption of responsibility from the Police Service, begun in previous years, for transporting prisoners to court and their security while in court, continued throughout this period.

In addition, NSW has implemented a process of technology renewal with the introduction of the Offender Management System (replacing the Offender Records System) and the scheduled introduction of the Probation Information Management System. Indigenous population data missing from the 1997-98 data collection (due to data inconsistencies arising from the conversion) will be remedied in the 1998-99 data collection.

NSW has sought a review of the counting rule for collecting assault data to ensure greater consistency across jurisdictions. The high assault rates in NSW are due mainly to the more broadly based definition of assaults employed in NSW.

Against this background of significant change, performance in 1997-98 compared favourably with the previous year's outcomes for this State, for example:

- the total prisoner escape rate remained unchanged from the previous year at 1.5 and there was a slight decline in the escape rate from secure custody. The escape (abscond) rate for periodic detainees was also stable at 0.6;
- more than three quarters (77 per cent) of those prisoners eligible to work were employed, one third of them in industries. The employment rate for periodic detainees engaged in community work was 45.1; and
- the completion rate for offenders with community orders was pleasingly high with more than eight in ten offenders (84 per cent) registering a successful completion. Those with Supervision Orders showed the highest success rate at 89 per cent.

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## Victorian Government comments

“ The commissioning of a third private prison in Victoria in late 1997 was a significant milestone in the reform program in Victorian corrections. Adult corrections in Victoria has been transformed over the last five years through the development of a competitive, multi-provider environment, extensive modernisation of facilities and the establishment of a regulatory agency which sets policy direction and service delivery standards, as well as performing important sentence management and monitoring functions.

Comparison of the national results for the resource management measures demonstrates that Victoria continues to operate a cost-effective correctional system. Refinement of the definitions of the key efficiency indicators of average cost per prisoner and offender since the last report has resulted in enhanced comparability across jurisdictions on these measures. In 1996-97, the data indicated Victoria had the second highest cost, both per prisoner and per offender in community supervision. Following the review of the cost calculations, the data now shows that Victoria's costs are among the lowest on both measures. Based on these indicators, Victoria has one of the most efficient corrections systems and this is further supported by the lowest cost of corrective services per head of adult population.

The prison utilisation rate remained at around 90 per cent, even though the average prison population in Victoria increased substantially by almost 10 per cent from the previous year. This was achievable through increased system capacity which was the net result of the redevelopment of the prison facilities.

Outcomes in Victoria for most effectiveness measures in prisons and community supervision also compare favourably with the other jurisdictions. In particular, the prisoner education and employment figures improved significantly after the reconfigured prison system stabilised following the extensive changes which took place last year.

Beyond the measures of performance in service delivery currently included in this collection, Victoria operates a wide range of programs in prisons and community supervision aimed at enhancing the rehabilitative prospects of offenders. Special emphasis is placed on programs which address offence related behaviour, especially for offenders convicted of sex, violence or drug offences. Under a strategy aimed at addressing the needs of offenders with drug and alcohol problems, substantial resources under the Turning The Tide program have been allocated to improving the quality of, and access to, drug treatment programs. Other current initiatives include enhancement of suicide prevention strategies and studies aimed at improving educational outcomes for prisoners and offenders.

Victoria is pleased to support the continuing development of comparable and reliable national performance data, together with the benchmarking studies.

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### Queensland Government comments

The Queensland Corrective Services Commission (QCSC) purchases correctional services in Queensland and needs comparative performance data and national 'best practice' information. The cooperation of Australian correctional jurisdictions in the continuous improvement of performance measurement definitions and data accuracy helps meet these needs. This cooperation led to the decision to discontinue the category of community custody (previously only used in Queensland). This has contributed to an increase in the number of open custody prisoners. All data have been recalculated to take this change into account.

The daily average prisoner population increased from 3921 in 1996-97 to 4586 in 1997-98. The increase over the past four years is double that of any other State. Queensland has the second highest imprisonment rate in Australia at 188.9 per 100 000 adult population, with only the NT imprisoning its offenders at a higher level. The imprisonment rate in 1996-97 was 150.6. Queensland also experienced rapid growth in the female prisoner population although the proportion of female prisoners compared to males at 5.65 per cent is similar to most other States and only slightly higher than the national average of 5.59 per cent.

This high rate of growth has created a situation where there was a 114 per cent occupancy rate for the system in 1997-98, up from 113 per cent in 1996-97, and significant numbers of prisoners are 'doubled up'. This doubling up has contributed to a further reduction in prisoner costs with Queensland recording the lowest total cost per prisoner per day of \$115.52. The overcrowding has had a significant impact on involvement of prisoners in meaningful activity. Queensland shows prisoner employment in commercial industries (19.85 per cent) at a level below most other States. This is also well below national best practice (46.94 per cent). This area has been targeted by Queensland as one area where improvement should be achieved. The need for improvement further applies in the area of vocational education and training (Queensland 15.6 per cent compared to best practice 42.34 per cent) although Queensland does perform better in the areas of secondary education and other training.

In spite of two extraordinary incidents where nine prisoners escaped while staff were under fire from external supports, the rate of escapes from secure custody centres (0.35) is only slightly higher than the national average rate for secure centres (0.31). The total escape rate for secure and open custody (0.82) was below the national average (1.45). Queensland showed the lowest rate of deaths in custody (0.2 per 100 prisoner years), but the small numbers of these events mean a small change in numbers could result in significant changes to the rates.

Queensland shows the highest use of fine option orders and community service orders and is exceeded only by NSW in direct supervision numbers. The number of offenders performing community work affect the offender cost per day figure for community supervision and Queensland supports developing this indicator to separate community work data from more expensive supervision options. Queensland cost per offender per day in community supervision was \$2.97.

### Western Australian Government comments

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WA is committed to the development and collection of national performance data for correctional services which has provided jurisdictions with a solid foundation for examining best practice in corrections. WA continues to have reservations about the current comparability of this performance data and use of 'selected' performance indicators.

Geographically, WA is Australia's largest State with prisons and community corrections centres in many remote locations throughout the State. The offender population is characterised by a significant over representation of Aboriginal people within the Corrective Services system. In 1997-98, Aboriginal people comprised 33 per cent of the daily average number of persons held in prisons and 32 per cent of persons on community based supervision.

In 1997-98, WA's main focus remains the improvement of correctional services throughout the State. Planning is nearing completion for the implementation of reform initiatives, which include :

- the establishment of a central remand, receipt and assessment centre;
- a new 750 bed medium security prison, to be built by the year 2000, for which private operators will be considered and assessed against performance under the public sector model; and
- exploring contestability for the provision of offender management services under a purchaser, provider and regulator model.

The cost of community supervision in WA has increased over the past few years, but this needs to be seen in the context of WA's dispersion and high level of Aboriginal offenders, which significantly increase the costs of operation. There has also been a significant reduction in the number of persons being supervised for fine default. Because the level of resources committed to supervising fine default offenders is very low in comparison to other offenders, the unit cost per offender is distorted in comparison to other jurisdictions, which retain a high number of offenders being supervised for fine default.

WA has maintained incentives to reduce the rate of imprisonment. New community based options such as the Intensive Supervision Order and Suspended Imprisonment are aimed at bridging the gap between former community orders and imprisonment. In addition, WA continues to develop policy options that provide courts with an alternative to imprisonment and in turn provide offenders with an opportunity to learn new life and work skills.

WA's offender management strategies are being targeted at high risk offenders to provide program and nonprogram intervention so as to address the causes of offending behaviour. The criminogenic needs of offenders will be continually reinforced and met through the case management of offenders.

## South Australian Government comments

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SA recognises the value of nationally comparable performance data as a tool which contributes to greater understanding of key areas of corrections performance. It is committed to the ongoing task of developing and refining the collection of national performance indicators, particularly in view of their applicability in best practice projects such as the current benchmarking project being undertaken by the National Corrections Advisory Group.

The SA prison population is experiencing a period of stability, contrary to the growth in other jurisdictions; in fact its daily average prison population has decreased slightly. The reasons for this are currently under investigation, with the prisoner segment of sentenced males most affected. The daily average in 1996-97 was 1475 compared to 1421 in 1997-98, with the imprisonment rate decreasing to 121.2; its lowest level in four years. Conversely, the daily average community corrections population has increased by 14 per cent.

Total prison utilisation decreased from 114.80 per cent in 1996-97 to 107.65 per cent in 1997-98. This however, does not take into account available doubled up accommodation, which would place utilisation at a reasonable 89 per cent.

SA recorded the lowest rate of prisoner on prisoner assaults, at 7.39 and a decrease from the previous year. The rate of total deaths in custody has also decreased, from 0.49 in 1996-97 to 0.35 in 1997-98.

SA was one of two jurisdictions recording the highest out-of-cell hours for open prisons, but recorded the second lowest for secure prisons. The total rate overall has improved from 10.60 in 1996-97 to 11.10 in 1997-98.

The percentage of community corrections orders successfully completed increased marginally, with all order categories, excluding home detention, experienced slight increases from the previous year.

The rate of prisoner 'return to corrections' decreased markedly from 46.6 in 1996-97 to 40.9 in 1997-98, however, the rate of community correction offender 'return to corrections' increased from 31.3 to 35.1.

Some of the areas in which significant progress occurred during 1997-98 include:

- the implementation of Case Management across the organisation and, in particular, the formalisation of the throughcare concept with the development of an electronic case file. The electronic case file will go 'live' during 1998-99;
- the formalisation of six core offence-focussed programs for delivery to offenders;
- funding approval has been gained for the expanded methadone program; and
- a formal agreement has been reached with tribal authorities who will provide supervision for some indigenous offenders on Community Service.

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### **Tasmanian Government comments**

The availability of nationally comparable data has continued to provide a valuable yardstick in measuring performance. Reviewing the way Corrective Services manages its functions has contained the increase in the daily cost per prisoner to \$1.43.

An emphasis on all aspects of workplace health and safety issues and more timely management of injury cases has reversed the trend in the number of claims lodged. A small reduction in costs was achieved in 1997-98 and even better results are expected in 1998-99.

Although the daily average prison population dropped slightly for the year, Tasmania is beginning to see signs of the first significant increase in the prison population for many years. This is due mainly to a doubling in the number of persons on remand. The demands placed on small jurisdictions to cope with large variations in the numbers in custody have again been apparent. The variation experienced between the highest and lowest numbers in custody was over 28 per cent of the daily average. Hobart's new remand centre, due for occupation early in 1999, will provide 40 beds for detainees and an additional 20 beds, which will allow the watchhouse function to be taken over from Police.

Community Corrections continues to be a cost effective alternative to imprisonment. Tasmania's costs are among the lowest in the nation due largely to the offender to officer ratio that is among the highest in Australia. Despite the workload imposed on field staff, a high rate of successful completions has been achieved. Taken together, this demonstrates the commitment to ensuring that the orders of the courts are effectively carried out.

The substantial cost of implementing improved Justice information systems will be a continuing challenge. Until this is overcome, Tasmania will have difficulty in providing all of the performance data particularly in the area of measuring recidivism.

Tasmania is strongly committed to the national data collection process which has become an essential tool in measuring progress in effectiveness and efficiency in the Corrective Services output.

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## **Australian Capital Territory Government comments**

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The National Corrections Advisory Group (NCAG) has continued to refine data definitions and counting rules over the last year. Despite this, considerable inconsistency across jurisdictions remains in relation to their interpretation and application.

Community corrections is an area for which the availability of more detailed comparative data would be invaluable. It is hoped that the NCAG will develop counting rules and definitions that enable us to compare jurisdictions whilst taking into account the complexities of different community corrections options around Australia.

In this report, some of the ACT prisoner data take into account both sentenced prisoners held in NSW and remand prisoners, held in the Belconnen Remand Centre (BRC), whereas other data are limited to remand prisoners only. In the case of data including only remand prisoners, it is important to note that due to the small numbers involved, substantial changes in percentage rates do not necessarily reflect large changes in actual numbers.

The construction of a local correctional facility is planned for the ACT in order to accommodate increasing prisoner numbers and ongoing demands placed on the limited capacity of the BRC. It is envisaged that, with a new facility operating in the ACT, costs of accommodating ACT prisoners will decrease substantially. The facility is not expected to be operational until 2001.

Due to apparent inconsistencies in the application of counting rules across jurisdictions, the ACT has withdrawn all assault-related data, both for prisoners and periodic detainees. It is hoped that the relevant counting rules will be more strictly defined in future, to enable a more accurate cross-jurisdictional comparison.

We look forward to being able to contribute to the ongoing work of the NCAG in its effort to achieve consistent and accurate information dissemination throughout Australian jurisdictions.

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## Northern Territory Government comments

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The NT continues to support the Report on Government Services and is committed to utilising the data collected for internal performance analysis and National benchmarking in the correction's business environment.

Prisons and Community Corrections are administered by a single agency in the NT which incorporates two correctional institutions located in Darwin and Alice Springs and Community Corrections offices/staff located in approximately 30 locations throughout the Territory. The NT prisoner population represents only 3 per cent of the total Australian prisoner population. Over 70 per cent of the NT prisoner population are indigenous people. However, as indigenous people represent approximately 28 per cent of the NT population, the rate of imprisonment of indigenous people compared with non-indigenous people is the lowest for all jurisdictions.

The NT continues to demonstrate it is highly effective, in relation to the national levels for the effectiveness indicators, in providing Correctional Services to its population. For example, the escape rate of prisoners during 1997-98 was the lowest (that is, 0.16 escapes per 100 prisoner years) and only involved one escape incident. The NT also recorded the highest rate of successful completion of Home Detention Orders and the highest average number of hours worked for Community Service Orders.

During 1997-98, great emphasis was placed on prisoners providing reparation to the community, in that approximately 10 per cent of prisoners were involved in Community Work Programs, including graffiti removal and general clean-up of urban areas, preservation of historical sites and the maintenance of national park facilities.

The unique characteristics of the Territory (for example, scale, isolation, dispersion and large indigenous population) continue to cause the cost of supplying correctional and other services to Territorians to be higher than national benchmarks. However, the daily average cost per prisoner per day has reduced in the past year. This is partly attributed to the significant increase in prisoner numbers and the improved efficiencies in service delivery.

The costs for Community Correction Offenders continues to be significantly higher than for other jurisdictions, which is attributed to the decreased number of offenders with Community Corrections Orders (due to changes in legislation and sentencing practices and improved supervision) and the physical characteristics of the Territory mentioned above.

Efforts continue to improve performance in these areas.

The NT is however, pleased that again the national comparisons demonstrate that its overall service delivery is of a high level.

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