
9 Corrective services

The corrective services system protects the community and encourages prisoners and offenders to adopt law abiding lifestyles by:

- containing and supervising prisoners in a safe, secure and humane environment;
- providing opportunities for rehabilitation such as education and training courses, which prepare prisoners and offenders for law abiding and productive participation in the community; and
- facilitating reparation to the community through employment based programs and/or community work.

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.

Major changes in this year's Report include:

- the introduction of information on gender and Indigenous and non-Indigenous offender numbers in community corrections; and
- improvements on reporting unit cost measures.

A profile of the corrective services sector is discussed in section 9.1, including imprisonment rates of males and females, and of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, in both prisons and community corrections. Policy developments and how these may affect the collection and reporting of data are briefly discussed in section 9.2. The framework of performance indicators is outlined in section 9.3, and the data collected are discussed in section 9.4. There have been no major changes to the framework or scope of the data collections, but data quality continually improves. Future developments in performance reporting are broadly discussed in section 9.5. The chapter concludes with jurisdiction comments.

9.1 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 include responsibilities that belong to different justice sector agencies in other jurisdictions — for example, prisoner escorts, the management of prisoners held in court cells, the management of prisoners in police cells and the prosecution of order breaches (table D.3). 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. However, 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.

Corrective services are the responsibility of State and Territory governments, which deliver services directly, purchase them through contractual arrangements or operate a combination of both arrangements. Each jurisdiction maintained prison facilities during the reporting period. The ACT maintained one remand prison and one periodic detention facility. ACT prisoners sentenced in the ACT were held in NSW prisons under contractual arrangements between the two jurisdictions. Four jurisdictions (NSW, Victoria, Queensland and SA) operated private prisons in 1998-99. NSW and the ACT provided for periodic detention of prisoners — for example, weekend detention in prison, whereby prisoners are able to return home and maintain work commitments during the week.

There were 12 periodic detention facilities and 97 prisons (including 15 privately operated prisons) across Australia in 1998-99. The reduction in the number of prisons from 1997-98 (down from 108) largely reflects how one jurisdiction counted prison centres in previous years. A number of individual centres on the same physical site were combined to determine the number of Queensland prisons in 1998-99, in accordance with national counting rules.

On average, 19 850 people per day were held in Australian prisons during 1998-99 (excluding periodic detainees) — up 24 per cent over the five-year period from 1994-95, and up 9 per cent over 1997-98. Additionally, 1417 people on average were serving periodic detention orders in NSW and the ACT — a decline of 10 per cent from the 1997-98 average. Twenty-nine per cent of prisoners (excluding periodic detainees) were held in open prisons (facilities containing prisoners classified as low security) in 1998-99, and 71 per cent were held in secure facilities. A total of 3175 prisoners (or 16 per cent of the total prisoner population, excluding periodic detainees) was held in privately operated facilities in 1998-99.

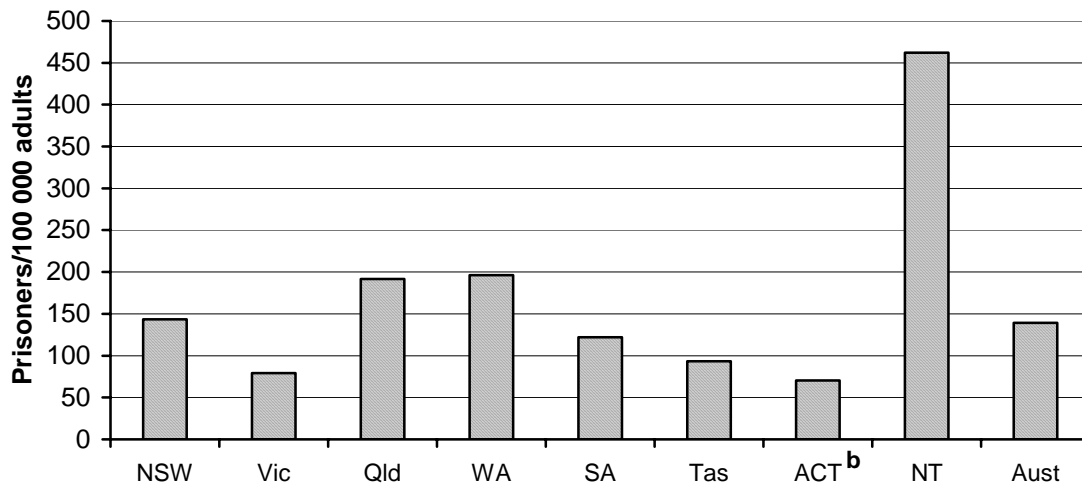
Nationally, the daily average number of prisoners comprised 18 678 males and 1172 females (94 per cent and 6 per cent of the prison population respectively) in 1998-99. The daily average number of Indigenous prisoners was 4047, comprising 20 per cent of prisoners nationally. Females made up 8.4 per cent of periodic detainees in NSW and the ACT in 1998-99, and Indigenous prisoners made up 6.9 per cent.

The rate of imprisonment is the number of prisoners (excluding periodic detainees) per 100 000 of the general population aged over 17 years in those jurisdictions where persons are remanded or sentenced to adult custody at 17 years of age (Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the NT) or per 100 000 of the general population in those jurisdictions where the age for adult custody is 18 years (NSW, WA, SA and the ACT). In previous Reports imprisonment rates were calculated against a general population aged 17 years and over for every jurisdiction. Thus, 1998-99 data are not directly comparable with figures published in previous Reports.

The rate of imprisonment ranged from 70.5 in the ACT to 462.3 in the NT in 1998-99, and the national rate was 139.1 (figure 9.1).

The national imprisonment rate for males was 265.6 in 1998-99, compared with 16.2 for females. The rate of male imprisonment ranged from 134.6 in the ACT to 828.7 in the NT. The rate of female imprisonment was lowest in Tasmania at 7.9, and highest in the NT at 44.4 (figures 9.2 and 9.3).

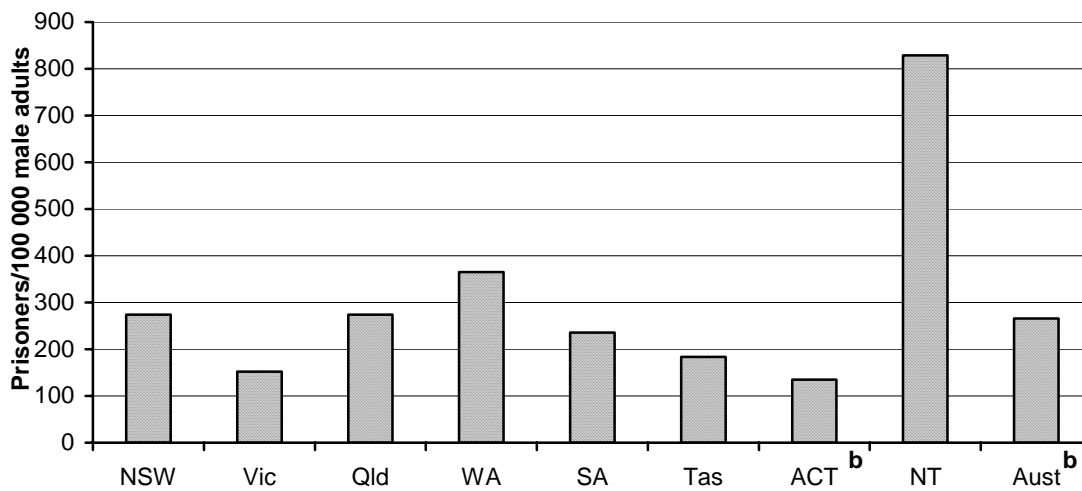
Figure 9.1 Imprisonment rates, 1998-99^a



^a Imprisonment rates for all prisoners are based on the daily average prisoner population supplied by States and Territories, calculated against a general population aged 17 or over in Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the NT, and 18 or over in NSW, WA, SA and the ACT. ^b ACT data include prisoners held on remand in the ACT and ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons. Australian rates are calculated to exclude any double counting of ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.

Source: table 9A.4.

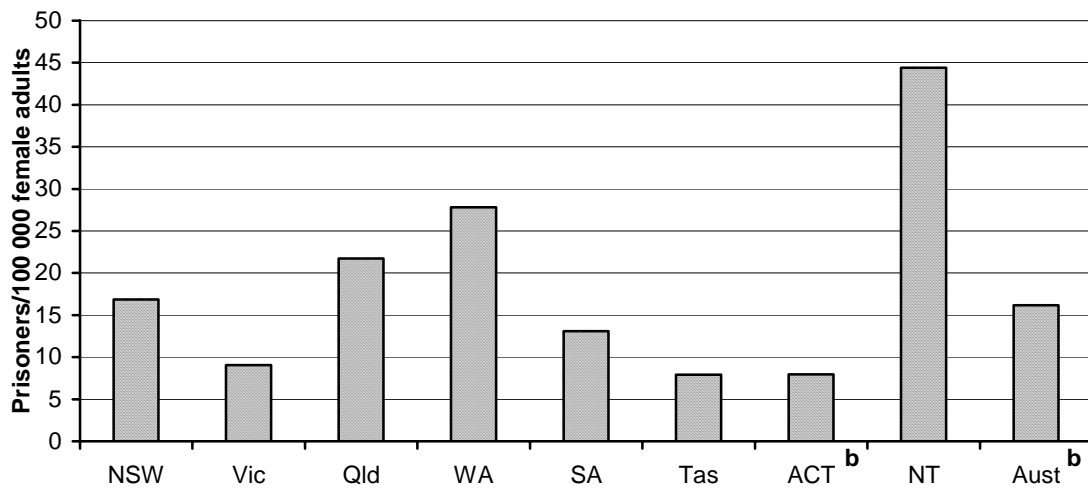
Figure 9.2 Male imprisonment rates, 1998-99^a



^a Imprisonment rates for all prisoners are based on the daily average prisoner population supplied by States and Territories, calculated against a general male population aged 17 or over in Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the NT, and 18 or over in NSW, WA, SA and the ACT. ^b ACT data include prisoners held on remand in the ACT and ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons. Australian rates are calculated to exclude any double counting of ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.

Source: table 9A.4.

Figure 9.3 Female imprisonment rates, 1998-99^a



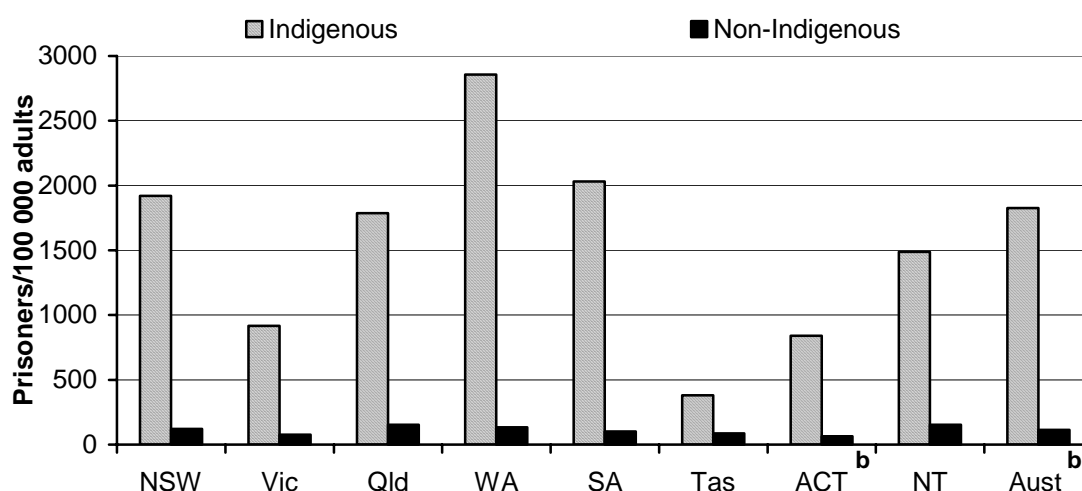
^a Imprisonment rates for all prisoners are based on the daily average prisoner population supplied by States and Territories, calculated against a general female population aged 17 or over in Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the NT, and 18 or over in NSW, WA, SA and the ACT. ^b ACT data include prisoners held on remand in ACT and ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons. Australian rates are calculated to exclude any double counting of ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.

Source: table 9A.4.

The national imprisonment rate per 100 000 Indigenous adults was 1827.2 in 1998-99 compared with a rate of 112.5 for non-Indigenous prisoners. Indigenous imprisonment rates ranged from 379.6 in Tasmania to 2856.7 in WA. Non-Indigenous rates ranged from 64.3 in the ACT to 153.7 in Queensland (figure 9.4). Indigenous prisoners continue to be over represented in the prisoner population. Rates in 1998-99 are not directly comparable with figures published in previous Reports which were calculated against a general population aged 17 years and over for every jurisdiction.

All jurisdictions operate community corrections programs. Community corrections comprise a variety of non-custodial programs (listed for each jurisdiction in table 9A.19). 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). There is no single objective or set of characteristics common to all community corrections programs, other than that they generally provide either a non-custodial sentencing alternative or a post-custodial mechanism for re-integrating prisoners into the community under continued supervision.

Figure 9.4 Indigenous and non-Indigenous imprisonment rates, 1998-99^a



^a Imprisonment rates for all prisoners are based on the daily average prisoner population supplied by States and Territories, calculated against a general population aged 17 or over in Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the NT, and 18 or over in NSW, WA, SA and the ACT. ^b ACT data include prisoners held on remand in the ACT and ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons. Australian rates are calculated to exclude any double counting of ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons.

Source: table 9A.4.

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, as does bail in some jurisdictions.

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). Home detention is available in all jurisdictions except Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT.

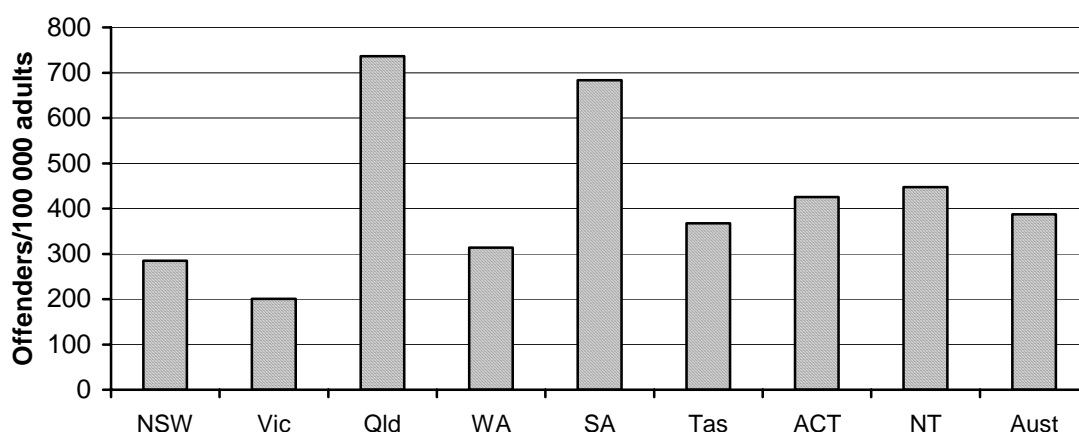
Home detention is a court initiated program in NSW and the NT (aimed at diverting offenders from custody), only a post-custodial program in Queensland, and both a post-custodial program and a court initiated program for bail in WA and SA.

On average, 55 253 offenders per day were serving community corrections orders across Australia in 1998-99. This daily average comprised 44 514 males (80 per cent) and 10 663 females (19 per cent), and 76 offenders whose gender was

not recorded. The daily average also comprised 5705 Indigenous offenders (10 per cent of the total community correction population) and 40 639 non-Indigenous offenders (74 per cent). The Indigenous status of community correction offenders was not available in Victoria and Tasmania in 1998-99. In other jurisdictions, non-Indigenous offender figures may also include some offenders whose Indigenous status was not known or not reported.

The community corrections rate is the daily average number of offenders serving community corrections orders per 100 000 of the general population aged either 17 or 18 years and over, depending on the relevant age of entry to the adult correctional system in each jurisdiction. Nationally the rate was 387.1 in 1998-99; across jurisdictions it ranged from 200.7 in Victoria to 736.2 in Queensland (figure 9.5).

Figure 9.5 **Community corrections rate, 1998-99^{a, b}**

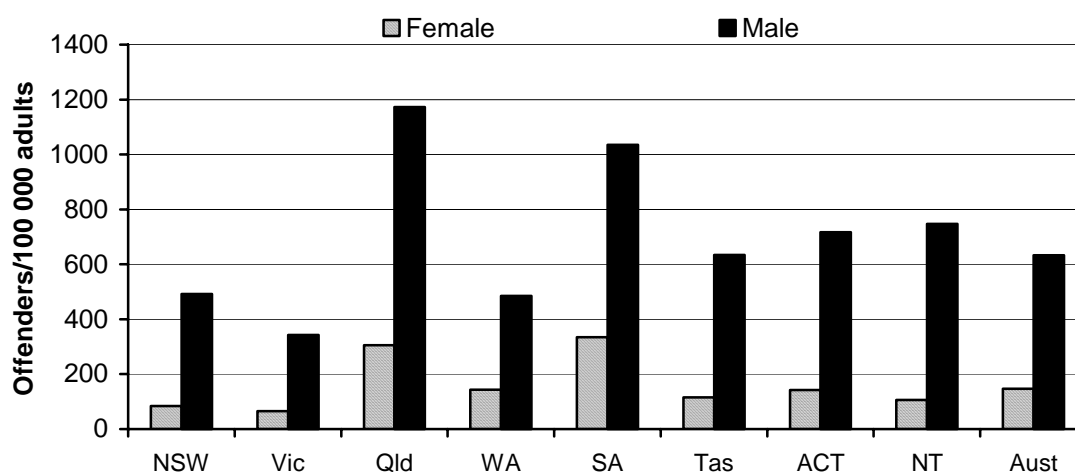


^a Rates are based on the daily average offender population supplied by States and Territories, calculated against a general population of either 17 or 18 years and over, depending on the age at which persons are received into adult custody. ^b NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the NT exclude from the count of daily average offenders those offenders who are awaiting outcome of a breach of an order or who are imprisoned.

Source: table 9A.4.

The national rate for female community correction offenders was 147.3 in 1998-99, compared with 633.0 for males. The male offender rate ranged from 342.3 in Victoria to 1172.7 in Queensland. Victoria also reported the lowest female offender rate (65.2), while SA reported the highest (334.2) (figure 9.6).

Figure 9.6 Community corrections rate, by gender 1998-99^{a, b}



^a Rates are based on the daily average offender population supplied by States and Territories, calculated against a general population of either 17 or 18 years and over, depending on the age at which persons are received into adult custody. ^b NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the NT exclude from the count of daily average offenders those offenders who are awaiting outcome of a breach of an order or who are imprisoned.

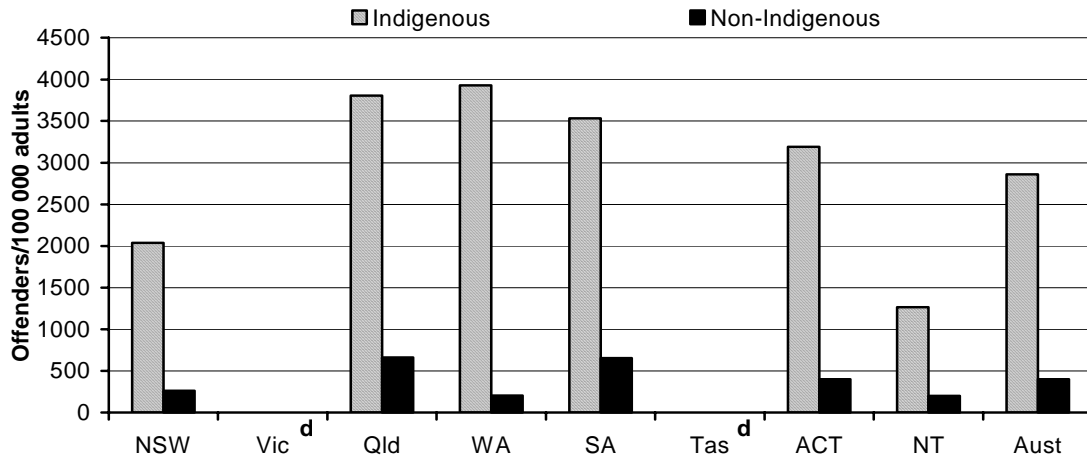
Source: table 9A.4.

The national community correction rate was 2863.2 for Indigenous offenders and 402.1 for non-Indigenous offenders in 1998-99 (excluding Victoria and Tasmania, where separate figures for Indigenous offenders were not available). The Indigenous offender rate ranged from 1265.0 in the NT to 3924.8 in WA. The rate for non-Indigenous offenders ranged from 200.6 in the NT to 663.4 in Queensland (figure 9.7).

Recurrent expenditure on corrective services nationally (net of revenue derived from own sources) totalled \$1179 million in 1998-99 — \$1049 million (89 per cent) for prisons and \$130 million (11 per cent) for community corrections. Recurrent expenditure per capita ranged from \$33.51 in Victoria to \$211.09 in the NT. Nationally, recurrent expenditure was \$62.87 per Australian adult (figure 9.8).

Additional information on prisoners, drawn from the most recent prisoner census (1998 National Prisoner Census), is reported in box 9.1. The census presents information on prisoners in custody on 30 June 1998, so this 'snapshot' information may differ from the daily average prisoner population data drawn from jurisdictional databases reported elsewhere in this chapter.

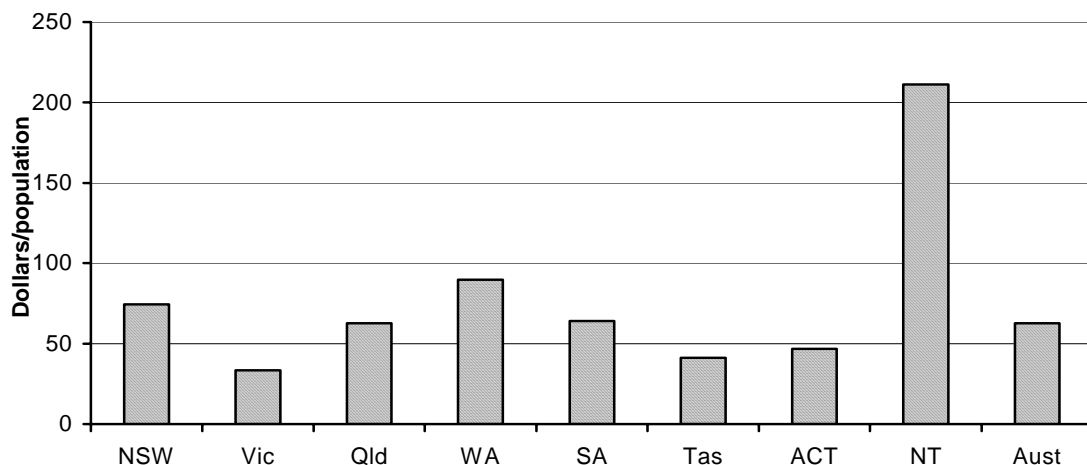
Figure 9.7 **Indigenous and non-Indigenous community corrections rate, 1998-99^{a, b, c}**



^a Rates are based on the daily average offender population supplied by States and Territories, calculated against a general Indigenous/non-Indigenous population of either 17 or 18 years and over, depending on the age at which persons are received into adult custody. ^b Non-Indigenous offender rates may also include some offenders whose Indigenous status was not known or not reported. ^c NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and the NT exclude from the count of daily average offenders those offenders who are awaiting outcome of a breach of an order or who are imprisoned. ^d Victoria and Tasmania do not have community corrections data disaggregated to Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders.

Source: table 9A.4.

Figure 9.8 **Recurrent expenditure per population, 1998-99^{a, b, c}**



^a Recurrent expenditure on all corrections (prisons plus community corrections) per person (based on 1997-98 population). ^b Recurrent expenditure includes expenditure by umbrella departments on behalf of corrective services, and is net of recurrent receipts (own source revenues). ^c To be consistent with the other jurisdictions, payroll tax estimates have been included this year for WA and the ACT.

Source: table 9A.6.

Box 9.1 Prisoners in Australia, 1998

Gender and age

Most of the 19 906 prisoners in custody on 30 June 1998 were male (94 per cent). The average age was 33 years, with half of all prisoners aged less than 30 years. Both males and females aged 20–24 years had the highest age-specific imprisonment rates.

Country of birth

The majority (76 per cent) of prisoners was born in Australia. Of the remainder, 760 (4 per cent) were born in the United Kingdom and Ireland, 493 (2 per cent) were born in New Zealand, and 474 (2 per cent) were born in Vietnam. In total, 14 per cent of prisoners whose country of birth was known were born in a non-English speaking country.

Legal status and sentence type

Most prisoners (86 per cent) were serving a sentence on June 30 1998. The majority (74 per cent) were serving a maximum/minimum or fixed term sentence, 7 per cent were serving periodic detention, 4 per cent were serving an indeterminate sentence (life, governor's pleasure or sentence subject to administrative/ministerial decision), and 1 per cent were serving a sentence for only fine default. The remaining 14 per cent were remanded in custody awaiting a hearing, sentencing or appeal, or were being held under a deportation order. A higher proportion of female prisoners (17 per cent) than of male prisoners (14 per cent) was on remand.

Most serious offence/charge

The most serious offence is that for which the prisoner has received the longest sentence. For unsentenced prisoners, the most serious charge is the one that carries the longest statutory maximum penalty. On 30 June 1998, nearly half (48 per cent) of all sentenced prisoners were convicted of an offence involving violence or threat of violence, including murder (7 per cent), other homicide (3 per cent), assault (12 per cent), sex offences (13 per cent), other offences against the person (1 per cent) and robbery (13 per cent). The highest proportions of males (as a percentage of total males sentenced for most serious offence) convicted of an offence involving violence or threat of violence were convicted for sex offences (14 per cent) followed by robbery (13 per cent) then assault (12.2 per cent). With females (as a percentage of total females sentenced for most serious offence), the highest proportions were convicted for robbery (10.8 per cent), assault (10.0 per cent), murder (5.5 per cent) and other homicide (4.5 per cent).

(Continued next page)

Box 9.1 (Continued)

Sentenced prisoners convicted of a property offence represented 26 per cent of all sentenced prisoners, including breaking and entering (13 per cent), fraud and misappropriation (4 per cent), receiving (2 per cent) and other theft (6 per cent). Another 9 per cent of prisoners were serving a sentence for a drug offence.

The most serious charges for prisoners on remand, included assault (16 per cent), robbery (14 per cent), breaking and entering (12 per cent) and murder (9 per cent).

Overall, the highest proportion of imprisoned males were sentenced for sex offences (14 per cent) while the highest proportion of females were sentenced for fraud and misappropriation, and government security/justice procedures offences (both at 12.1 per cent).

Known previous imprisonment

More than half the prisoners (62 per cent) were reported as having been previously imprisoned under sentence. Figures were higher for males (63 per cent) than females (55 per cent).

Sentence length and period held on remand

The average aggregate sentence was 4.6 years. The average expected time served in custody was 2.9 years. The average time spent in custody on remand was 4.2 months.

Source: NCSSU ABS (1999).

9.2 Policy developments in corrective services

Case management in the context of diverse sentencing options

One of the features of the Australian criminal justice system affecting corrective services is the growing diversity of sentencing options. This diversity includes correctional sanctions that focus on the special needs and circumstances of different offenders. NSW, for example, recently established the NSW Drug Court — a special court to deal with non-violent offences committed by heroin dependent offenders. Eligible offenders receive a suspended sentence during which they are required to participate satisfactorily in a drug program. The 12-month drug program includes intensive supervision by the NSW Probation and Parole Service.

Other innovative sentencing options in recent years have included various diversionary mechanisms, restorative justice, mediation, and combinations of

conditions of community correction orders that target specific offender needs and circumstances. Table 9A.19 shows the range of correctional sanctions available across jurisdictions.

These different sentencing options require corrective services to develop a range of programs and facilities to appropriately address the conditions imposed by the court sentence or other order. Criminal justice system initiatives to address drug related offences pose particular challenges, given the need to balance secure custody with treatment and rehabilitation objectives. Thus individual case management and detailed risk assessment of prisoners and offenders are needed to ensure appropriate levels of supervision and custody consistent with meeting the requirements of the court order and addressing the individual needs of the prisoner or offender. The approach also places greater demands on cooperation among areas of government (for example, the integration of health, community and welfare service delivery to prisoners and offenders across the range of community correction orders).

Within the range of sentencing options, sentencing objectives may include deterrence, punishment, rehabilitation, reparation and containment. There is a continuing need to balance diverse objectives and expectations — such as the need to maintain prisoner security and community safety as well as minimum standards of prisoner care. Further, respect for prisoner and offender rights must be balanced against community expectations of compensation and reparation for crimes committed.

Various issues affect the opportunity to address these diverse expectations effectively. These issues include the rapid and continual growth in prisoner and offender numbers, changes in the characteristics of the prisoner and community correction offender populations, the time and cost of increasing prison capacity through the establishment of new prisons, and the resources available to develop and operate programs and facilities, both in custody and in the community.

Prisoner numbers and characteristics

Corrective service populations are determined by factors outside the control of corrective services. These include changes in court sentencing patterns, police activity and socioeconomic factors. Available prison accommodation in most States and Territories has been under pressure from steady increases in imprisonment rates over a decade. The particular composition of the prison population also imposes specific demands on prison management.

The number of female prisoners continues to increase at a higher rate than that of male prisoners. In 1994-95, an average of 727 women were held in Australian prisons each day; in 1998-99, the figure had risen by 61 per cent to reach 1172 (an average annual increase of 17.3 per cent). Male prisoner numbers increased by 21 per cent over the same period (an average annual increase of 6.9 per cent). However, the overall proportion of female prisoners in the total prisoner population remained small (only 6 per cent) in 1998-99. This combination of rapidly growing numbers but continuing small proportion of the total prisoner population poses particular challenges for corrective services in meeting the specific needs of female prisoners, such as segregated accommodation and appropriate programs.

The characteristics of the overall prison population are also changing. Prison census figures over the past 10 years show, for example, a higher proportion of prisoners are serving sentences for assault and sex offences as their most serious offence. The average age of prisoners has increased over this period and the proportion of younger prisoners has declined. Prisoners serving sentences of one year or less are fewer than those serving similar sentences 10 years ago.

Changing prison populations and increasing prisoner numbers have combined to place increasing pressure on corrective service facilities and programs. Demands by government for greater accountability and increased efficiency across the justice sector have also affected services. Additional resources or the 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 extensive lead time necessary to construct new prison accommodation, such trends can exacerbate the effects of long term increases in prisoner numbers.

Changes in purchaser–provider arrangements

The delivery of elements of corrective services under corporatised, privatised or other contractual arrangements continues to be an important policy issue for the sector in 1998-99. The number and proportion of prisoners held in privately operated prisons continue to grow nationally. The average daily number of prisoners held in privately operated facilities more than doubled in the four-year period since 1994-95 (an average annual increase of 23 per cent); in 1998-99, the number was 12 per cent higher than in the previous year.

The focus of a number of jurisdictions operating private prison facilities in 1998-99 was on the regulatory and monitoring role required of corrective services to set policy direction and to ensure accountability of contracted service providers.

9.3 Framework of performance indicators

Performance is reported against five key result areas based on the five common objectives for corrective services (box 9.2). Definitions and counting rules were further refined during 1998-99 as part of the continuing effort to ensure jurisdictional comparability on all indicators. Information on gender and Indigenous and non-Indigenous offender numbers was introduced for the first time. Counting rules for indicators developed in recent years (such as prisoner assaults) were reviewed and refined. A major benchmarking exercise was conducted during the year on the indicators of community correction completion rates and on the calculation of recurrent expenditure across all jurisdictions. Work is continuing in both these areas.

Past years' data have been updated where possible in accordance with refined counting rules and definitions. This Report presents some historical data that may be different from data published in previous Reports for a number of jurisdictions (and tables have been footnoted accordingly). In other cases, it has not been possible to recalculate historical data, so any conclusions about changes within individual jurisdictions need to be considered in this context.

Figure 9.9 provides performance indicators for each of the objectives identified in box 9.2, and highlights the comparability of each of these indicators across States and Territories. 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.

The performance indicators framework for corrective services is under review, with changes possible for next year's Report (figure 9.9).

All the 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. Efficiency indicators, such as assets per prisoner, have been reported for publicly owned prisons only, given commercial-in-confidence concerns with separately reporting privately operated services.

Box 9.2 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.

These objectives are to be met through the provision of services in an equitable and efficient manner.

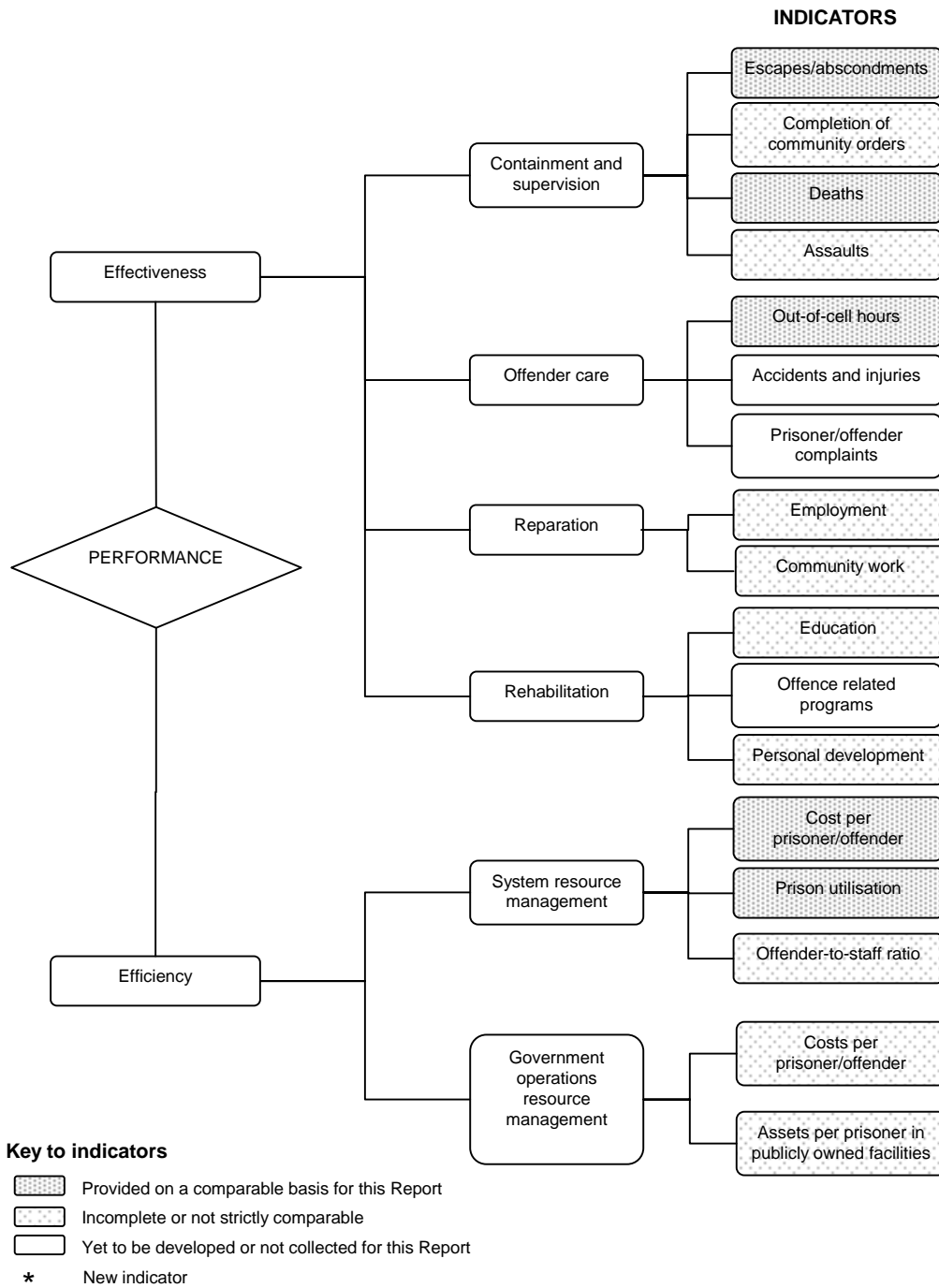
Corrective services' *efficiency* indicators relate to the objective of:

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

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.

Ongoing work to provide a more comprehensive set of performance indicators, and to improve existing indicators and the data, is discussed in section 9.5.

Figure 9.9 Performance indicators for corrective services



9.4 Key performance indicator results

Different delivery contexts, locations and types of client may affect the effectiveness and efficiency of corrective services. 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.

Effectiveness

Containment and supervision

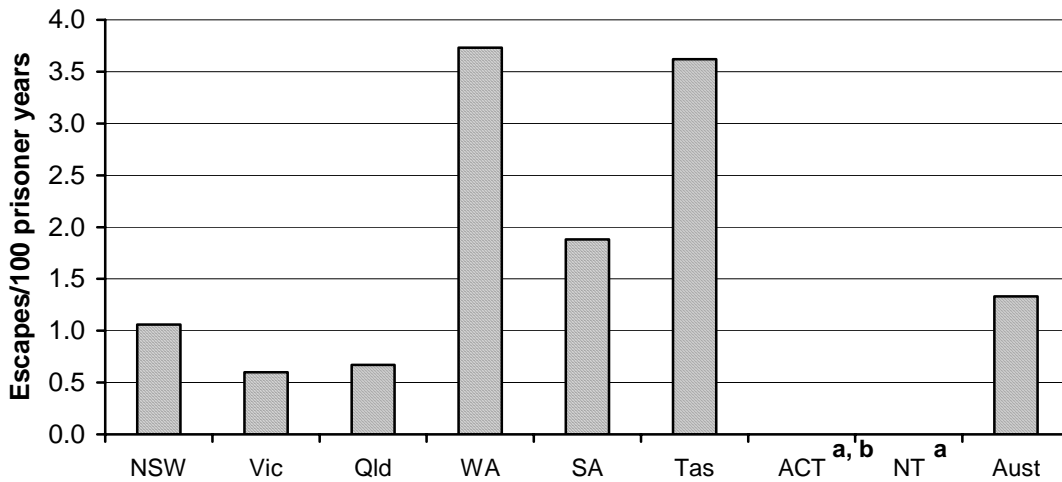
Prison indicators of containment and supervision are particularly vulnerable to the effects of small numbers, especially when expressed as a rate of total prisoner populations in jurisdictions with relatively small average daily prisoner populations. Given small absolute numbers in many cases, care should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

Escapes/abscondments

The total prisoner escape/abscondment rate in 1998-99 declined from that in 1997-98 in all jurisdictions except WA and Tasmania (where the rates increased for open and secure custody categories). The ACT and the NT reported zero prisoners escaping or absconding in 1998-99, while WA reported the highest rate of prisoners escaping/absconding (3.73 per 100 prisoner years) (figure 9.10).

The escape rate for secure custody ranged from zero in Queensland, the ACT and NT to 2.9 in Tasmania. The rate for open custody ranged from zero in the NT to 9.1 in WA (figure 9.11). A third category of escape/abscondment from other levels of security refers to prisoners who abscond or fail to return from unescorted absences such as work release and day leave, or who escape while being transported from a court complex while under the supervision of corrective services. This rate ranged from zero in the NT to 0.65 in SA in 1998-99. The escape rate among prisoners serving periodic detention was 0.29 for NSW and zero for the ACT.

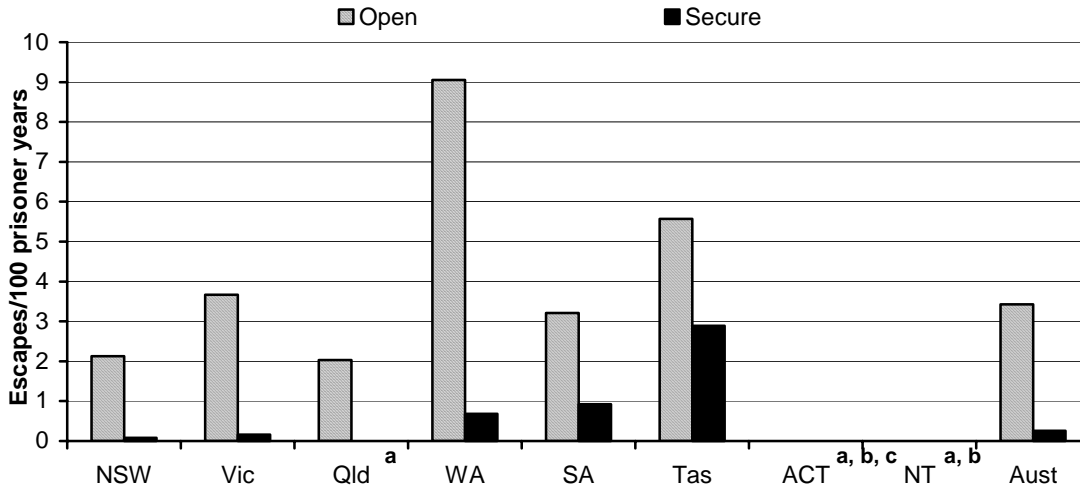
Figure 9.10 Total prisoner escape/abscondment rate, 1998-99



^a The ACT and the NT had zero escape rates. ^b ACT rates were calculated against prisoners held in the ACT remand centre.

Source: table 9A.7.

Figure 9.11 Escape rate of prisoners, 1998-99



^a Queensland, the ACT and the NT had zero escape rates from secure prisons. ^b The escape rate from open prisons did not apply to the ACT, while the NT had zero escape rate. ^c ACT rates were calculated against prisoners held in the ACT remand centre.

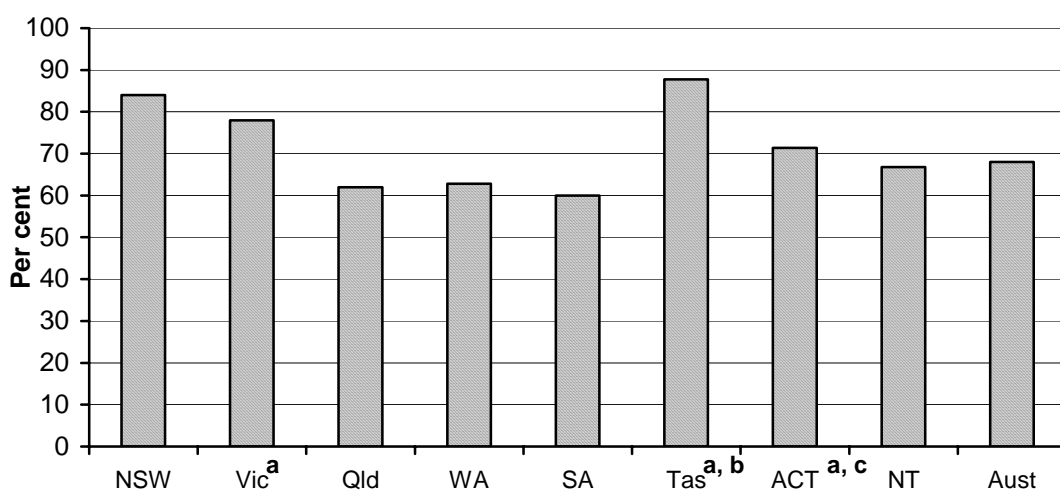
Source: table 9A.7.

Completion of community orders

The key indicator of containment and supervision for community corrections is the successful completion of orders. Unsuccessful completion occurs when the offender breaches an order (failing to comply with the conditions of the order) or commits a further offence. Figures need to be interpreted with caution. 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 60.0 per cent in SA to 87.8 per cent in Tasmania in 1998-99 (figure 9.12). The relative proportions of offenders on different orders, and the requirements of these different types of order, affect the overall completion rate and comparability across jurisdictions. This indicator has also been reported according to broad categories of community corrections order. However, even within these subtypes, there are still jurisdictional differences in the manner of counting offenders who breach different features of an order and offenders who are awaiting breach action. Thus jurisdictional comparisons on this indicator should be made with caution.

Figure 9.12 **Successful completion of community corrections orders, 1998-99**



^a Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT did not operate home detention programs. ^b Data on fine option orders are included under community service bonds/order in Tasmania. ^c Data on fine option orders were not applicable in the ACT.

Source: table 9A.8.

Successful completion of home detention orders in 1998-99 (for those five jurisdictions in which this program operated) ranged from 57.2 per cent in SA to 93.0 per cent in the NT. Completion rates for fine option orders (not applicable in the ACT) ranged from 55.6 per cent in SA to 86.6 per cent in Victoria. Tasmania did not report separately on this indicator in 1998-99. Completion rates for community service bonds and orders ranged from 47.9 per cent in the ACT to 83.9 per cent in Tasmania, and rates for supervision orders ranged from 63.7 per cent in WA to 94.5 per cent in Tasmania.

Deaths

The ACT recorded zero prisoner deaths in 1998-99. The highest rate of prisoner deaths (per 100 prisoner years) was 0.38, reported by both NSW and Queensland (figure 9.13). Deaths from apparent natural causes ranged from zero in the ACT and NT, to a rate of 0.30 (one death) in Tasmania. Tasmania and the ACT recorded zero deaths from apparent unnatural causes. The highest rate of deaths from apparent unnatural causes (per 100 prisoner years) was 0.31, reported by NSW. The number and rate of total deaths declined from 1997-98 levels in all jurisdictions except Queensland, where the increase was due solely to a rise in the rate of deaths from apparent natural 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 for six of the eight jurisdictions. Queensland recorded the highest rate (0.28). The equivalent rate for non-Indigenous prisoners ranged from zero in the ACT and the NT to 0.34 (one death) in Tasmania. Five jurisdictions reported a zero rate of Indigenous death rates from apparent unnatural causes (Victoria, WA, SA, Tasmania and the ACT). NSW reported the highest rate at 0.26. The equivalent rate for non-Indigenous prisoners ranged from zero in Tasmania, the ACT and the NT to 0.31 in NSW.

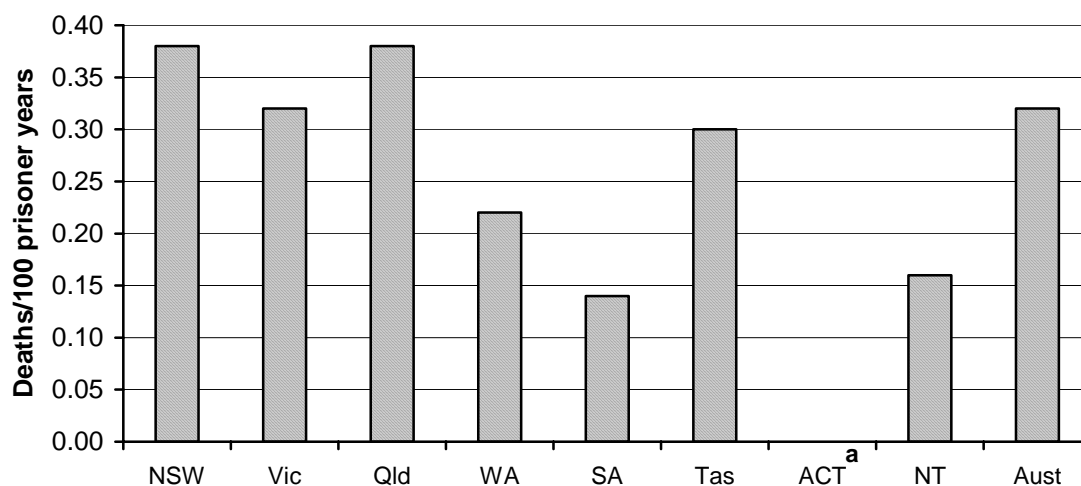
Neither of the two jurisdictions operating periodic detention reported deaths of periodic detainees in 1998-99.

Assaults

Assault data are included here for the third year, and definitions are still being refined to improve comparability across jurisdictions. Results should be regarded as indicative rather than strictly comparable. 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.

Figure 9.13 Total prisoner death rates, 1998-99



^a The ACT had zero deaths.

Source: table 9A.9.

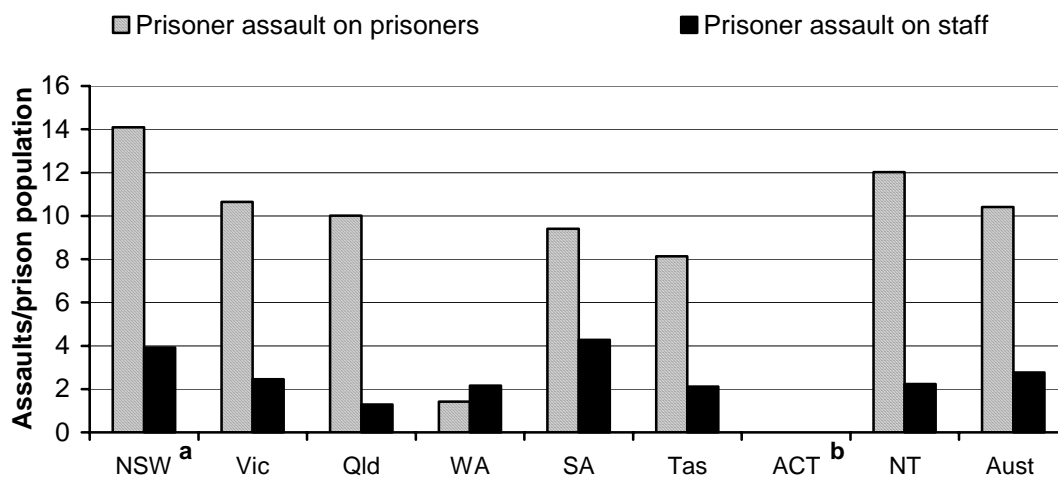
The reported rate of assaults by prisoners on other prisoners (number of assaults per 100 prisoners) in 1998-99 ranged from 1.4 in WA to 14.1 in NSW. The reported rate of assaults by prisoners on officers ranged from 1.3 in Queensland to 4.3 in SA (figure 9.14). The ACT did not report on either indicator in 1998-99.

In NSW, the rate of assaults on periodic detention prisoners by other periodic detention prisoners was 2.0 and the rate of assaults on officers by periodic detention prisoners was 0.7 in 1998-99.

Offender care

The primary indicator is 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 a higher standard of prisoner care. 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 9.14 **Prison assaults, 1998-99**



^a NSW stated that it employed a broader definition of assault to that adopted for the national indicators.

^b The ACT did not report on this indicator.

Source: table 9A.12.

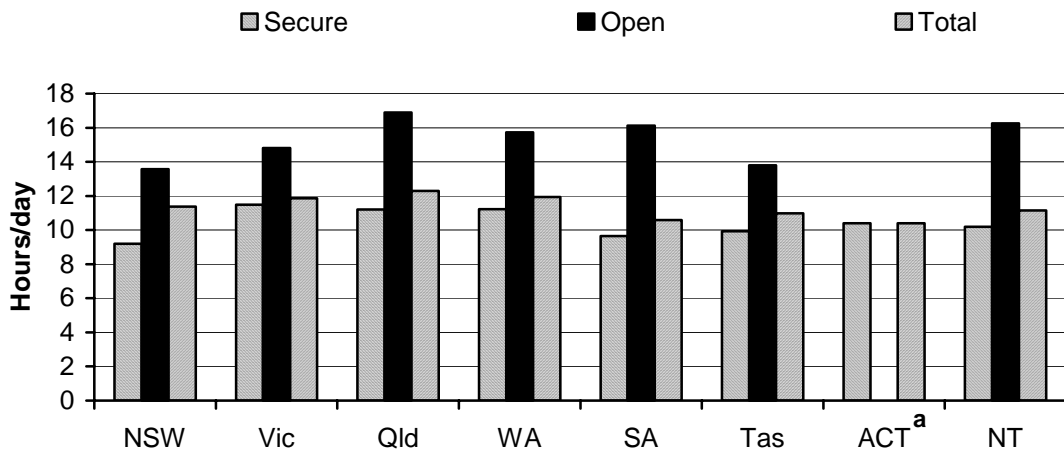
Out-of-cell hours

SA reported the lowest average daily out-of-cell hours for all prisons combined in 1998-99 (10.6 hours per day). The ACT is excluded from this comparison because open custody prisoners are not accommodated in ACT prisons. Queensland reported the highest number of out-of-cell hours (12.3 hours per day). Out-of-cell hours for secure custody ranged from 9.2 per day in NSW to 11.5 in Victoria; the hours for open custody ranged from 13.6 in NSW to 16.9 in Queensland (figure 9.15). The average daily out-of-cell hours for total prisons declined marginally from 1997-98 levels in all jurisdictions except the ACT (remand prisoners only).

Accidents and injuries

This indicator is still under consideration. Jurisdictions differ markedly in their capacity to provide data on accidents and injuries, and there are significant comparability issues still to be resolved in defining this measure.

Figure 9.15 Average out-of-cell hours, by type of prisoner, 1998-99



^a The ACT had no open custody facilities. The secure rate is for the remand centre. Total rate is equal to the rate for secure facilities.

Source: table 9A.13.

Prisoner/offender complaints

This indicator is still under consideration. As with accidents and injuries, jurisdictions differ markedly in their capacity to provide data on prisoner and offender complaints, and there are significant comparability issues still to be resolved in defining this measure.

Prisoner reparation

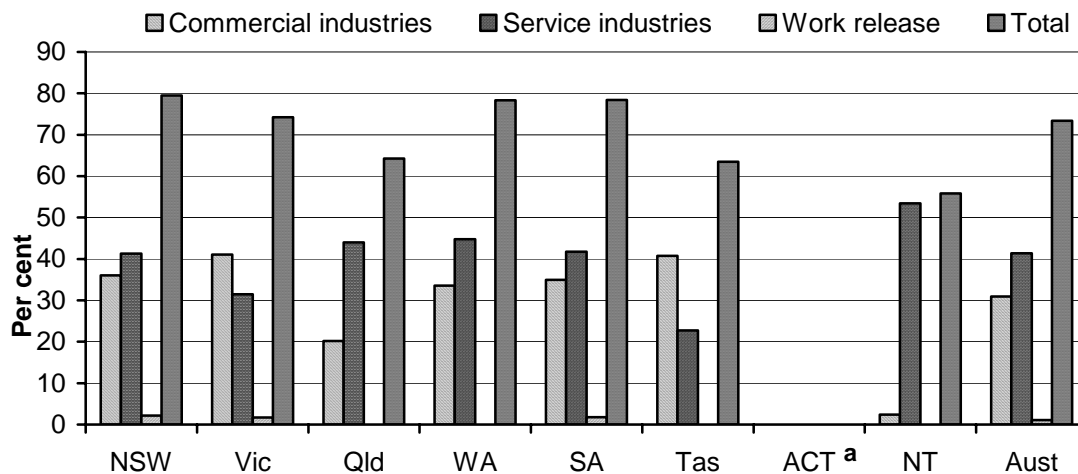
Prisoner employment

Prisoner work provides reparation by generating income from prison industries (industries that are 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 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.

NSW reported the highest percentage of prisoners eligible to work who were employed in 1998-99 (79.5 per cent) and the NT reported the smallest percentage (55.8 per cent). All jurisdictions except Victoria and Tasmania had proportionally more prisoners employed in service industries than in commercial industries (figure 9.16). 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.

The employment rate among periodic detainees in 1998-99 in the two jurisdictions operating periodic detention was 48.5 per cent in NSW and 88.2 per cent in the ACT.

Figure 9.16 **Proportion of eligible prisoners employed, 1998-99**



^a The ACT held only remand prisoners.

Source: table 9A.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, and counting rules were refined in 1998-99 (section 9A.2). Information on each indicator is not available for all jurisdictions in 1998-99.

These indicators reflect corrective services' responses to court orders. Hours ordered to be worked depend on jurisdictional legislation, court sentencing practices and, in particular, government policy on dealing with fine defaults.

The ACT reported the highest average number of hours ordered to be worked per offender (100 hours) and Tasmania reported the lowest (50 hours). The rate of hours of community work ordered per 100 000 adults in the general population ranged from 16 934 in the ACT to 123 200 in Queensland in 1998-99. NSW and Victoria did not report on either indicator. Tasmania and Queensland figures were based on hours for only new orders made during the year, and were not directly comparable with data from other jurisdictions (which also included hours for old orders that continued into 1998-99).

The ACT reported the highest average number of hours actually worked per offender (70 hours) and SA reported the lowest (30 hours). The rate of hours of community work performed per 100 000 adults in the general population ranged from 11 884 in the ACT to 61 625 in Queensland. NSW did not report on this indicator in 1998-99.

The ratio of hours worked to hours ordered ranged from 1:1.3 in Tasmania to 1:2.4 in SA. NSW and Victoria did not report on this indicator in 1998-99. Queensland and Tasmanian figures are based on hours for only new orders made during the year and are therefore not directly comparable with data from other jurisdictions

Rehabilitation

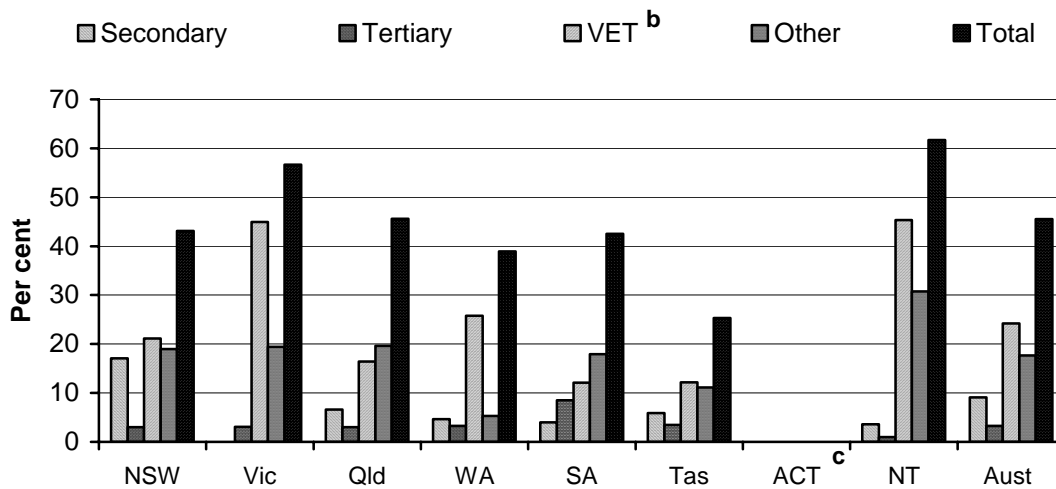
Education

Enhancing employment opportunities through vocational education and training is important for successfully re-integrating prisoners into the community and reducing the risk of re-offending. The percentage of eligible prisoners undertaking education or training courses in 1998-99 ranged from 25.4 per cent in Tasmania to 61.7 per cent in the NT. Care should be taken when comparing the percentages of eligible prisoners undertaking education or training courses across jurisdictions because prisoners eligible for these courses are defined differently across jurisdictions.

The NT also had the largest percentage of prisoners in vocational training (45.3 per cent), while SA had the lowest (12.1 per cent). The percentage of prisoners engaged in secondary education ranged from 3.6 per cent in the NT to 17.1 per cent in NSW. Victoria did not report on prisoners in secondary education separately in 1998-99. Prisoners undertaking tertiary education ranged from 1.0 per cent in the NT to 8.5 per cent in SA. The NT reported the highest proportion (30.7 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 (5.3 per cent). Education indicators were not applicable to the ACT given that only remand prisoners are accommodated in the ACT (figure 9.17).

Figure 9.17 **Proportion of prisoners enrolled in education and training, 1998-99^a**



^a Prisoners eligible to participate in education are defined differently in different jurisdictions. See tables 9A.22, 9A.30, 9A.36, 9A.42, 9A.48, 9A.54, 9A.60 and 9A.68 for details. ^b Vocational education and training.

^c The ACT held only remand prisoners.

Source: table 9A.15.

Offence related programs

This indicator is still under development, although some progress has been made in defining the indicator and developing counting rules. However, appropriate information collection systems need to be developed and implemented before the indicator can be reported on a consistent basis in future reports.

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 three jurisdictions were able to report on this indicator for 1998-99.

Efficiency

System resource management

System resource management is the management of resources and the provision of services by:

- government owned and managed facilities, and
- government or privately owned facilities managed under contract by a private sector organisation.

If corrective facilities are owned and managed by government only, then system resource management indicators are also government operations resource management indicators.

There has been substantial work to improve the comparability of resource management indicators during the year. While some jurisdictions continue to calculate recurrent expenditure differently, there is reasonable comparability of cost based indicators across jurisdictions in the corrective services section.

The Steering Committee is working with the Corrective Services Working Group to improve the measurement of unit costs by introducing a more consistent treatment of superannuation costs, payroll tax, depreciation and the user cost of capital (box 9.3).

Even when based on comparable information, cost indicators are affected by factors other than differences in performance efficiency. These include the composition of the prisoner population (such as security classification, the number of female or special need prisoners, and the number of periodic detainees), the size and dispersion of the area serviced, and the scale of operations.

Cost per prisoner (all prisons)

A measure of the efficiency in the system resource management is the total cost of all prison services divided by the number of prisoners per day (unit costs). Average recurrent cost per prisoner per day (for open and secure prisons combined) ranged from \$106 in Queensland to \$192 in the ACT in 1998-99. Calculating costs for open and secure custody separately, Queensland maintained the lowest unit cost for secure prisons at \$118 and the ACT reported the highest unit cost at \$253. These two jurisdictions also show the lowest and the highest unit costs for prisoners in

open custody (including periodic detainees on a 2/7 pro rata basis) respectively — \$58 for Queensland and \$145 for the ACT. Victoria did not report on open and secure prisoner costs separately in 1998-99 (figure 9.18).

Box 9.3 Comparability of cost estimates

It is an objective of the Review to report comparable estimates of costs. Ideally, the full range of costs to government is counted on a comparable basis. Where the full costs cannot be counted, costs should be estimated on a consistent basis.

The Steering Committee has identified four areas that have the potential to diminish the comparability of costs across the services covered in this Report. As mentioned above, the costs of corrective services are broadly comparative.

- Superannuation costs are currently included on an accrual actuarial basis, as recommended in SCRCSSP (1998).
- Depreciation costs are included in cost estimates for government operated corrective services.
- Payroll tax is payable by most government and private corrective services. SCRCSSP (1999) recommended adding payroll tax to the unit cost estimates for WA and the ACT to achieve comparability across government and private corrective services and across jurisdictions. Payroll tax estimates have been added to the unit cost estimates for WA and the ACT for the first time this year.
- The user cost of capital per prisoner per day is estimated for the first time this year. Comparability will improve when calculation of the estimate is refined to deduct debt servicing costs and State based capital asset charges from total costs.

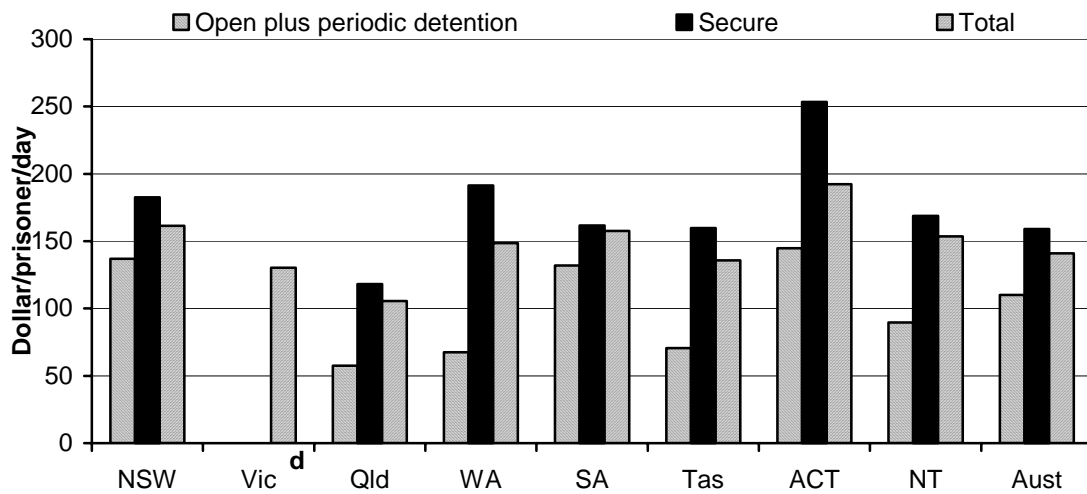
Sources: SCRCSSP (1998 and 1999).

Cost per offender (community corrections)

A measure of the efficiency in the system resource management is the total cost divided by the number of offender per day (unit costs). The reported unit costs are also government-only unit costs for all jurisdictions except Queensland where there are some privately operated community corrections facilities.

Cost per offender per day in community corrections varied from \$3 in Queensland to \$23 in the NT in 1998-99. This indicator, as with prisoner costs, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of the different offender populations (and associated supervision requirements), dispersion and size factors among jurisdictions (figure 9.19).

Figure 9.18 Cost of prisons, 1998-99^{a, b, c}



^a Recurrent expenditure includes expenditure by umbrella departments on behalf of corrective services, and is net of recurrent receipts (own source revenues). It does not include the user cost of capital for buildings and equipment. ^b All prisons expenditure includes expenditure by umbrella departments on behalf of corrective services that could not be allocated separately to open or secure prisons. ^c Payroll tax estimates have been included for WA and the ACT. ^d Victoria did not report on open and secure prisoners separately for this indicator.

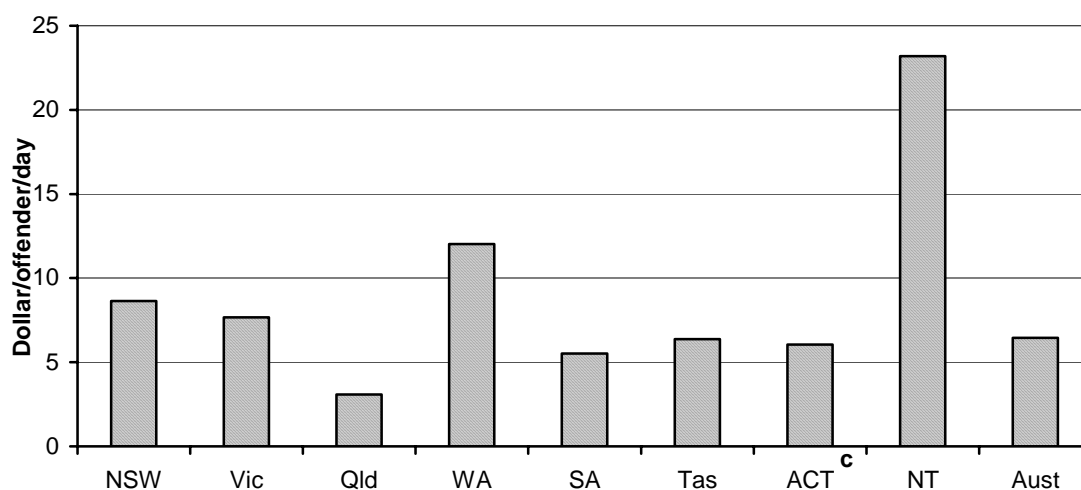
Source: table 9A.6.

Prison utilisation

The system's prison utilisation rate is considered to be an indicator of the efficiency with which private and publicly owned 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 the transfer of prisoners, provide special purpose accommodation such as hospital and protection units, provide separate facilities for males and females and for different security levels, and deal with short term fluctuations in prisoner numbers. The internationally accepted rate is 85–95 per cent.¹

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

Figure 9.19 Cost of community corrections, 1998-99^{a, b}



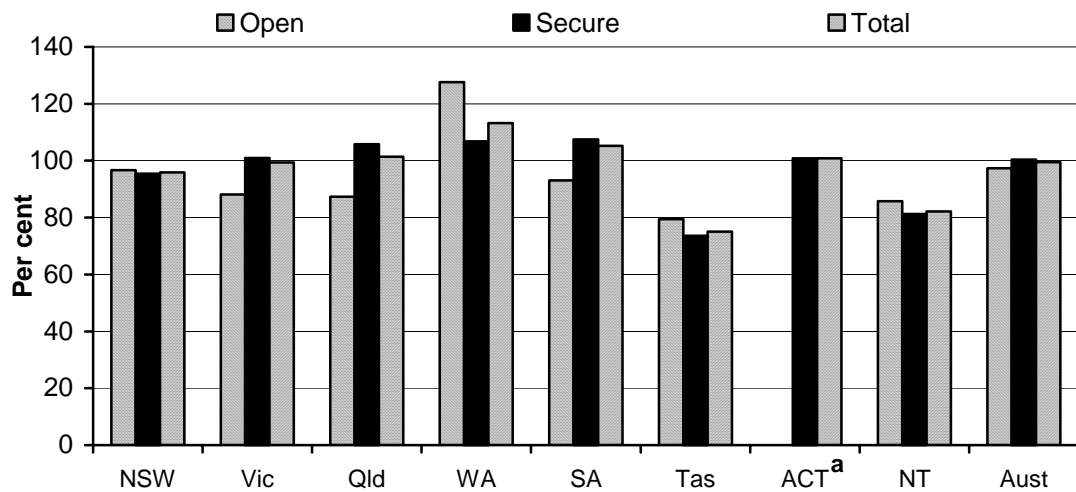
^a Payroll tax estimates have been included for WA and the ACT. ^b This represents both systemwide and government operations resource management for all jurisdictions except Queensland, where it is a measure of systemwide resource management only. ^c Recurrent expenditure includes expenditure by umbrella departments on behalf of corrective services, and is net of recurrent receipts (own source revenues). It excludes the user cost of capital for buildings and equipment.

Source: table 9A.6.

Prison utilisation for all prisons (open plus secure) ranged from 75.1 per cent in Tasmania to 113.2 per cent in WA in 1998-99. Rates in Queensland, WA, SA and the ACT exceeded 100 per cent of current design capacity. (Rates exceed 100 per cent when more prisoners are housed in a facility than allowed for in its design.) Tasmania maintained the lowest secure (73.6 per cent) and open (79.4 per cent) prison utilisation rates. SA had the highest secure custody utilisation rate (107.5 per cent) and WA had the highest open custody utilisation rate (127.6 per cent) (figure 9.20).

Total prison utilisation rates increased from those of the previous year in Victoria, WA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT. NSW and Queensland rates declined, while the SA rate remained relatively constant (section 9A.2).

Figure 9.20 Prison capacity use rates, 1998-99



^a The ACT does not operate open prisons.

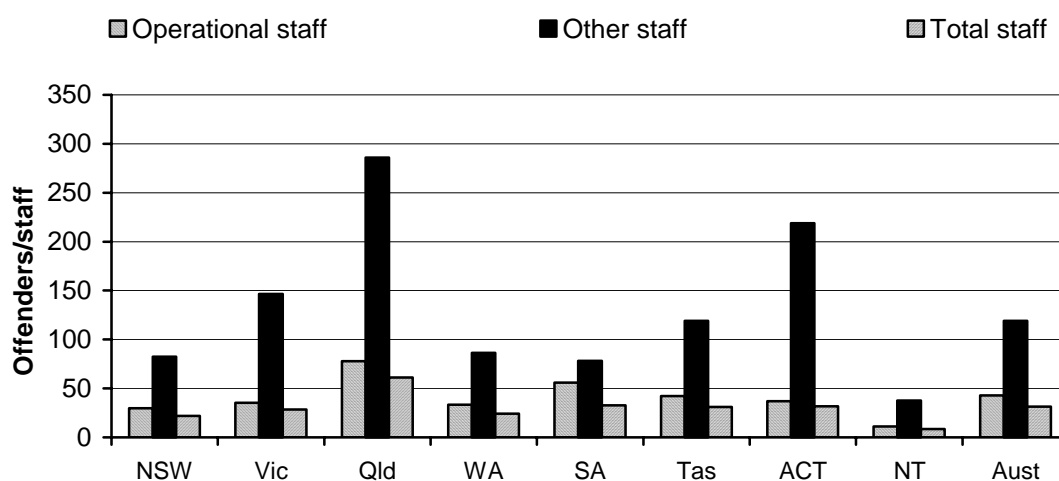
Source: table 9A.16.

Offender-to-staff ratio

Offender-to-staff ratio, prisoner-to-staff ratio and assets per prisoner are proxy indicators of the efficiency of the systemwide delivery of prison and community corrections services. Offender-to-staff ratio for community corrections is reported here, but prisoner-to-staff ratio is no longer reported because it has been found to be an incomplete measure of efficiency. Additional services provided by prison staff in some jurisdictions, such as court security and prisoner escort, meant that prisoner-to-staff ratio was not comparable across jurisdictions. The results for this indicator were also influenced by factors that affect supervision resource requirements (for example, modern prisons incorporating video surveillance and electronic security require fewer staff).

Offender-to-staff ratios for community corrections ranged from 61.2 offenders per staff member in Queensland to 8.5 in the NT in 1998-99. Queensland also reported the highest ratios of offenders to operational staff (77.8) and offenders to other staff (285.9). The NT reported the lowest of these ratios (11.0 and 37.8 respectively) (figure 9.21). The offender-to-staff ratio, as with cost per offender, represents both a systemwide and government-only indicator of efficiency for all jurisdictions except Queensland (where some non-government operated community corrections facilities exist).

Figure 9.21 **Community corrections offender-to-staff ratio, 1998-99^a**



^a This represents both systemwide and government operations resource management for all jurisdictions except Queensland, where it is a measure of systemwide resource management only.

Source: table 9A.17.

Government operations resource management

Cost per prisoner

The framework of indicators also 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 (\$123.60 per prisoner per day). This could be compared with the unit costs of WA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT (which are both systemwide and government), although Queensland's cost per prisoner may be sensitive to the mix of prisoners in public and private prisons. NSW, Victoria and SA were unable to provide cost per prisoner per day for government managed facilities.

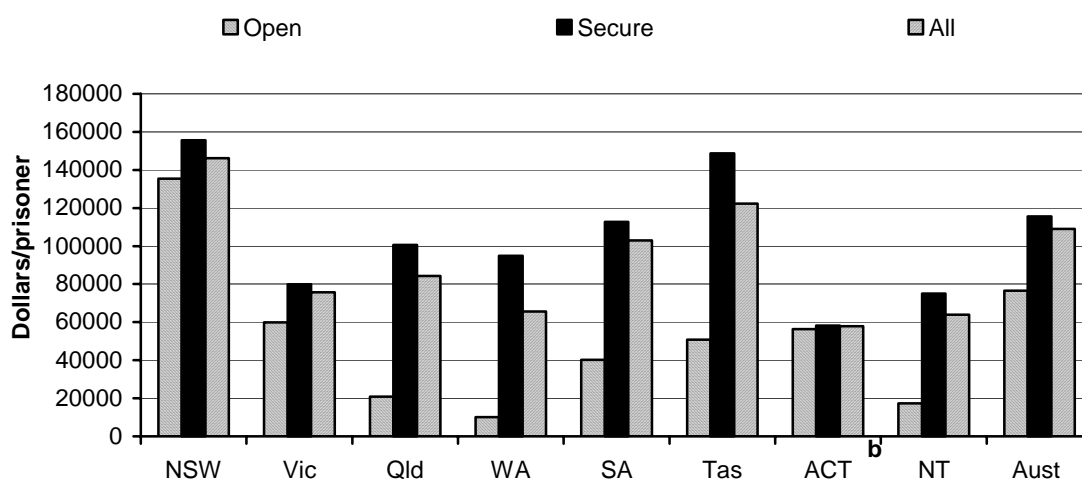
Cost per offender

Cost per offender for each jurisdiction is shown in figure 9.19. Except for Queensland, the cost per offender represents a systemwide and a government-only measure of efficiency because there are no non-government operated community corrections facilities.

Assets per prisoner in publicly owned facilities

Value of assets per prisoner is an indicator of the capital inputs to corrective services. As an indicator of the use of government owned assets, value of assets per prisoner covers both government owned and operated prisons, and 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 owned prisons in 1998-99 (\$57 842), and NSW reported the highest value (\$146 119) (figure 9.22). The ACT data relate to only periodic detainees and prisoners held in the ACT remand centre. Asset 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 9.22 **Value of government owned assets per prisoner in government owned prisons, 1998-99^a**



^a This indicator is sensitive to the method of asset valuation and accounting policies adopted in each jurisdiction. ^b Calculated per ACT prisoner in the remand centre and/or periodic detainee.

Source: table 9A.18.

User cost of capital

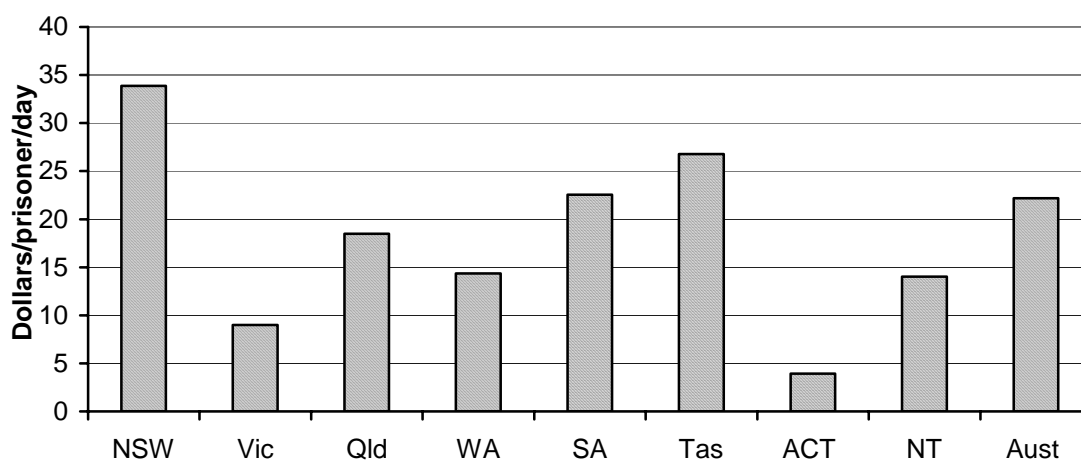
The user cost of capital for government services is the cost of the funds tied up in the capital used to deliver services (for example, the land and buildings used to house prisoners). The user cost of capital makes explicit the opportunity cost (the return forgone by using the funds to deliver services rather than investing them

elsewhere or using them to retire debt) of this capital. 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 per prisoner per day in government owned prisons ranged from \$4.00 in the ACT² to \$34.00 in NSW (figure 9.23). The user cost of capital per prisoner day could be added to the recurrent cost per prisoner day for government operations, provided that interest payments and capital asset charges are not included in operating costs to avoid double counting. The user cost of capital per prisoner per day in government owned prisons could be added to the total system recurrent cost per prisoner day to derive the cost (weighted according to the proportion of prisoners in government owned prisons).

Future reporting of user cost of capital will exclude debt servicing costs and capital cost charges to avoid double counting. It will also exclude the user cost of capital for land, which will be reported separately.

Figure 9.23 User cost of capital per prisoner in government owned prisons, 1998-99



Source: table 9A.18.

² The ACT maintains only one remand prison and one periodic detention facility.

9.5 Future directions in performance reporting

Jurisdictions will continue to refine definitions and counting rules to maximise comparability across States and Territories. Work is in progress between the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the agencies in the justice and criminal system to improve the reporting of flow data throughout the justice system. Work is also in progress, building on the benchmarking and State survey comparisons conducted during 1998-99, to guide the refinement of existing indicators. The benchmarking exercise has led to a review of all community correction indicators, and the National Corrections Advisory Group is considering adjustments to the community corrections indicators to ensure greater accuracy of reporting. New indicators are being developed further and trialed, and will be introduced when data quality and comparability are established across jurisdictions.

Improving data comparability of efficiency measures across jurisdictions is another task that the corrective services sector is addressing. The National Corrections Advisory Group is undertaking a recurrent expenditure survey to ensure consistent treatment of recurrent expenditure items across jurisdictions. The Steering Committee is also working with the corrective services sector to improve the estimates of unit costs by introducing a more consistent treatment of:

- superannuation costs (see SCRCSSP 1998);
- payroll tax (see SCRCSSP 1999); and
- depreciation and the user cost of capital.

Accounting for these elements should improve the comparability and accuracy of unit cost information in future Reports.

Further, the Steering Committee is working with the corrective services sector to address the treatment of public and systemwide efficiency indicators in the current performance indicator framework for corrective services.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access to mainstream services

In May 1997 the Prime Minister requested that the Steering Committee give priority to developing indicators that measure the performance of mainstream services in meeting the needs of Indigenous Australians. This is an important task, but large gaps remain. The Corrective Services Working Group is working towards this task and is considering which indicators would benefit from such a disaggregation.

Currently information reported on Indigenous prisoners includes population levels, death rates by apparent cause (natural, unnatural and unknown), and imprisonment and offender rates among Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations.

Descriptive data on Indigenous prisoners for certain aspects of community corrections were reported for the first time in this Report. The Corrective Services Working Group reviews all indicators annually to monitor the consistency of the data collected, and the availability and coverage of nationally consistent data on the provision of services to Indigenous clients may increase for future Reports.

There are agencies in various jurisdictions that publish justice related data on Indigenous people. Information on the experiences of Indigenous people with the criminal justice system in WA, for example, is included in *Our Mob Our Justice: Keeping the Vision Alive* (Aboriginal Justice Council 1999). This report includes time series data on Indigenous offenders and Indigenous victims of crime, and spans the entire justice system, including corrective services.

9.6 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).

New South Wales comments

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

In 1998-99 there was a substantial increase (8 per cent) in the average prison population and in community-based corrections there was a 13 per cent increase in the number of offender registrations.

The Department is currently exploring strategies designed to assess the likely magnitude of this increase and to ensure that adequate accommodation and staffing are available to meet future projected demand for service. The following strategies are currently being implemented to address these critical issues:

- work is being undertaken with other criminal justice agencies and the Treasury to develop a whole-of-justice prisoner population projection model in addition to existing internal projections;
- planning is underway for the construction of additional correctional facilities. These facilities will increase current accommodation by 13 per cent (900 beds in total) and will be located in regional and metropolitan areas;
- the introduction of a Drug Court to provide a diversionary program for illicit drug users. These offenders are managed by community-based corrections;
- the introduction of a range of initiatives in response to the recommendations of the NSW Drug Summit including additional specialised drug detection teams, a new permanent drug corruption investigation taskforce and three new detoxification centres; and
- the trial of Victim-Offender Conferencing (Restorative Justice) to be fully implemented in 1999-2000.

Against this background of significant change, performance in 1998-99 compared favourably with previous year's outcomes for this state, for example:

- there was a substantial drop in the number of prisoner escapes for the year resulting in a total escape rate of 1.1. The escape (abscond) rate for periodic detainees at 0.03 was also down compared with last year;
- eight in ten (79 per cent) of those prisoners eligible to work were employed, over one third of them in industries. Thirty seven per cent of periodic detainees were engaged in community work, 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 87 per cent.

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““ Victorian Government comments

The national performance indicators for corrections, in conjunction with the annual benchmarking project, are steadily developing into valuable tools for comparative inter-jurisdictional analysis. Substantial work was done during 1998-99 by the National Corrections Advisory Group on community corrections orders and recurrent expenditure to investigate the factors underlying the relative performance of the jurisdictions. Such investigations will result in greater comparability and provide a basis for an understanding of best practice.

The community corrections measures were revised this year to include greater detail on offenders' gender and Indigenous status. Victoria was unable to provide the additional information for this report but is committed to providing the data in future reports. This year, for the first time, Victoria has provided complete data for the recidivism indicator. Victoria acknowledges that as performance measures are refined and expanded, improvements will need to be made to data collection and reporting systems to support new requirements.

Victorian assault data, including all historical data, now comply with the agreed definition. In past reports, assault incidents were reported, rather than assault victims. While the revised rates were slightly higher than previously reported, it is positive that the 1998-99 rates are lower than for any year since 1994-95. Victoria's average prison population increased for the fourth successive year and the utilisation rate was almost 100 per cent of design capacity. In response, new diversionary programs to provide alternative non-custodial sentencing options are being developed, together with plans to increase the permanent capacity. Nevertheless, Victoria continues to have a relatively low Indigenous and non-Indigenous imprisonment rate as well as the lowest community corrections rate. The cost per prisoner and expenditure per head of population in Victoria is also low in comparison to other jurisdictions. The major developments during 1998-99 in Victorian corrections were:

- The Office of the Auditor-General conducted an independent audit of Victoria's prison system and the report was tabled in Parliament in May 1998.
- CORE — the Public Correctional Enterprise, commissioned research into offender deaths in Community Corrections. The report made 12 recommendations on the identification and management of 'at risk' offenders.
- The Government's prisons drug strategy, incorporating detection, deterrence and treatment, continued in 1998-99 with encouraging results.
- A major review of suicides and self-harm in Victorian prisons was conducted and changes in the system were implemented as a result. In particular, a Corrections Health Board was established and additional places for prisoners with acute psychiatric needs and other self-harm prevention initiatives are now planned.

Queensland Government comments

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Corrective Services in Queensland has experienced significant changes during 1998-1999. The activities of the QCSC (purchaser of Correctional Services) and QCORR, the Government service provider have been amalgamated in the formation of a Department of Corrective Services with QCORR as a business unit within the Department.

Some factors that have influenced performance over recent years have changed. There has been a reduction in the rate of growth of the prison population as reflected in the average daily population figure of 5044 which represents an increase of 10 per cent for the year compared to 17 per cent in 1997-98.

The infrastructure development program for corrections has resulted in the construction and opening of an additional 960 cells during the year. This has significantly reduced the crowding problem and while there is still a level of "doubling up" in the system the total utilisation rate is now only marginally above single cell occupancy at 101.4 per cent (Secure Custody 105.8 per cent). This expansion program has resulted in an increase in the value of assets per prisoner and in the cost of securing prisoners.

In contrast to 1997-98 where 13 prisoners escaped from secure custody, 9 while staff were under fire, there were no escapes from secure custody during the year. There was a significant increase in the rate of deaths in custody by natural causes. However, Queensland performed better than the national average in the number of unnatural deaths (suicide/murder). The rate of prisoner on prisoner assaults increased for the period which is understandable in an environment where prisoners were required to share cells in increasing numbers for a significant part of the year. In spite of the increase, Queensland performed better than the national average.

Implementation of a Prison industry policy saw a marginal improvement in the proportion of prisoners employed in commercial industries in spite of the overall increase in numbers. However, there was a reduction in the proportion of prisoners involved in elective training activities. This could be attributed to the higher numbers and the short duration of many prison sentences. Queensland still performed in line with the national average in this indicator.

Queensland continues to provide effective low cost community corrections although for some orders performance has diminished. This is particularly the case in relation to fine option orders where the successful completion rate has declined to 60 per cent. National comparability of performance in this area is problematic because of differing legislative requirements and managerial approaches. New approaches to fine default management in Queensland should impact in this area in future years.

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Western Australian Government comments

WA is committed to the development and collection of national performance data for correctional services this has provided jurisdictions with a solid foundation for examining best practice in corrections.

The WA offender population is characterised by a significant over representation of Aboriginal people within the Corrective Services system. In 1998-99, Aboriginal people comprised 34 per cent of the daily average number of persons held in prisons and 29 per cent of persons on community based supervision. In the 12 months to June 1999 the prison population increased by 34 per cent in WA.

WA has commenced work on the implementation of initiatives, which include:

- the establishment of a central remand, receipt and assessment centre;
- a new 750 bed medium security prison, to be commissioned in 2000, it will be operated by a private contractor; and
- the establishment of a purchaser, provider and inspector of prisons. The inspector will have responsibility for the inspection of private and government operated prisons.

New initiatives within prisons to reduce deaths in custody have been most effective with deaths being reduced significantly.

The cost per offender of community supervision in WA has increased during the past year partly due to a continuing reduction in the number of daily average persons being supervised, primarily by way of Court Ordered supervision. Since the inception of new sentencing legislation in 1996, the maximum period of a supervised Order in the community has reduced from five years to two. Although daily average numbers fell, there was an increase in the total numbers of orders commenced/issued. There is also an increasing Community Corrections mandate to broaden activities and direct resources into through-care, and treatment, preventative and diversionary roles as a whole of government approach to reducing offending.

The figures for successful completion of orders show an improvement in success rates in three of the four categories. Whereas the success rate of supervision orders has declined this is in response to a policy decision to maintain a high level of vigilance and tight case management, especially in respect to high risk offenders. Concern remains that in respect to Home Detention Orders the figures in WA include those of two schemes, the Prison Release scheme and the Bail scheme which have considerably varying success rates and thus makes comparisons with other jurisdictions problematic.

South Australian Government comments

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SA acknowledges the value of nationally comparable performance data as a tool that contributes to greater understanding of key areas of corrections performance. As an active participant in the National Correctional Advisory Group, SA remains committed to the ongoing task of developing and refining the collection of comparable national performance indicators.

The SA daily average prison population continues to decrease contrary to the growth in other jurisdictions. The daily average in 1997-98 was 1421 compared to 1383 in 1998-99, with the imprisonment rate decreasing to 121.9; its lowest level for four years. Additionally, the daily average community corrections population decreased from 8366 in 1997-98 to 7754 in 1998-99 a decrease of 7 per cent.

Total prison utilisation remained stable in 1998-99 at 105.3 per cent, its lowest level for four years. SA recorded one of the lowest rates of total deaths in custody at 0.14, a decrease from the previous year. The rate of prisoner on prisoner assault increased from 7.39 in 1997-98 to 9.4 in 1998-99.

South Australia recorded one of the highest out-of-cell hours for open prisons, but recorded the second lowest for secure prisons. The total rate decreased from 11.1 in 1997-98 to 10.6 in 1998-99.

The percentage of community corrections orders successfully completed remained relatively stable, from 60.6 in 1997-98 to 60.0 in 1998-99. However, this stability was not uniform throughout all order categories with Home Detention and Fine Option decreasing, Community Service Orders/Bonds increasing and Supervision orders remaining stable.

The rate of prisoner 'return to corrections' decreased from 40.9 in 1997-98 to 37.8 in 1998-99, additionally the rate of community correction offender 'return to corrections' also decreased from 35.1 to 33.0.

Some of the Departments' key achievements during 1998-99 include;

- the implementation of Case Management in prisons, including the formalisation of Throughcare with the implementation of electronic case files;
- delivery across the Department of six core offence-focussed programs to offenders;
- implementation of the first stage of a prison Methadone Maintenance Program;
- the establishment of various agreements between prisons and other Government agencies for prisoners to conduct community work in accordance with Restorative Justice principles; and
- consolidation of Community Supervision partnerships with remote Aboriginal communities agreeing to co-management of offenders subject to Community Supervision Orders.

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Tasmanian Government comments

“ It was noted in the 1997-98 report that Tasmania was beginning to experience an increase in prison numbers. This continued throughout the year and resulted in the most significant increase in the daily average population for many years. This increase was experienced in both remand and sentenced inmate numbers and has put considerable pressure on a system which has had a stable population for many years and has experienced progressively reduced staffing levels.

The increase in remand numbers was such that, despite the opening of the new Hobart Remand Centre during the year, an extra Division at Risdon has had to be kept open to accommodate remandees. The increased numbers resulted in greater overall costs within the system, but the cost per inmate per day reduced significantly to \$134.

The larger population, and changes in the prisoner profile have contributed to a substantial increase in incidents within the prison system. A concerning aspect of this is the increase in assaults by prisoners on staff. Work has been undertaken to make available an additional area where certain prisoners can be separately managed, in an attempt to overcome this problem. The pressure is also reflected in higher rates of escape at both open and secure custody levels. An independent security review was conducted through the year and significant progress has been made in implementing recommendations arising from this review.

Despite the pressures on the system, employment and education rates have been maintained or even enhanced in some areas. This is particularly important in a period of high prisoner numbers, as management is enhanced by having meaningful and productive work and training opportunities available. The overall training rate figure recorded is distorted as a consequence of a lockdown in effect on the date at which data were recorded. The ongoing number of prisoners participating in training programs is increased from the previous year.

A new information system is currently under development and Community Corrections data will be considerably enhanced for future collections. The figures currently available reflect that Community Corrections staff are continuing to provide a highly cost effective service. There was a decrease in the number of persons committed to community based orders, although the actual number of separate orders made throughout the year was only slightly less than previous years.”

Australian Capital Territory Government comments

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The ACT continues to support the collection and presentation of nationally comparable performance data. In pursuit of this goal the National Corrections Advisory Group (NCAG) has continued to refine data definitions and counting rules over the last year. However, considerable inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of jurisdictional data still remain.

Of significance to the ACT is the configuration of two specific counting rules – assaults and prison utilisation. The ACT has withdrawn all assault-related data, both for prisoners and periodic detainees as there are still problems surrounding the comparability of this indicator across jurisdictions. Part of the problem relates to the definition of key terms such as ‘assault’ and ‘injury’. Further clarification of these terms will better enable ACT Corrective Services to provide accurate and informative data on prisoner/officer safety.

Similar difficulties surround the counting rule that determines prison utilisation rates. At present the rule focuses on identifying original design capacity which does not accurately describe the capacity of certain institutions. ACT Corrective Services would argue for either of the two following methods for calculating prison utilisation. One method would involve the development of criteria that enable modifications to design capacity to be incorporated into the description of original design capacity. Alternatively, original design capacity could be replaced with operational capacity that could then be defined in a manner that ensures consistency in data collection across jurisdictions.

One issue worthy of comment in a small jurisdiction such as the ACT, is the impact that small shifts in numbers have to the overall percentages or rates for the ACT. Those interpreting the ACT’s position on a number of indicators, including escapes, assaults and costs generally, need to be mindful of the raw numbers from which these percentages or rates are derived.

Planning for a best practice correctional facility for the ACT has further progressed. It is intended that this facility will accommodate increasing prisoner numbers and reduce ongoing demands placed on the limited capacity of the Belconnen Remand Centre. It is envisaged that, with a new facility operating in the ACT, costs of accommodating ACT prisoners will decrease. The facility is not expected to be operational until 2001.

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.

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Northern Territory Government comments

“ 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 business environment of Correctional Services in Australia.

Prisons and Community Corrections are administered by a single agency in the NT, which also has responsibility for Juvenile Justice. The NT has two multi-classification prisons and each has a open security facility. Community Corrections has offices in all major Territory centres and some remote communities. The NT's daily average prison population for 1998-99 was 624 which is 3 per cent of the total for Australia. The daily average increased by 14, or two per cent, over the previous year.

The number of Community Corrections clients averaged 604 for the year using the national counting rules. This is not a true workload indicator and has contributed to low caseloads and high costs per offender. In reality all Community Corrections staff have Juvenile Justice responsibilities (caseload 117 on 30 June 1999) which are not counted in this adult collection. An effort has been made to exclude the direct costs of Juvenile Justice, however, shared resources makes this difficult.

As well, Community Corrections have 276 prisoners on pre-release programs. Although these prisoners are a high demand on time, they are counted in the custodial section of the report because of the counting rules. This is a unique situation in Australia and must be considered in any national comparisons. Factoring in these other clients would result in caseloads and costs close to mid range in Australia.

The NT continues to have a high level of effectiveness with escapes and deaths in custody being amongst the best in the nation and Home Detention supervision having the best rate of success. Costs for prisoners per day is mid range which is a good outcome given the disadvantage the NT experiences in the Grants Commission factors of isolation, scale, dispersion and high Aboriginal population. Prisoner education participation in the NT is high with a strong emphasis on numeracy, literacy and vocational training.

Demonstrating the Government's commitment to Correctional Services and its mission of public safety, the NT achieved the best prison utilisation rate with no overcrowding and the resultant problems of duty of care and cost escalation.

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