
Chapter 7: Corrective services (CO)

The corrective services chapter

In the *Report on Government Services*, corrective services include prison custody (including periodic detention) and a range of community correctional orders and programs for adult offenders (for example, parole and community work orders). The term ‘offenders’ is used in this chapter to refer to people serving community corrections orders. Both public and privately operated facilities are included, however, the scope of this chapter does not extend to:

- juvenile justice (which is covered in the Community services preface);
- people held in institutions to receive psychiatric care (who are generally the responsibility of health departments);
- prisoners held in police custody (who are covered in the police services chapter); and
- people held in facilities such as immigration and military detention centres.

Indigenous data in the corrective services chapter

The corrective services chapter in the *Report on Government Services 2003* (ROGS) contains the following data items on Indigenous people:

- Indigenous and non-Indigenous imprisonment rates, 2001-02;
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous community corrections rates, 2001-02; and
- Prisoner death rates from apparent unnatural causes, 2001-02.

Supporting tables

Supporting tables for data within the corrective services chapter of the compendium are contained in the attachment to the compendium. Supporting tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by the abbreviated chapter name (for example, CO.A5 is table 5 in the corrective services attachment to the compendium).

As the data are directly sourced from the *Report on Government Services 2003*, the compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the Report can be found. For example, where the compendium refers to ‘ROGS 2003, p. 6.15’ this is

page 15 of chapter 6 of the Report and 'ROGS 2003, 6A.2' is attachment table 2 of attachment 6 of the Report.

Prison custody

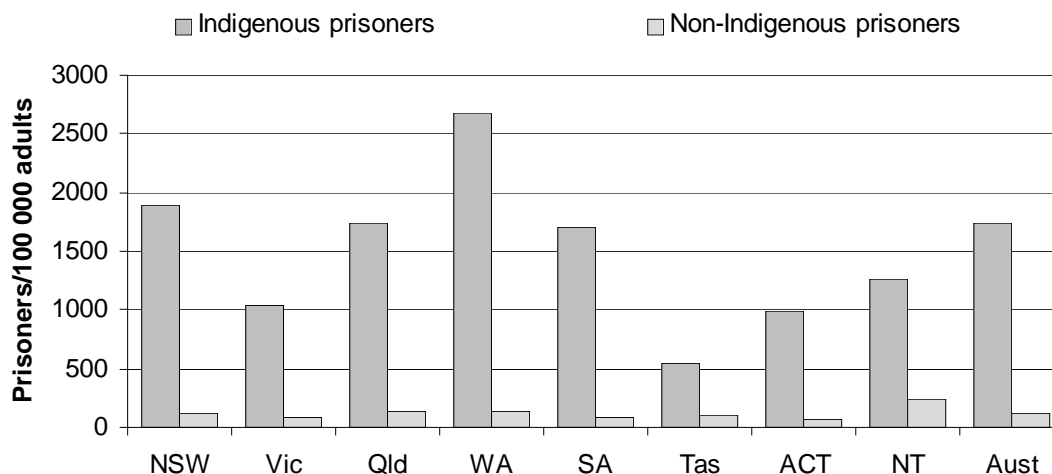
Nationally, the daily average number of prisoners (excluding periodic detainees) in 2001-02, comprised 20 241 males and 1431 females — 93.4 per cent and 6.6 per cent of the prison population respectively. The daily average number of Indigenous prisoners was 4239 — 19.6 per cent of prisoners nationally (table COA.1).

The rate of imprisonment represents the number of prisoners (excluding periodic detainees) per 100 000 of the general adult population. The adult population includes people at or above the minimum age at which sentencing to adult custody can occur in each jurisdiction. This was 17 years in Victoria and Queensland and 18 years in all other jurisdictions, for the reporting period.

The national imprisonment rate per 100 000 Indigenous adults was 1746.3 in 2001-02 compared with a rate of 115.5 for non-Indigenous prisoners per 100 000 non-Indigenous adults (figure CO.1). The highest rate of Indigenous imprisonment per 100 000 adults was reported in WA (2668.9) and the lowest in Tasmania (540.9). The NT reported the highest non-Indigenous imprisonment rate per 100 000 adults at 236.4 and the ACT reported the lowest rate at 75.6 in 2001-02 (figure CO.1). These comparisons need to be interpreted with care, especially for States and Territories with low Indigenous populations, where small changes in prisoner numbers can cause variations in rates that do not accurately represent either real trends over time or consistent differences with other jurisdictions.

While imprisonment rates for Indigenous people are far higher than those for non-Indigenous people, the majority of prisoners are non-Indigenous. Nationally, 78.1 per cent of prisoners were non-Indigenous in 2001-02 (table CO.A1).

Figure CO.1 **Indigenous and non-Indigenous imprisonment rates, 2001-02^{a, b, c}**



^a Imprisonment rates are based on the daily average prisoner populations supplied by States and Territories, calculated against adult Indigenous and non-Indigenous population estimates (ABS figures supplied by the National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics). ^b The 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. ^c Prisoners reported as being of unknown Indigenous status are not included. This significantly affects SA and NSW which had by far the highest reported proportion of prisoners of unknown Indigenous status (11.8 per cent and 4.1 per cent respectively). Queensland was unable to report separately and included prisoners of unknown Indigenous status as non-Indigenous prisoners (see attachment 7A in ROGS).

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ROGS 2003, p.7.6; table CO.A3.

Community corrections

All jurisdictions operate community corrections programs. Community corrections comprise a variety of non-custodial programs (listed for each jurisdiction in table CO.A6). 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 level of restrictions placed 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 reintegrating prisoners into the community under continued supervision.

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

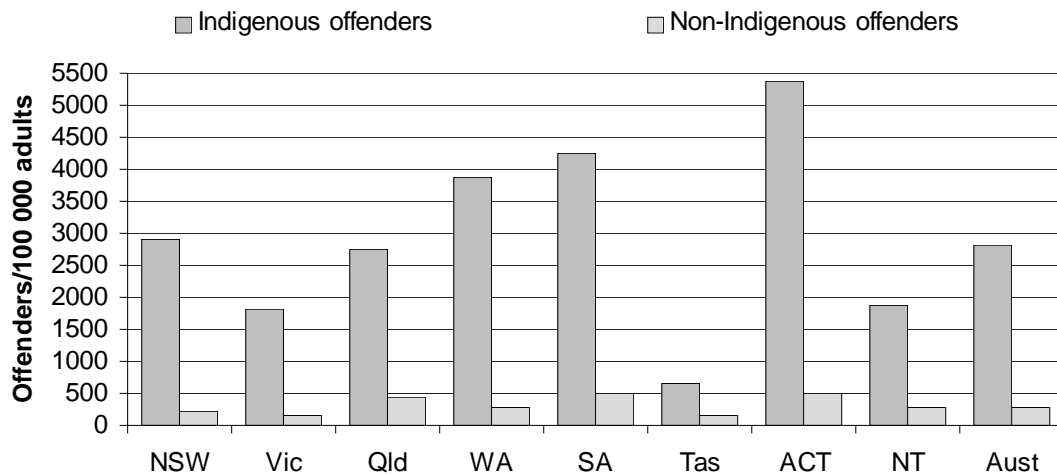
orders, probation, intensive supervision orders and recognisance. In most jurisdictions, fine default orders fall under community corrections, as does bail supervision in some jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction has reparation and supervision orders. Restricted movement orders were available in all jurisdictions except Victoria and Tasmania in 2001-02.

A daily average of 52 305 offenders were serving community corrections orders across Australia in 2001-02 — a decrease of 12.0 per cent from the previous year's revised figures. This is largely due to a significant reduction in the number of offenders serving fine option orders in Queensland. This daily average comprised 42 583 males (81.4 per cent) and 9 472 females (18.1 per cent), and 250 offenders whose gender was reported as not known. The daily average also comprised 6807 Indigenous offenders (13.0 per cent of the total community correction population) and 40 348 non-Indigenous offenders (77.1 per cent) (table CO.A2). The remaining offenders were reported as having Indigenous status 'unknown'. In some jurisdictions, non-Indigenous offender data may also include some offenders whose Indigenous status was not known or not reported (table CO.A2).

The community corrections rate represents the daily average number of offenders serving community corrections orders per 100 000 people in 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.

For Indigenous offenders, the national rate was 2804.4 per 100 000 Indigenous adults compared with 275.3 for non-Indigenous offenders (figure CO.2). The ACT reported the highest rate of Indigenous offenders per 100 000 Indigenous adults in 2001-02 at 5371.9 and Tasmania the lowest at 657.6. The rate of Indigenous offenders in the ACT may be inflated because of the inclusion of NSW residents convicted in ACT courts. The highest rate of non-Indigenous offenders per 100 000 non-Indigenous adults was reported by SA at 488.4 and the lowest rate by Victoria at 159.5 in 2001-02 (figure CO.2). As in the case of imprisonment rates, these comparisons need to be interpreted with care, especially for States and Territories with low Indigenous populations where small changes in offender numbers can cause variations in rates that do not accurately represent either real trends over time or consistent differences with other jurisdictions.

Figure CO.2 **Indigenous and non-Indigenous community corrections rates, 2001-02^a**



^a Rates are based on the daily average offender populations supplied by States and Territories, calculated against adult Indigenous and non-Indigenous population estimates (ABS figures supplied by the National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics). Offenders reported as being of unknown Indigenous status are not included. This significantly affects Tasmania and NSW which had by far the highest reported proportion of offenders of unknown Indigenous status (32.2 per cent and 25.3 per cent respectively). Queensland and SA were unable to report separately and included offenders of unknown Indigenous status as non-Indigenous offenders (see attachment 7A in ROGS).

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ROGS 2003, p.7.9; table CO.A3.

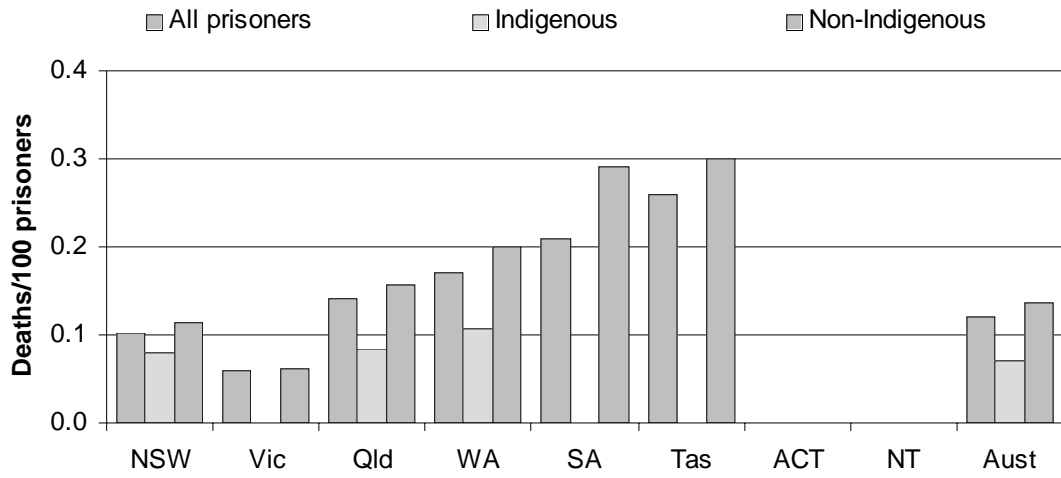
Prisoner death rates from unnatural causes

In 2001-02, death rates from apparent unnatural causes for total prisoners ranged from 0.26 (one death) per 100 prisoners in Tasmania to zero in the ACT and the NT (figure CO.3). WA reported the highest apparent unnatural causes death rate for Indigenous prisoners at 0.11 (one death) and Victoria, SA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT reported the lowest at zero (figure CO.3).

Neither of the two jurisdictions operating periodic detention reported deaths of periodic detainees in 2001-02.

Prisoner death rates from unnatural causes, from 1998-99 to 2001-02, have fallen for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous prisoners (table CO.A5).

Figure CO.3 Prisoner death rates from apparent unnatural causes, 2001-02^a



^a NSW, Queensland and WA each had one Indigenous death. Tasmania had one non-Indigenous death.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ROGS 2003, p.7.16; table CO.A4.