
7 CORRECTIVE SERVICES

7.1 Introduction

In this Report, corrective services incorporates prison custody (including periodic detention) and a range of community-based correctional orders and programs for adult offenders. Three categories of corrective services are identified, based on the extent to which the individual's liberty and activities are restricted by order of a court or other lawful authority:

- *prison* — a legally proclaimed prison (excluding police prisons or juvenile detention facilities) which holds adult offenders;
- *community custody* — orders which deprive adults of their liberty by confining their physical location to a facility, dwelling or property that is not a proclaimed prison; and
- *community supervision* — other orders on adults under the supervision of an adult correctional agency in the community.

The scope of corrective services in this Report does not extend to:

- juvenile offenders (generally the responsibility of community services agencies);
- people held in institutions for the purpose of being provided with psychiatric care (generally the responsibility of health services);
- prisoners in police facilities or custody; and
- people held in facilities such as immigration and military detention centres.

The framework of performance indicators adopted in this Report has been modified to reflect government responsibilities as both manager of the corrections system and as an operator of correctional facilities.

Indicators and data quality are continually being reviewed. The 1996–97 data set included both improved indicators and more detailed breakdowns of ongoing indicators, such as average prisoner numbers, the identification of indigenous prisoners and prisoners employed by type of employment. Considerable attention has also been focused on improving jurisdictional comparability, particularly in relation to financial data items and the treatment of private prisons.

For revised indicators, jurisdictions have updated information reported in previous years wherever possible. However, where this has not been possible, care needs to be taken in making comparisons over time.

7.2 Profile of corrective services

Each jurisdiction maintained prison facilities during the reporting period, although prisoners sentenced in the ACT were held in NSW prisons under agreement between the two governments. Where possible, ACT data relate to both its locally-held remand prisoners and sentenced prisoners held in NSW — this provides a better reflection of its system-wide effectiveness and costs.

Only NSW and the ACT provided for periodic detention of prisoners.¹ Periodic detainees were reported on separately from prisoners, except where information about this group could not be readily separated out (as was the case for financial data).² Future Reports will specifically report on periodic detainees for all relevant indicators.

In 1996–97, there were 111 prison and periodic detention facilities across Australia. These included six privately operated facilities in four jurisdictions (NSW, Victoria, Queensland and SA). A total of 1862 prisoners, or 11 per cent of the total prisoner population (excluding periodic detainees) were held in private facilities across Australia in 1996–97.

All jurisdictions provided community-based programs, including post-prison supervision such as parole, and community-based orders as directed by the courts. Four jurisdictions also provided community custody programs — NSW, SA and NT (which ran home detention programs) and Queensland (which ran outstations and workcamps). It should be noted that other jurisdictions may have provided similar programs but these were included within prison or community supervision, rather than separately identified as community custody.

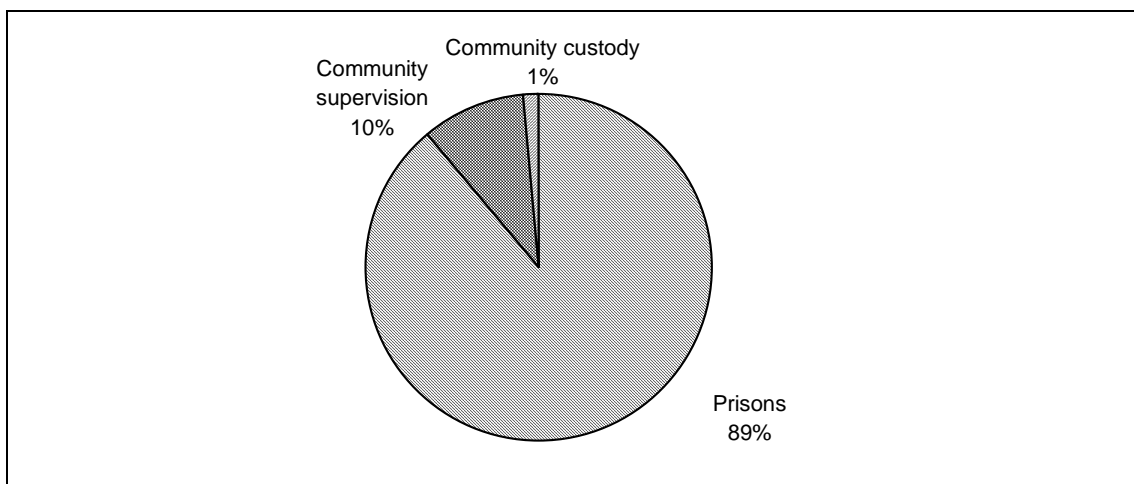
1 Periodic detention refers to discontinuous periods of imprisonment — for example, offenders sentenced to weekend detention in prison, but allowed to return home during the week.

2 For NSW, periodic detainees were included on a two-sevenths pro rata basis for some indicators — for example, each periodic detainee counted as two-sevenths of a prisoner for calculating recurrent expenditure per prisoner.

7.2.1 Expenditure and staffing

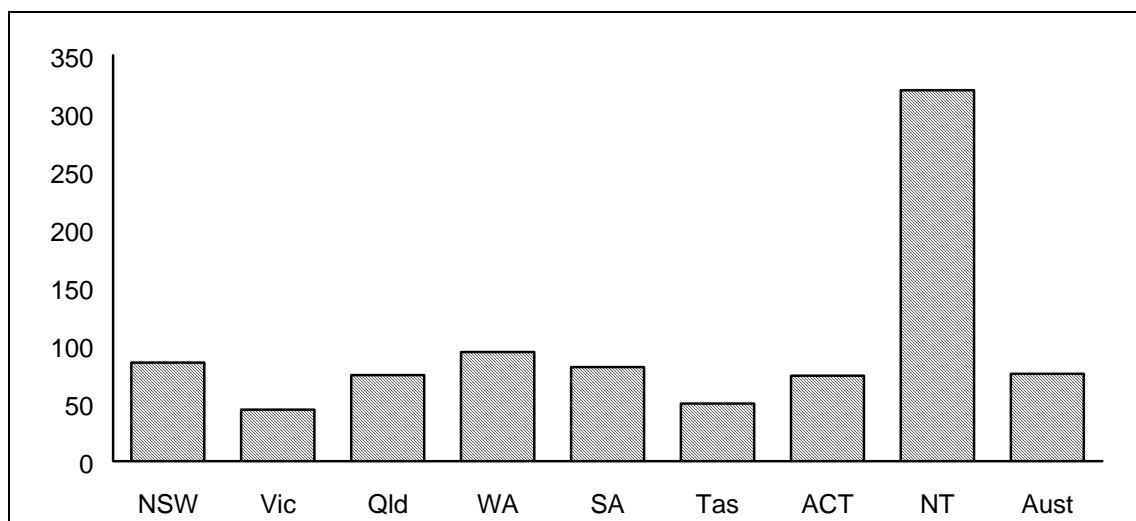
Total recurrent expenditure on corrective services amounted to \$1064 million in Australia in 1996–97. This comprised \$945 million (89 per cent) for prisons, \$13 million (1 per cent) for community custody and \$106 million (10 per cent) for community supervision (Figure 7.1). Total recurrent corrective services expenditure per head of adult population ranged from \$44 in Victoria to \$320 in the NT (Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.1: Recurrent expenditure by type of detention or sanction, 1996–97



Source: Table 7A.1

Figure 7.2: Recurrent expenditure per head of adult population, 1996–97 (\$)



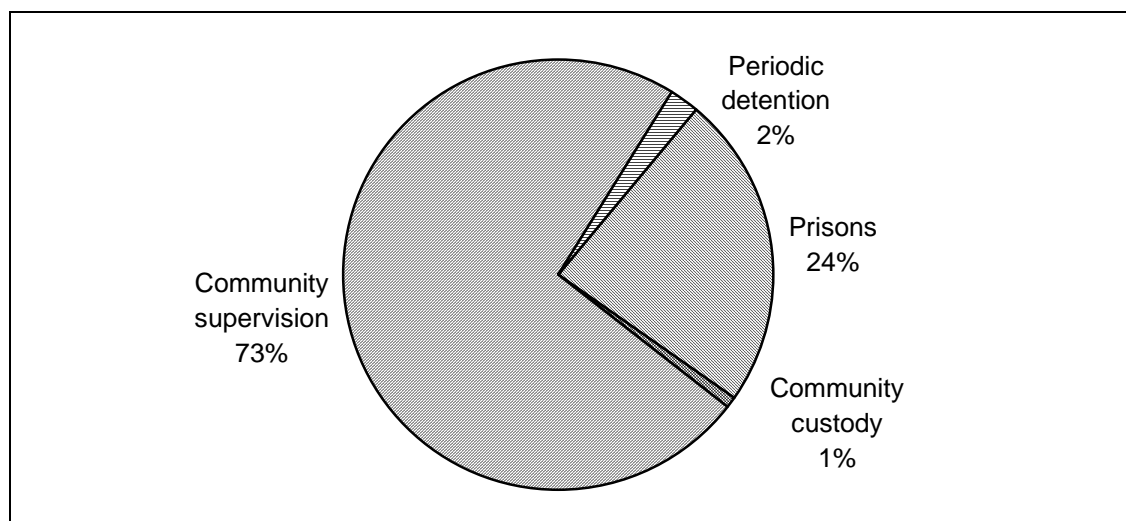
Source: Table 7A.2

Publicly-owned prison assets were valued at over \$1900 million in 1996–97. Government-operated corrective facilities employed the full-time equivalent of approximately 12 000 staff across prisons, community custody and community supervision.

7.2.2 Prisoner and offender populations

On average, almost 17 000 adults were held in Australian prisons each day during 1996–97 (excluding periodic detainees). In addition, over 500 adults were held in some form of community custody and 52 000 adults were under community supervision orders (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3: Offenders by type of detention, 1996–97

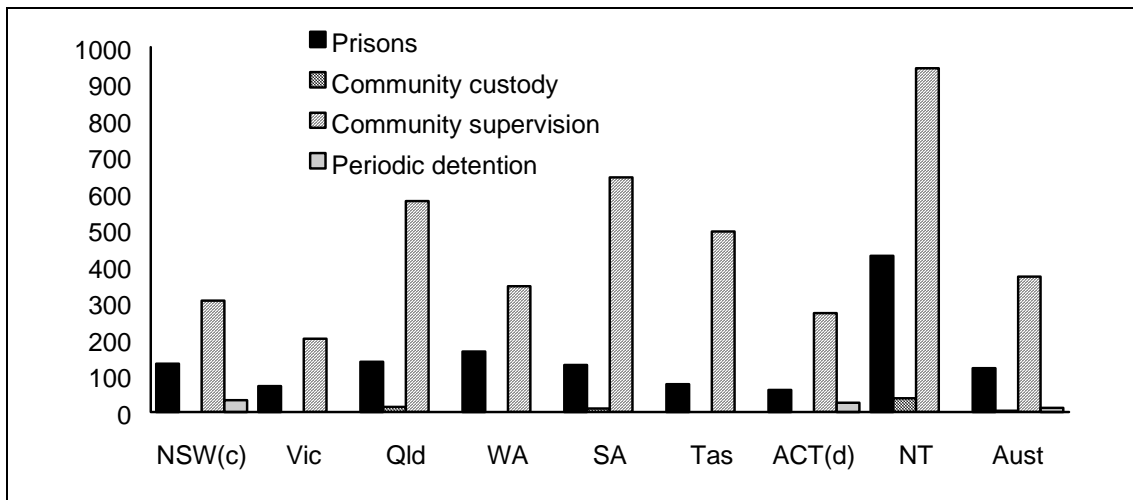


Source: Table 7A.3

Of those in prison, 29 per cent were held in open prisons (facilities containing prisoners classified as low security) and 71 per cent were held in secure facilities. The prison population comprised 95 per cent men and 5 per cent women. Additionally, on average, 1620 people were serving periodic detention orders in NSW and the ACT (Section 7A.3).

The average number of prisoners (excluding periodic detainees) per 100 000 of the general population aged 17 years and over ranged from 61 in the ACT and 71 in Victoria to 428 in the NT in 1996–97. The national imprisonment rate was 120 per 100 000 of the general population aged 17 years and over (Figure 7.4). This rate has shown a steady increase over the past five years.

Figure 7.4: Offenders held in each type of detention, 1996–97
(offenders per 100 000 adults)^{a,b}



a Based on average daily offender numbers in 1996–97.

b Victoria, WA, Tasmania and the ACT did not use community custody as a sentencing option. NSW reported a community custody rate of 0.4.

c The NSW policy of allowing termination of community supervision orders prior to expiry of the order when program goals have been achieved, leads to a relative underestimate of people serving community supervision orders in NSW. NSW used periodic detention as a sentencing option.

d The ACT rate included prisoners held in NSW prisons. The ACT used periodic detention as a sentencing option.

Source: Table 7A.4

The prison population in May 1997 included 3400 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander prisoners (or 20 per cent of Australia's total prison population). The Australian imprisonment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was 1820 (per 100 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults).

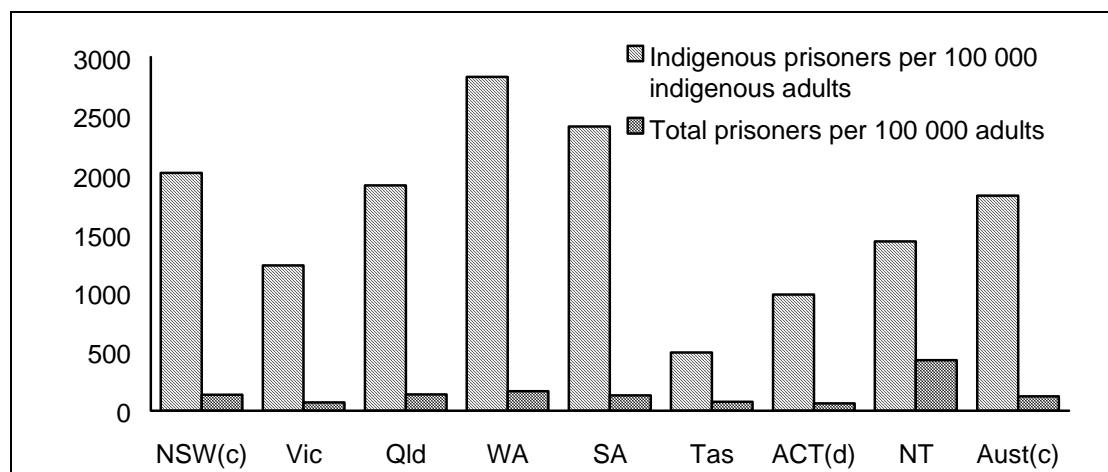
The imprisonment rate per 100 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged over 17 years was generally 12 to 17 times that for the general population except in the NT and Tasmania (where the rates were three and six times those for the general population respectively). The imprisonment rate per 100 000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 17 years ranged from 392 in Tasmania to 2674 in WA (Figure 7.5).

A daily average of 532 people were serving community custody orders in the four jurisdictions using this form of detention in 1996–97. Rates per 100 000 of the general population aged 17 years and over varied from 0.4 in NSW to 37 in the NT. The overall rate across the relevant jurisdictions was 3.8.

An additional 52 000 people (397 per 100 000 of the adult population) served community supervision orders across Australia during 1996–97. Jurisdictional rates ranged from 201 per 100 000 of the adult population in Victoria to 942 in

the NT. The national rate has declined consistently over the past four years, reflecting a trend towards shorter but more intensive community-based orders.

Figure 7.5: Imprisonment rates for indigenous people and the total population, 1996–97^{a,b}



a The total population imprisonment rate was based on the average daily prisoner population in 1996–97.

b The indigenous population imprisonment rate was based on prisoner numbers as at June 1997.

c Indigenous prisoner numbers for NSW were not available for the month of June 1997. The numbers for May 1997 were substituted for NSW and Australia.

d The ACT rate included ACT sentenced prisoners held in NSW prisons.

Sources and additional notes: Tables 7A.5; 7A.6

Over 25 000 people were released from prison during 1996–97 and about 100 000 community custody and community supervision orders were completed during the year. A significant proportion of those released from a correctional sanction (prison, community custody or community supervision) returned to correctional services within two years. For prison custody, this proportion ranged from 23 per cent in Queensland to 47 per cent in SA in 1996–97 (Table 7A.31). Returns to corrections, or ‘recidivism’, is discussed in detail in the justice preface.

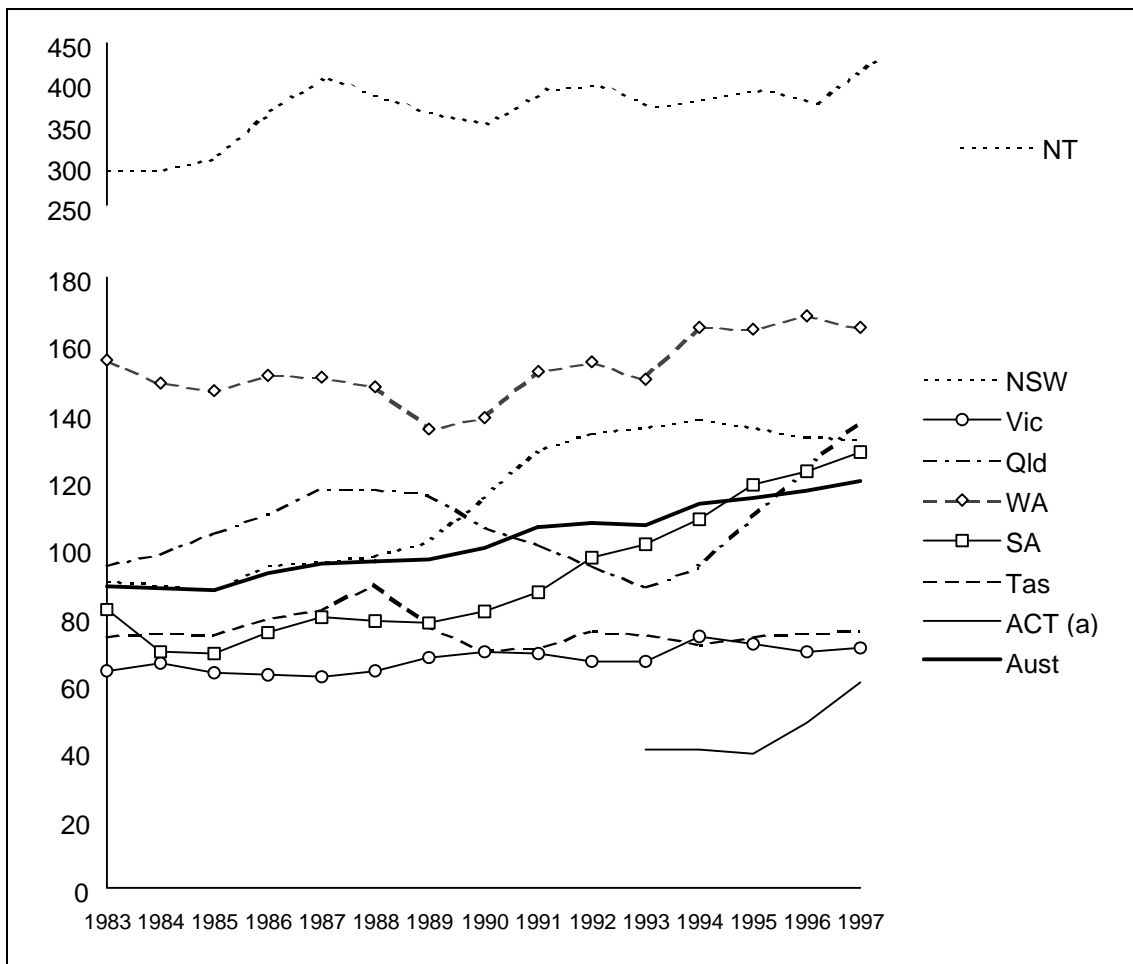
7.3 Recent developments in the sector

7.3.1 Prisoner numbers

Entry to corrective services results from the interaction of a range of socio-economic factors including demographic trends, crime trends, policing priorities, court sentencing practices, government policy and legislation. Many of these factors are outside the control of the corrective services sector.

Imprisonment rates have increased steadily over the past decade — in particular, rates in Queensland, the NT and SA showed marked increases in 1996–97 (Figure 7.6).

Figure 7.6: Imprisonment rates, 1983 to 1997
(prisoners per 100 000 adults)



a The ACT rate included ACT sentenced prisoners held in NSW prisons. Comparable data for the ACT were only available on a financial year basis and from 1992–93.

Source and additional notes: Table 7A.6

7.3.2 Contracting and corporatisation

Two jurisdictions operated private prisons in 1995–96 but only Queensland had a significant proportion (32 per cent) of prisoners held in privately-operated facilities in this period. In 1996–97, two more jurisdictions (Victoria and SA) introduced private prison services and, across Australia, 1862 prisoners, or

11 per cent of all prisoners (excluding periodic detainees), were held in privately-operated facilities.

In addition to the contracting out of prison services, there has been a move to corporatisation. The service delivery elements of the Queensland Corrective Services Commission were corporatised in July 1997. The 'corporatised' public operator of corrective facilities openly competes with the private sector. It can also enter into interstate and overseas contract arrangements.

Contracting and corporatisation are changing the correctional environment and the activities of government. Governments are clearly responsible for the overall management of the corrective services system, whether actual delivery of corrective services is achieved through private contractors or government-operated corrective facilities, and system-wide outcomes should be assessed. Where governments continue to carry out the operation of correctional facilities, their operational performance also needs to be assessed.

7.3.3 Case management

Many jurisdictions are increasingly focusing on a case management approach to prisoner and offender management and rehabilitation. Need and risk assessment based programs are being used to address educational, vocational, personal, social and other needs to encourage rehabilitation and personal development and to reduce the likelihood of re-offending. Comprehensive strategies for sex offender treatment, violence prevention and drug and alcohol abuse, for example, are either in operation or being developed in many jurisdictions.

Greater flexibility in court sentencing options across jurisdictions enhances this approach by providing sentencing options that allow for prisoner and offender needs to be more effectively targeted and addressed. The approach also places greater demands on intersectoral collaboration (for example, integration of health, community and welfare service delivery to prisoners and offenders across the range of community orders).

7.4 Framework of performance indicators

Government objectives for both the overall system and for prisons alone can be grouped under effectiveness and efficiency and relate to five key result areas (Box 7.1). A description of all indicators is provided in Attachment 7A.

Box 7.1: Objectives for corrective services

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

- containment and supervision — to protect the community by sound management of 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-based 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 cost to the taxpayer); and
- rehabilitation and personal development — to provide programs and opportunities that address the causes of offending and maximise the chances of successful integration into the community.

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

- resource management — to (cost-efficiently and effectively) manage resources to deliver correctional services.

Resource management for the *overall* corrections system is concerned with total government expenditure. This comprises the full costs of running the government correction facilities and, where private facilities are being used, the cost of managing the contracting process and payments to the private contractors.

Resource management for *government correctional facility operations* is concerned not only with total costs to government but also with the way in which individual resources are used. Thus, indicators include not only costs per prisoner but also staffing and asset levels per prisoner.

7.4.1 Changes to indicators

The 1996–97 data collection replaced ‘prisoner protection’ with ‘assault rate’ as a more appropriate indicator of containment and supervision for prisoners. Each effectiveness indicator refers to all prisoners whether held in public or private facilities, but some efficiency indicators (specifically staff and asset ratios) exclude privately operated prisons.

Data quality was improved in the 1996–97 data collection in a number of areas. Prisoner education was reported on a comparable basis across jurisdictions for the first time. Financial data items used to calculate unit costs were also more consistently collected across jurisdictions — for example, unit costs included depreciation on capital assets and costs incurred by other departments in providing services to corrections, more accurately reflecting true costs across jurisdictions.

In previous Reports, ‘recidivism’ was included in the corrective services framework of indicators. However, to better reflect that all elements of the wider justice system have an impact on recidivism, this Report includes it as part of the justice preface.

The full indicator framework for corrective services is given in Figure 7.7. It should be noted that as the corrective services system continues to develop, the framework of indicators will also be subject to change.

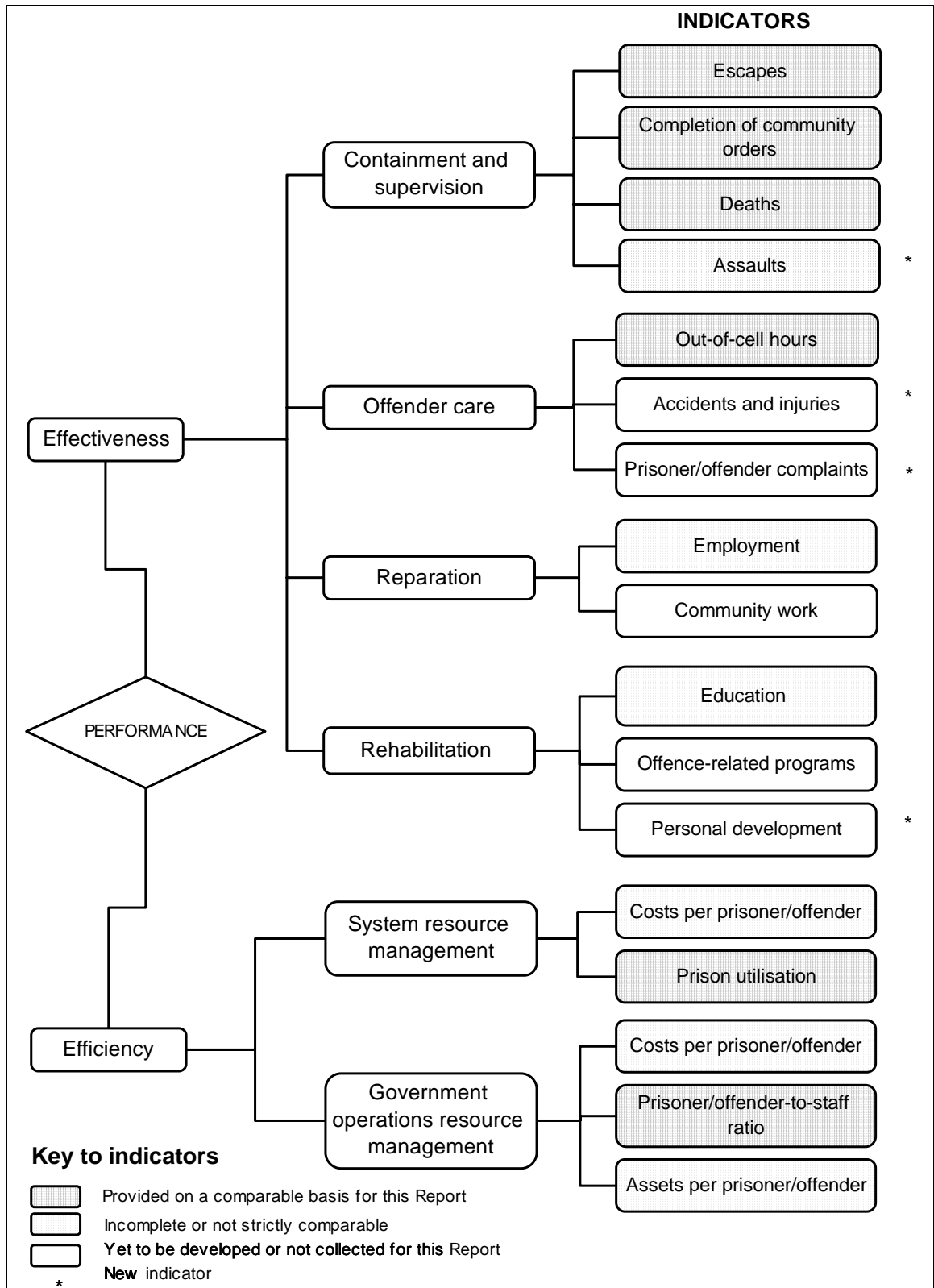
7.5 Future directions

The 1997–98 data collection will include two additional indicators for offender care — accidents and injuries in relation to prisoners; and complaints for prisoner, community custody, and community supervision populations. It will also include two additional indicators for rehabilitation and personal development — offence-related programs and personal development.

Additional specific indicators for offender care, containment and supervision, reparation, and rehabilitation and personal development will also be developed.

Some differences in indicator results for jurisdictions may reflect different counting and reporting rules for generating financial data. Differences may also reflect the treatment of various expenditure items (for example, superannuation). Jurisdictions will continue to refine definitions and counting rules each year to optimise comparability between states and territories. This includes further refinement of financial indicators and the development of standards for the consistent treatment of periodic detainees and the distinction between private and public prisons.

Figure 7.7: Performance indicators for the corrective services sector



It is anticipated that user cost of capital will be incorporated into the cost data for government correctional facility operations. This will ensure full costing for government facilities and consistency in the treatment of asset costs between government and privately-owned facilities. (Government payments to a private contractor using privately-owned facilities include a lease or accommodation component.) It is proposed that the user cost of capital be calculated by applying a user-cost-of-funds rate (provided by each jurisdiction) to the jurisdiction's asset valuations.

This Report includes prisoner numbers by type for indigenous people and data on indigenous deaths in custody. Future Reports will include more information on the interaction of indigenous people with corrective services. It should be noted that the representation of indigenous people in corrective services is the result of wider social and economic conditions as well as the actions of the total justice system, including policing and court sentencing practices.

7.6 Key performance results

7.6.1 Effectiveness — containment and supervision

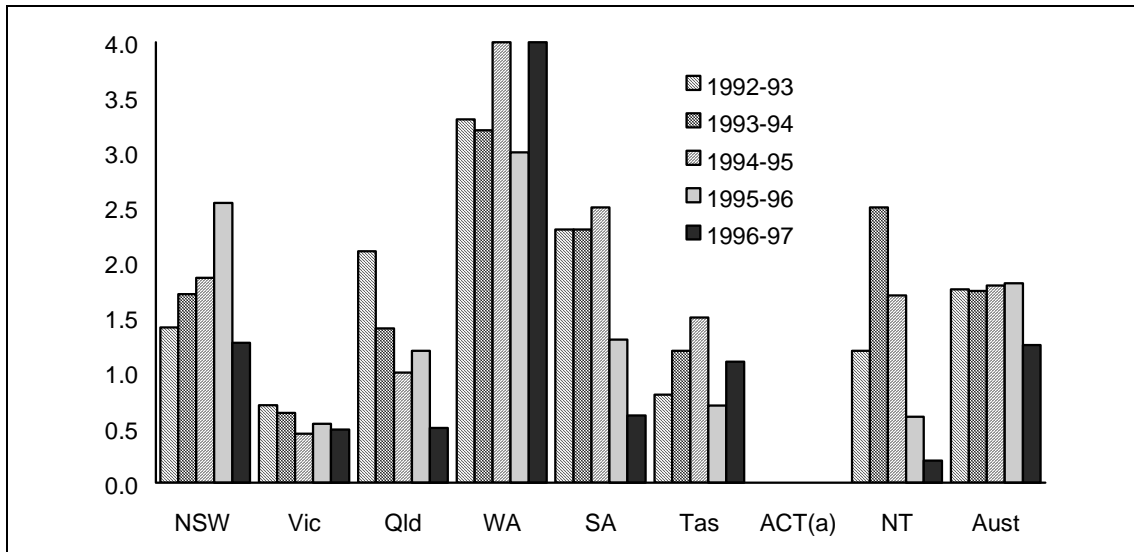
Containment and supervision — prisons

Given the relatively small absolute numbers of escapes in many cases, simple comparisons of escape rates across jurisdictions and over time within jurisdictions should be made with care. There were three or fewer escapes from secure custody in all except one jurisdiction, and three or fewer from open custody in the three smaller jurisdictions.

The total prisoner escape rate (for open and secure prisons combined) ranged from zero escapes per 100 prisoner years in the ACT to four escapes per 100 prisoner years in WA in 1996–97. The higher rate for WA reflects a higher rate of escapes for open prisons (11.5) rather than for secure custody (0.2).

The total prison escape rate declined between 1995–96 and 1996–97 in five jurisdictions but increased slightly — to a level commensurate with the 1994–95 rate — in both WA and Tasmania (Figure 7.8).

Figure 7.8: Total prisoner escape rate, 1992–93 to 1996–97
(escapes per 100 prisoner years)

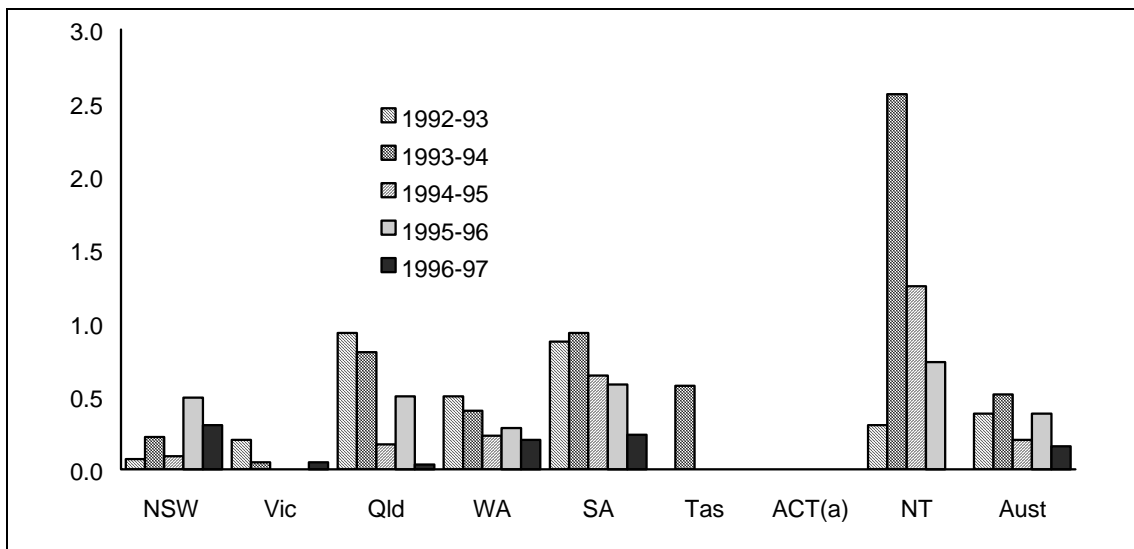


a The ACT had no escapes by prisoners held on remand in the ACT.

Source: Table 7A.7

The escape rate from secure custody ranged from 0.0 in the NT, Tasmania and the ACT to 0.3 in NSW in 1996–97 (Figure 7.9). Over the same period, the escape rate from open custody ranged from 2.4 in Victoria to 11.5 in WA (Figure 7.10).

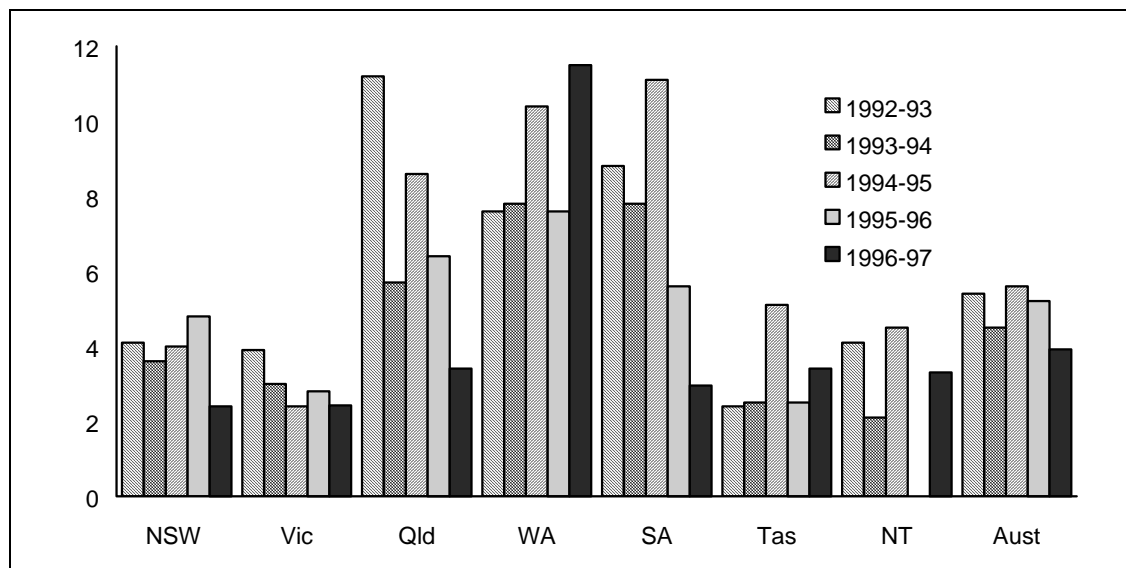
Figure 7.9: Escape rate of secure prisoners 1992–93 to 1996–97
(escapes per 100 prisoner years)



a The ACT had no escapes by prisoners held on remand in the ACT.

Source: Table 7A.8

Figure 7.10: Escape rate of open security prisoners, 1992–93 to 1996–97 (escapes per 100 prisoner years)^a



a ACT-sentenced prisoners classified as open security were held in NSW prisons.

Source: Table 7A.9

There was a total of 64 prisoner deaths in 1996–97 — a rate of 0.38 deaths per 100 prisoner years. The overall rate of prisoner deaths in 1996–97 ranged from zero in the ACT and NT to 0.47 in SA (seven deaths).

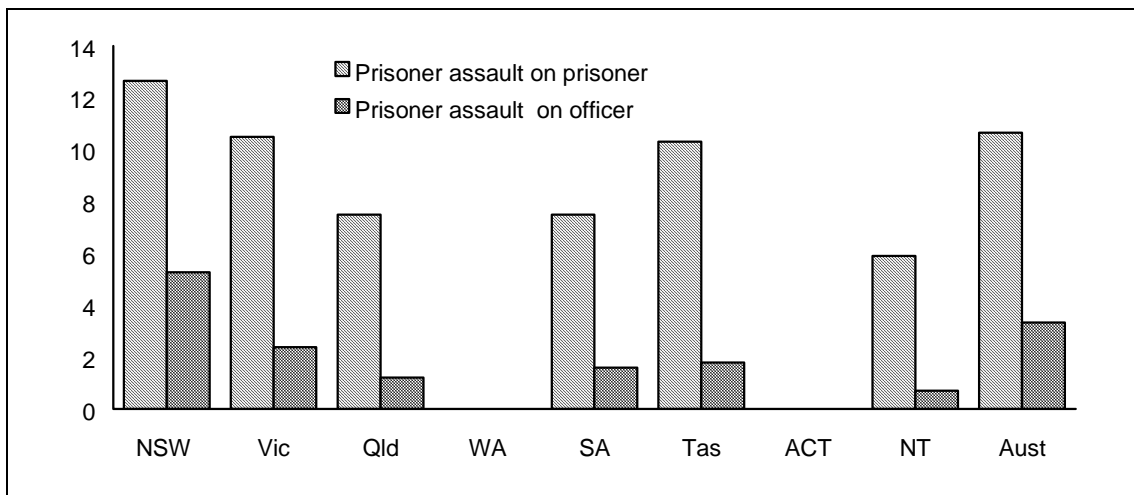
In 1996–97, deaths in custody were disaggregated according to cause of death (where known) and indigenous status of the prisoner. Deaths per 100 prisoner years from apparent unnatural causes for total prisoners in 1996–97 ranged from 0.0 in Tasmania, the ACT and NT to 0.4 in WA (nine deaths).³ Deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners from apparent unnatural causes (per 100 indigenous prisoner years) ranged from 0.0 in Victoria, SA, Tasmania, ACT and NT to 0.33 in NSW. Although there were large differences in the death rate by unnatural causes between indigenous and total prisoners for individual jurisdictions, there did not appear to be any consistent difference across all jurisdictions (Figure 7.11). The death rates should be interpreted with caution, because a single death in a jurisdiction with a relatively small average prisoner population can have a major impact on its overall rate.

³ A death from an ‘apparent unnatural cause’ is defined as a prisoner death in custody in respect of which there is sufficient evidence to suggest, subject to a Coroner’s finding, that the most likely cause of death was homicide, suicide or a drug overdose.

Figure 7.11: Prisoner death rates by unnatural causes, 1996–97^a

a Tasmania, the ACT and the NT had 0.0 unnatural deaths. Victoria and SA had 0.0 unnatural indigenous deaths.
 Source: Table 7A.12

The rate of assaults (number of assaults per 100 prisoners) by prisoners is a new indicator for effective prisoner supervision. Assaults by prisoners on other prisoners ranged from 5.9 per cent in the NT to 12.7 per cent in NSW. The rate of assaults by prisoners on officers ranged from 0.7 per cent in the NT to 5.3 per cent in NSW (Figure 7.12). The ACT and WA did not report on either measure.

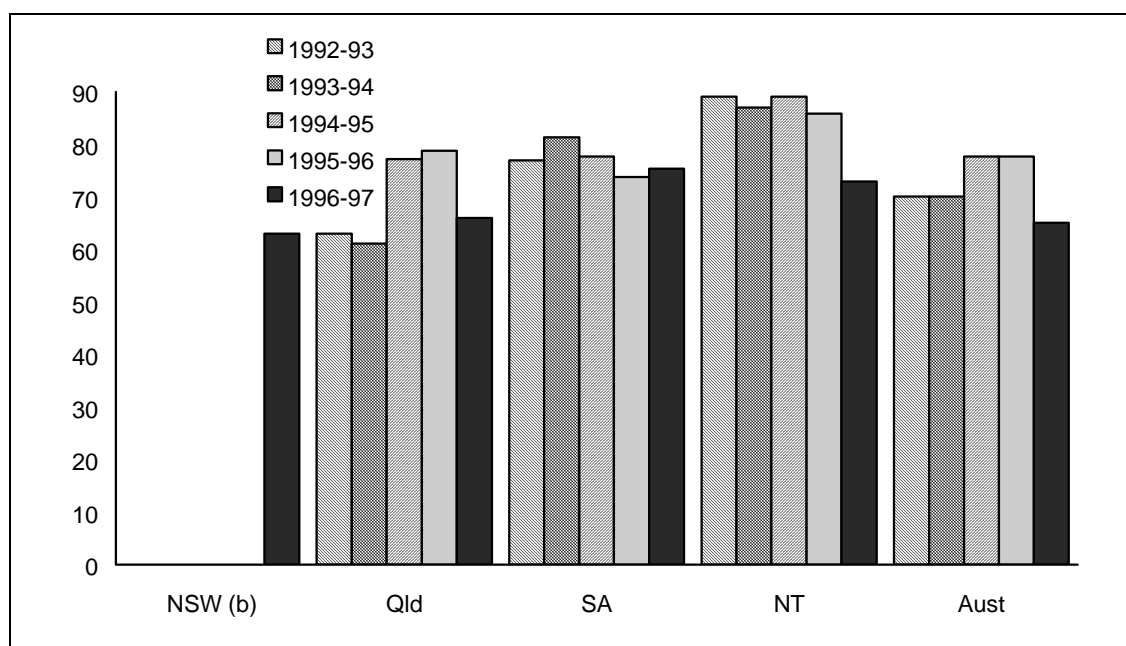
Figure 7.12: Prison assaults, 1996–97 (per cent)^a

a WA and the ACT did not report on this indicator.
 Source: Table 7A.13

Containment and supervision — community custody

NSW, Queensland, SA and the NT reported relatively similar successful completion rates for community custody, ranging from 63 per cent in NSW and 66 per cent in Queensland to 75.4 per cent in SA. Rates tended to be lower in 1996–97 than in previous years, particularly in the NT and Queensland. Comparable trend data were not available for NSW (Figure 7.13).⁴

Figure 7.13: Successful completion rate for community custody, 1992–93 to 1996–97 (per cent)^a



a Victoria, WA, Tasmania and the ACT did not use community custody as a sentencing option.

b Comparable data were not available for 1992–93 to 1995–96 for NSW.

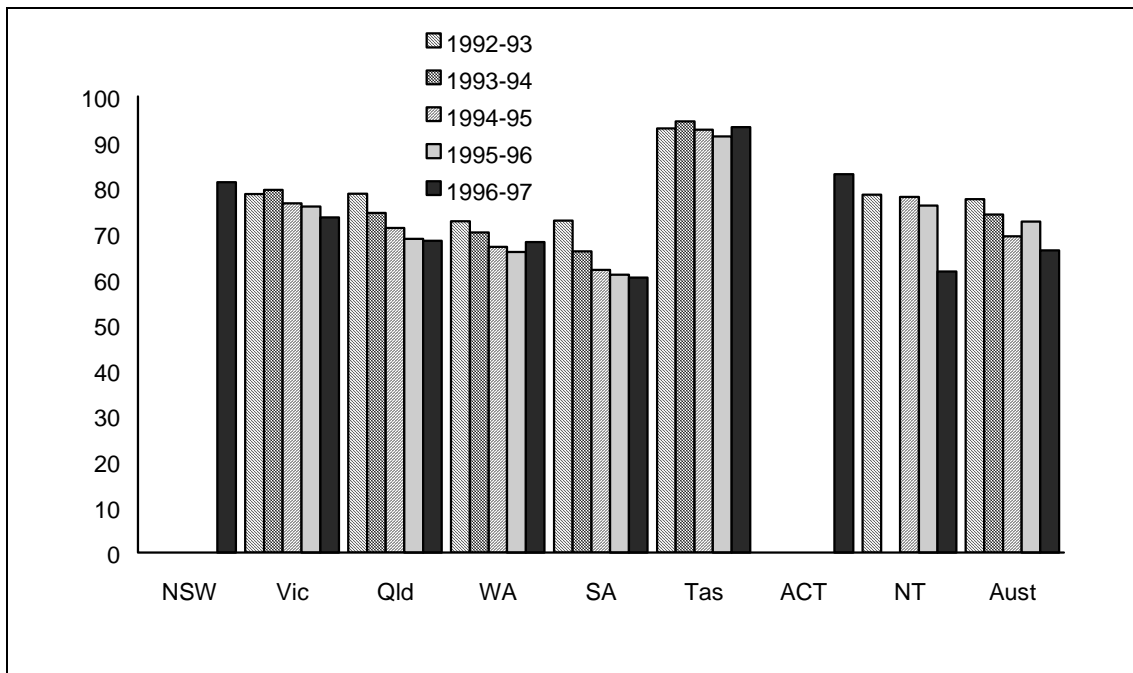
Source: Table 7A.14

Containment and supervision — community supervision

Successful completion of community supervision orders ranged from 60.3 per cent in SA to 93.3 per cent in Tasmania. Where comparable previous year information was available, most jurisdictions showed slight declines in completion rates over time. The NT reported a decline from over 76 per cent in the two previous years to 61.6 per cent in 1996–97 (Figure 7.14).

⁴ The number of reported completions reflects both effective supervision and provision of programs and the undertaking of necessary action on a breach of the order. A high number of completions could result from high compliance or from failure to detect or act on breaches of compliance.

Figure 7.14: Successful completion rate for community supervision orders, 1992–93 to 1996–97 (per cent)^a



a Data were not available for the NT for 1993–94; for the ACT for 1992–93 to 1995–96; nor for NSW for 1992–93 to 1995–96.

Source: Table 7A.15

7.6.2 Effectiveness — prisoner care

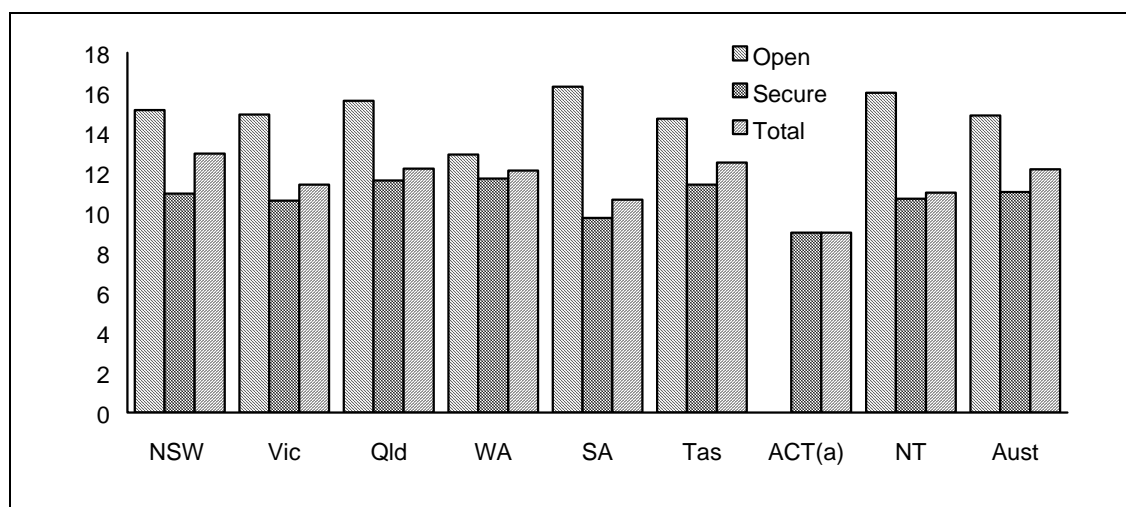
The indicator used for offender care — the number of hours per day prisoners may spend out of their cells — assumes that time in which prisoners are not restricted to cells provides a more acceptable quality of life. Indicators are being developed to measure out-of-cell activities.

Average daily out-of-cell hours for combined open and secure prisons varied from 10.6 in SA to 13 in NSW in 1996–97. Out-of-cell hours for secure prisoners ranged from 9.0 in the ACT to 11.7 in WA.⁵ The hours for open prisons ranged from 12.9 in WA to 16.3 in SA (Figure 7.15).

There were marked changes in average out-of-cell hours from 1995–96 levels for a number of jurisdictions, although not in consistent directions. NSW open prison out-of-cell hours increased, as did those for NT secure prisons. Queensland's secure prison average out-of-cell hours and SA's open prison average out-of-cell hours declined (Section 7A.3).

⁵ The ACT result was based on remand prisoners only.

Figure 7.15: Average out-of-cell hours by type of prisoner, 1996–97
(hours per prisoner per day)



a Only remand prisoners were held in the ACT. Other ACT prisoners were held in NSW prisons.

Source: Table 7A.16

Prison utilisation rates (Section 7.6.6) can also be considered an indicator of offender care, (although not a direct measure), assuming that crowded living environments reduce quality of life.

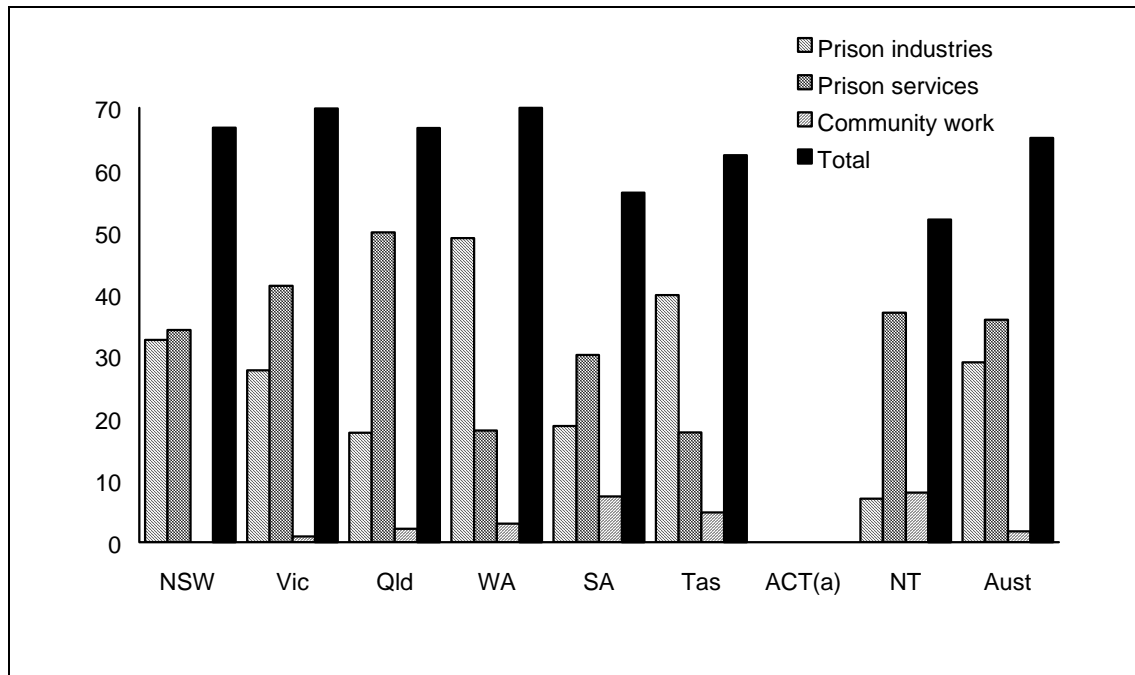
7.6.3 Effectiveness — reparation

Reparation — prisons

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 itself). All jurisdictions showed a significant number of prisoners employed in either prison industries or services or, in a smaller number of cases, undertaking community work. The ACT was not included in this analysis because only remand prisoners were held in that jurisdiction.

The proportion of prisoners employed in industries and services combined showed wide variation in 1996–97, from 52 per cent in the NT to 70 per cent in WA (Figure 7.16). Improvements to definitions and counting rules have enhanced data quality in 1996–97, but comparable previous year data were not available for all jurisdictions.

Figure 7.16: Proportion of prisoners employed, 1996–97 (per cent)



a Only remand prisoners were held in the ACT. Other ACT prisoners were held in NSW prisons.

Source: Table 7A.17

Excluding the ACT, the percentage of prisoners working in prison industries in 1996–97 ranged from 7 per cent in the NT to 49 per cent in WA. But jurisdictional differences on this indicator may reflect more than jurisdictional corrective services policy and resourcing priorities. The location of the prison and local economic conditions may also be relevant factors.

Prisoners employed in prison services ranged from 17.7 per cent in Tasmania to 49.9 per cent in Queensland. Generally, jurisdictions with a relatively low proportion of prisoners employed in commercially-oriented industries had a higher proportion employed in service provision within the prison. A smaller percentage of prisoners (from 1 per cent in Victoria to 8 per cent in the NT) undertook community work.

Reparation — community custody and community supervision

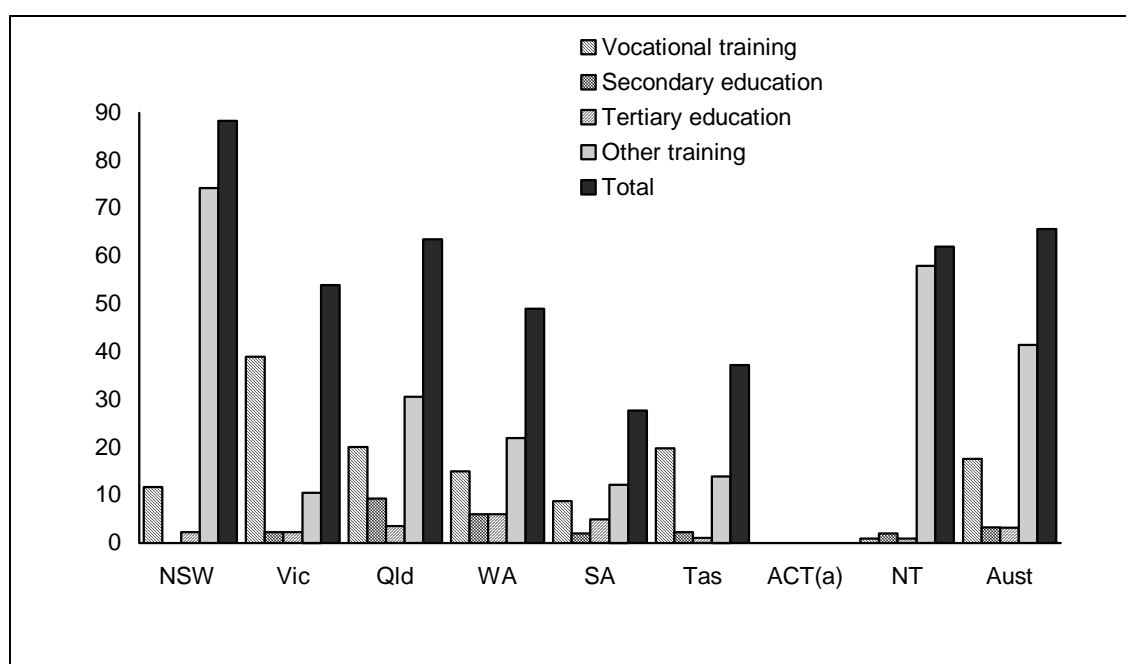
Hours worked provides an indication of reparation, but depends on jurisdictional legislation, court sentencing practices and, in particular, government policy on dealing with fine defaults. No jurisdictional comparisons are reported for 1996–97.

7.6.4 Effectiveness — rehabilitation and personal development

Rehabilitation and personal development — prisons

Enhancing employment opportunities through vocational training and education is important for the successful re-integration of offenders into the community and the reduction of the risk of re-offending. In 1996–97, the proportion of prisoners undertaking education or training courses ranged from 28 per cent in SA to 88 per cent in NSW (Figure 7.17).

Figure 7.17: Proportion of prisoners enrolled in education and training, 1996–97 (per cent)



a Only remand prisoners were held in the ACT. Other ACT prisoners were held in NSW prisons.

Source: Table 7A.18

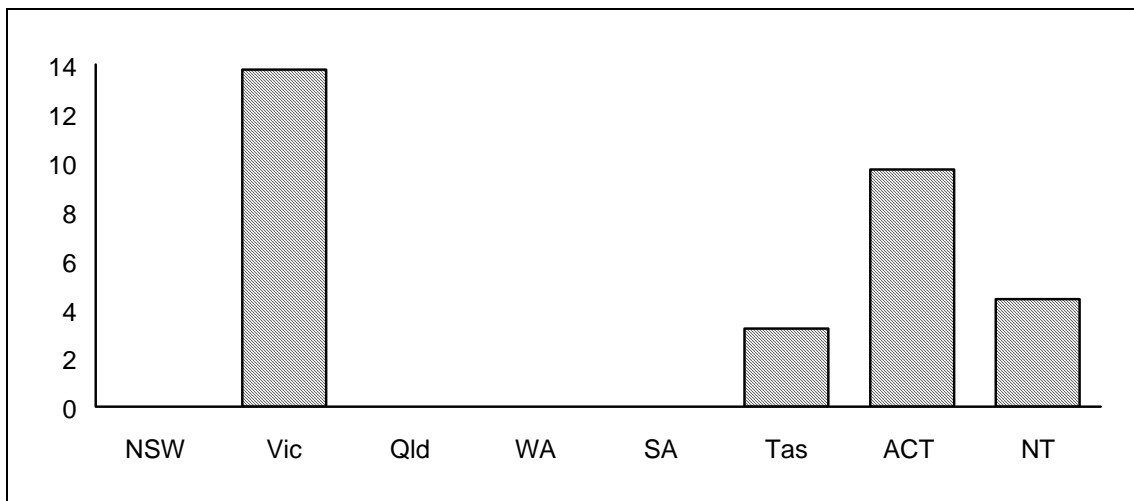
Rehabilitation and personal development — community custody

The number of offenders undertaking personal development courses provided by or on referral from corrective services is reported for the first time. The NT was the only one of the four jurisdictions operating community custody that provided data, so jurisdictional comparisons were not possible for 1996–97. In the NT, 64 per cent of prisoners in community custody were undertaking personal development courses.

Rehabilitation and personal development — community supervision

The proportion of offenders under community supervision undertaking personal development courses was reported by only four of the eight states and territories. The reported proportion ranged from 3 per cent in Tasmania to 14 per cent in Victoria (Figure 7.18).

Figure 7.18: Proportion of offenders on community supervision orders undertaking personal development courses, 1996–97 (per cent)^a



a Only Victoria, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT reported on this indicator.

Source: Table 7A.19

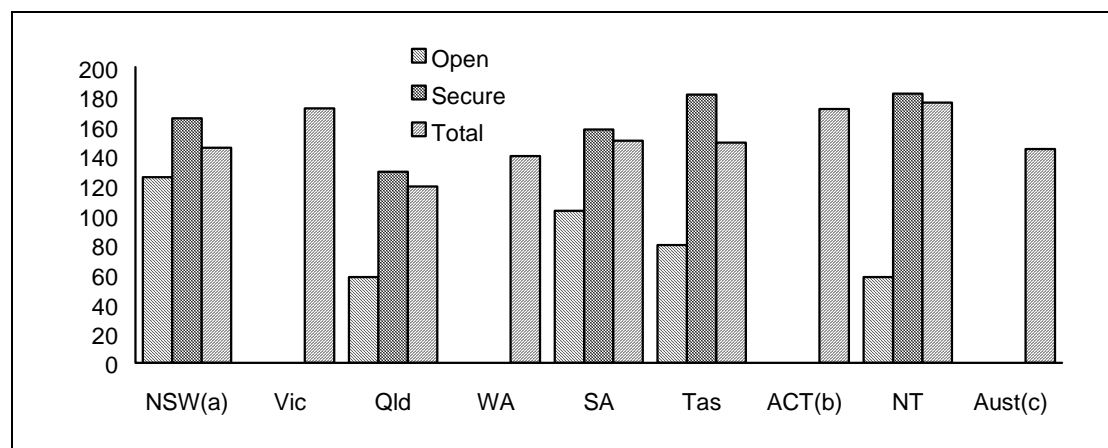
7.6.5 Efficiency — unit costs

Some differences in efficiency indicator results for jurisdictions may reflect different counting and reporting rules for generating financial data. Differences may also reflect the treatment of various expenditure items (for example, superannuation).

Unit costs — prisons

Average cost per prisoner per day for open and secure prisons combined in 1996–97 ranged from \$119 in Queensland to \$176 for the NT. Queensland had the lowest reported unit costs for secure prisons (\$129) while the NT and Queensland shared the lowest reported unit cost for open prisons (\$58). There was significant variation in unit costs across jurisdictions, particularly for open prisons (Figure 7.19).

Figure 7.19: System-wide prison cost, 1996–97 (\$ per prisoner day)



- a NSW total recurrent cost included some costs not allocated to either open or secure prisons.
 b Included the cost of ACT prisoners held in remand in the ACT and ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.
 c Victoria, WA and the ACT did not report separately on open and secure costs. Open and secure costs could not be calculated for Australia.

Source: Table 7A.20

Financial data items used to calculate unit costs for 1996–97 were collected on a more consistent basis across jurisdictions. Depreciation on capital assets and costs incurred by other departments in providing services to corrections were included, for example. Thus, true costs were more accurately reflected across jurisdictions. It is anticipated that, in future years, user cost of capital will also be incorporated into the cost data for government correction facilities. This will ensure full costing for government facilities and consistency in the treatment of asset costs between government and privately owned facilities.

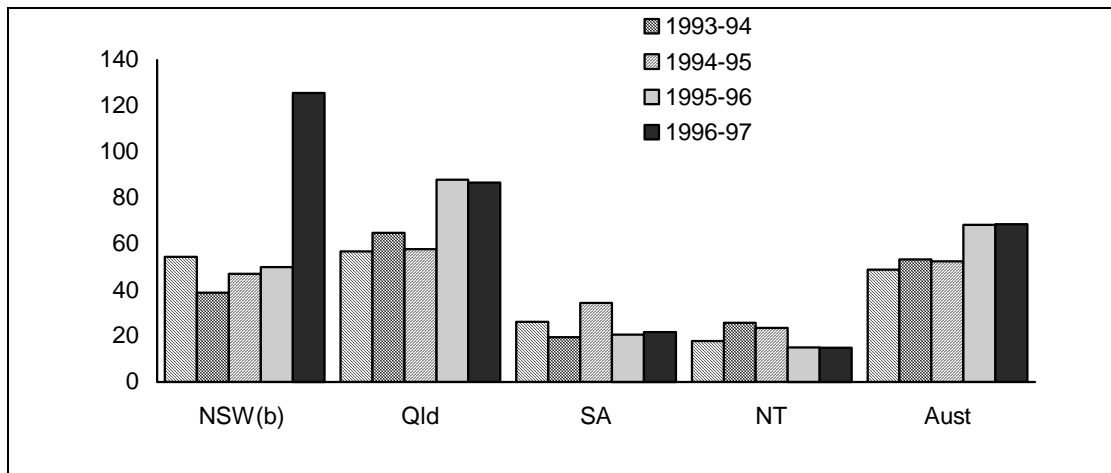
It should be noted that unit costs can be affected by factors other than efficiency. These factors include differences in the composition of the prisoner population (such as security classification and the number of female or special need prisoners), the size and dispersion of the area serviced, the scale of operations, and industrial and workplace practices.

Unit costs — community custody

Cost per offender in 1996–97 varied significantly among the four jurisdictions operating community custody — from \$14.86 per day in the NT to \$125.61 in NSW. This partly reflected the different objectives and approaches of programs in different jurisdictions. Also, the NT numbers did not include staff surveillance costs because this component could not be identified separately from community supervision staff costs. (This effectively reduced unit costs for community custody in the NT, but increased unit costs for offenders on community supervision.)

Cost per offender fluctuated considerably within jurisdictions over the five-year period to 1996–97. The variations reflected the small absolute numbers in some cases (18 and 47 offenders in two jurisdictions) and the different stages of program implementation (NSW’s only community custody program moved from a pilot to a full program during 1996–97) (Figure 7.20).

Figure 7.20: Cost of community custody, 1992–93 to 1995–96 (\$ per offender day)^a



a Victoria, WA, Tasmania and the ACT did not use community custody as a sentencing option.

b NSW expanded its home detention scheme from a trial basis during 1996–97.

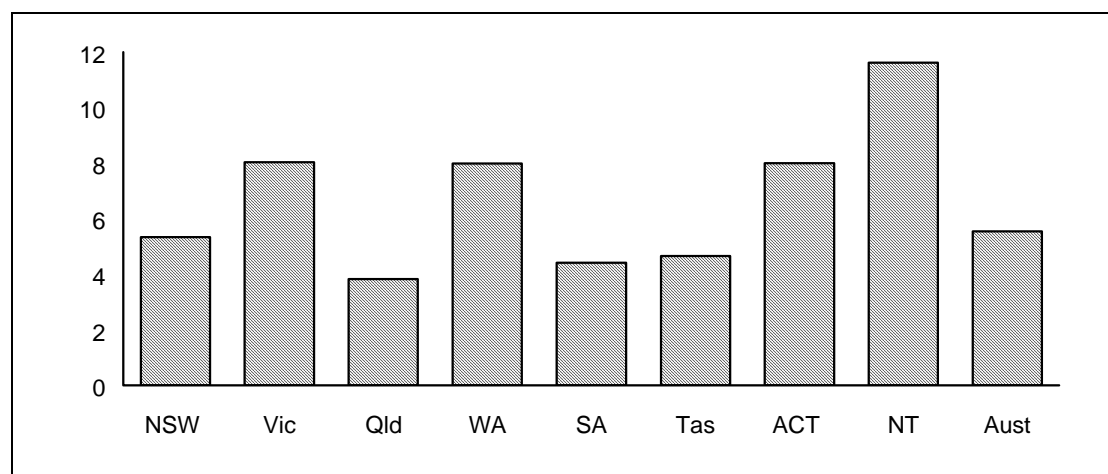
Source: Table 7A.21

Unit costs — community supervision

Unit costs for offenders on community supervision in 1996–97 ranged from \$3.83 per day in Queensland to \$11.62 in the NT (Figure 7.21). Policy and legislative arrangements may affect the nature of the offender population and influence unit costs. Jurisdictions with higher proportions of ‘low risk’ offenders (who require less intensive supervision) would be expected to maintain lower offender-to-staff ratios. This would enable them to achieve lower costs per offender.

There were no consistent five-year trends across jurisdictions, with the possible exception in WA, where unit cost increased each year. Victoria, Queensland, WA, SA and the NT reported higher costs per offender than in the previous year, while NSW, Tasmania and the ACT reported lower costs.

Figure 7.21: Cost of community supervision, 1996–97
(\$ per offender day)



Source: Table 7A.22

7.6.6 Efficiency — 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 measure of quality of life and, therefore, of offender care. Note that the optimum rate of prison utilisation is unlikely to be 100 per cent because facilities need to accommodate transfer prisoners, provide special purpose accommodation and deal with short-term fluctuations in prisoner numbers.

Prison utilisation for all prisons ranged from 71.6 per cent in Tasmania to 112.6 per cent in SA in 1996–97. Rates in Queensland, WA and SA exceeded 100 per cent of current design capacity.

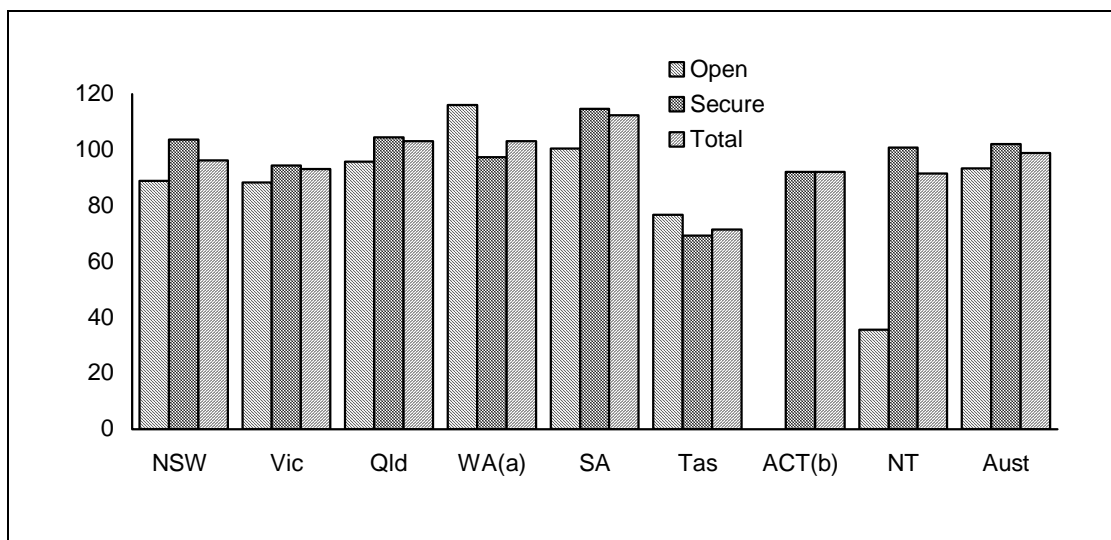
The overall prison utilisation rate declined in five jurisdictions (NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA and the NT) in 1996–97, although it still exceeded design capacity in Queensland and WA. SA, ACT and Tasmanian utilisation rates continued to rise. The 1996–97 rate in SA continued to exceed design capacity. The utilisation rate in the ACT increased from 50 per cent in 1992–93 to 92.2 per cent in 1996–97. Tasmania's utilisation rates, although increasing over time, remained low relative to those in all other jurisdictions.

In NSW and WA, the decline in overall utilisation reflected reduced open custody rates. In Victoria and Queensland, the decline resulted from lower

secure prison utilisation rates.⁶ Only in the NT was the lower overall utilisation associated with both reduced open and secure custody rates. Rising overall utilisation rates in SA and Tasmania were a result of both open and secure prison custody increases (Figure 7.22).

Secure prison utilisation rates exceeded design capacity in four jurisdictions (NSW, Queensland, SA and the NT). Only WA and SA rates exceeded design capacity of open prisons (noting that half of WA's largest open prison was destroyed by a bushfire during the year). Utilisation rates for secure prisons ranged from 69.3 per cent in Tasmania to 114.8 per cent in SA, and utilisation rates for open prisons ranged from 35.7 per cent in the NT to 116.2 per cent in WA. The NT's open prison rate was significantly lower than in previous years.

Figure 7.22: Prison capacity utilisation rates by type of custody, 1996–97 (per cent)



a The capacity utilisation rates for WA, if calculated on the basis of the classification of the prison where the prisoner is held, rather than the classification of the prisoner regardless of where held, results in an open utilisation rate of 83.5 per cent and a secure utilisation rate of 111.4 per cent.

b Only remand prisoners were held in the ACT. Other ACT prisoners were held in NSW prisons.

Source: Table 7A.23

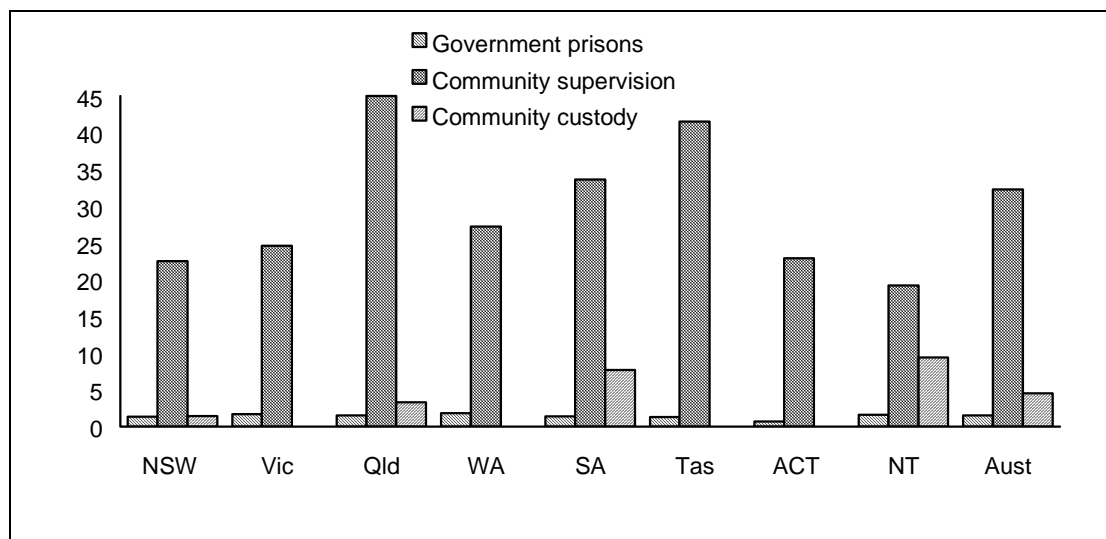
⁶ The open and secure custody utilisation rates in this Report compared the design capacity of facilities classified as open or secure, with the number of prisoners classified as open or secure, regardless of where such prisoners were held. Alternatively, utilisation rates could be calculated by comparing the design capacity of facilities classified as open or secure, with the number of prisoners held in those facilities, regardless of the prisoners' classification. For WA, for example, this results in the open custody rate decreasing from 116.2 per cent to 83.5 per cent and the secure custody rate increasing from 97.6 per cent to 111.4 per cent.

7.6.7 Efficiency — prisoner and offender-to-staff ratios

Prisoner and offender-to-staff ratios — government prisons

Prisoner-to-staff ratios are considered to be an indicator of the efficiency with which labour inputs are applied in facility operations. Thus, from a government perspective, it is particularly relevant for government corrective facilities. The lowest ratio of prisoners to total staff in government corrective facilities was 0.7 in the ACT (noting that this relates to a single high security remand facility) and the highest was 1.7 in Victoria (Figure 7.23). The staff numbers for WA are not directly comparable with those of other jurisdictions in 1996–97.

Figure 7.23: Public prison prisoner and offender-to-total staff ratios, 1996–97 (prisoners or offenders per staff member)^{a,b,c}



a Only remand prisoners were held in the ACT. Other ACT prisoners were held in NSW prisons.

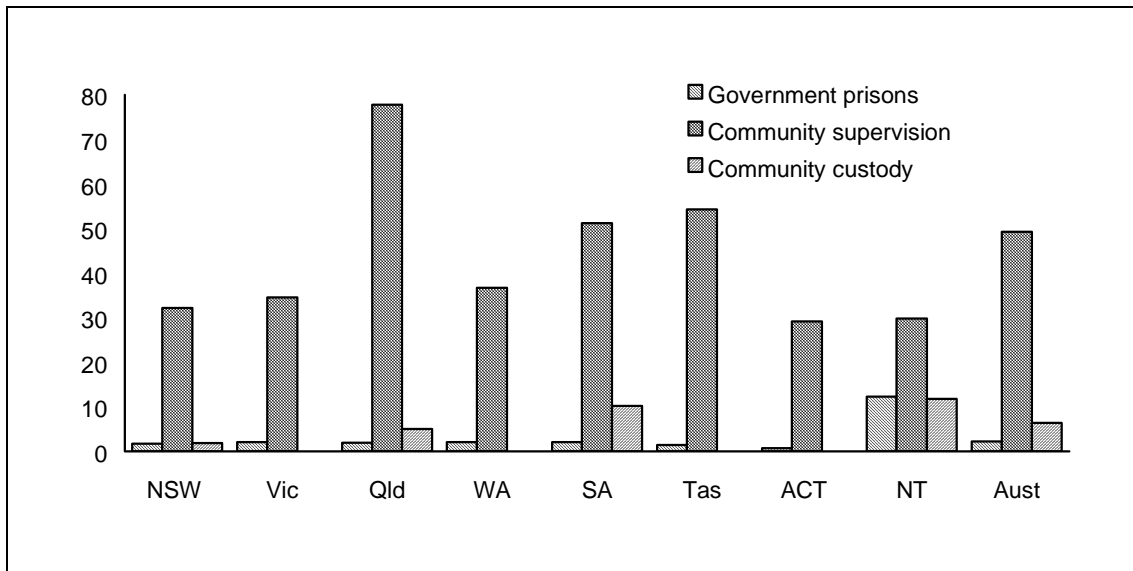
b Victoria, WA, Tasmania and the ACT did not use community custody as a sentencing option.

c WA total staff numbers were not directly comparable with those of the other jurisdictions.

Source: Table 7A.27

The rates of operational staff and other staff to prisoner numbers showed different patterns across jurisdictions. Prisoner-to-operational-staff ratios ranged from 0.7 in the ACT to 2.1 in Victoria (Figure 7.24). Prisoner-to-other-staff ratios ranged from 12.3 in the NT to 4.9 in SA in 1996–97. The staff numbers for WA are not directly comparable with those of other jurisdictions in 1996–97 (Tables 7A.28 and 7A.29).

Figure 7.24: Public prison prisoner and offender-to-operational-staff ratios 1996–97 (prisoners or offenders per staff member)^{a,b}



a Only remand prisoners were held in the ACT. Other ACT prisoners were held in NSW prisons.

b Victoria, WA, Tasmania and the ACT did not use community custody as a sentencing option.

c WA staff numbers were not directly comparable with those of the other jurisdictions.

Source: Table 7A.28

Prisoner-to-staff ratios are affected by sentencing practices and the age of the prison facility — newer facilities tend to substitute capital for labour in many areas (for example, remote video surveillance and automation).

Most jurisdictions showed an increase in the ratio of prisoners to total staff in 1996–97 from that of the previous year, while NSW and the NT reported no change. Revised definitions of operational and other staff in 1995–96 precluded direct comparisons between jurisdictions for earlier years.

Prisoner and offender-to-staff ratios — community custody

Offender-to-total staff ratios varied markedly across the four jurisdictions operating community custody in 1996–97 — from 1.4 offenders per officer in NSW to 9.4 in the NT (Figure 7.23). Ratios of offenders to operational staff ranged from 1.8 in NSW to 11.8 in the NT (noting that NSW's community custody program was at an early stage of implementation) (Figure 7.24). Definitional changes precluded earlier year comparisons of offender-to-operational-staff ratios. The different objectives and approaches of programs included under the generic heading of community custody mean that there were some inherent jurisdictional differences in community custody information.

Prisoner and offender-to-staff ratios — community supervision

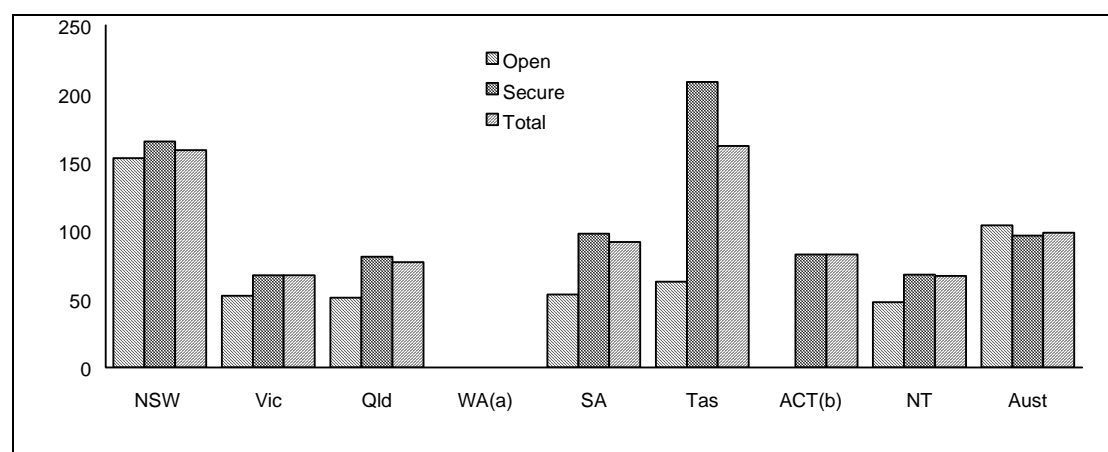
Offender-to-total staff ratios varied markedly for offenders on community supervision — from 19.2 offenders per officer in the NT to 45.0 in Queensland (Figure 7.23). Ratios of offenders to operational staff ranged from 29.1 in the ACT to 77.8 in Queensland (Figure 7.24). Issues of offender population type and size and dispersion factors need to be considered when making jurisdictional comparisons of these indicators. There were no consistent trends on either measure over the five-year period for any jurisdiction. Definitional changes precluded earlier year trend comparisons for operational staff ratios.

7.6.8 Efficiency — value of assets per prisoner

The value of assets per prisoner indicates the capital inputs to corrective services and thus is an indicator of how effectively capital is being used, and therefore a relevant indicator for government owned and operated facilities. Assets per prisoner in 1996–97 ranged from \$66 900 in the NT to \$161 900 in Tasmania for secure and open security prisons combined. For open prisons it ranged from \$47 600 in the NT to \$152 900 in NSW, and for secure prisons it ranged from \$67 200 in Victoria to \$208 600 in Tasmania (Figure 7.25).

Improvement to the definition and data collection for this indicator in 1996–97 precluded earlier year trend comparisons. In addition, the value of assets per prisoner data need to be interpreted with caution, because they are particularly sensitive to the method of valuation and accounting policies applied.

Figure 7.25: Value of assets for government owned and operated prisons, 1996–97 (\$'000 per prisoner)



a WA did not report on this indicator.

b Only remand prisoners were held in the ACT. Other ACT prisoners were held in NSW prisons.

Source: Table 7A.30