
Chapter 7: Corrective services

In this chapter, corrective services include prison custody (including periodic detention) and a range of community corrections orders and programs for adult offenders (for example, parole and community work orders). The term ‘prisoners’ is used in this chapter to refer to people held in full time custody under the jurisdiction of an adult corrective service agency; the term ‘offenders’ is used to refer to people serving community corrections orders. Both public and privately operated correctional facilities are included; however, the scope of this chapter does not extend to:

- juvenile justice (which is covered in the Community services preface)
- prisoners or alleged offenders held in forensic mental health facilities 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)
- people held in facilities such as immigration or military detention centres.

Indigenous data in the corrective services chapter

The corrective services chapter in the *Report on Government Services 2004* contains the following data items on Indigenous people:

- Indigenous and non-Indigenous imprisonment rates, 2002-03
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous community corrections rates, 2002-03
- Prisoner death rates from apparent unnatural causes, 2002-03.

Supporting tables

Supporting tables for data within the corrective services chapter of the compendium are contained in the attachment to the compendium. These tables are identified in references throughout this chapter by an ‘A’ suffix (for example, table 7A.3 is table 3 in the corrective services attachment to the compendium). As the data are directly sourced from the Report on Government Services 2004, the compendium also notes where the original table, figure or text in the Report on Government Services 2004 can be found. For example, where the compendium refers to ‘ROGS 2004, p. 7.15’ this is page 15 of chapter 7 and ‘ROGS 2004, 7A.2’ is attachment table 2 of attachment 7 of the Report on Government Services 2004.

Prison custody

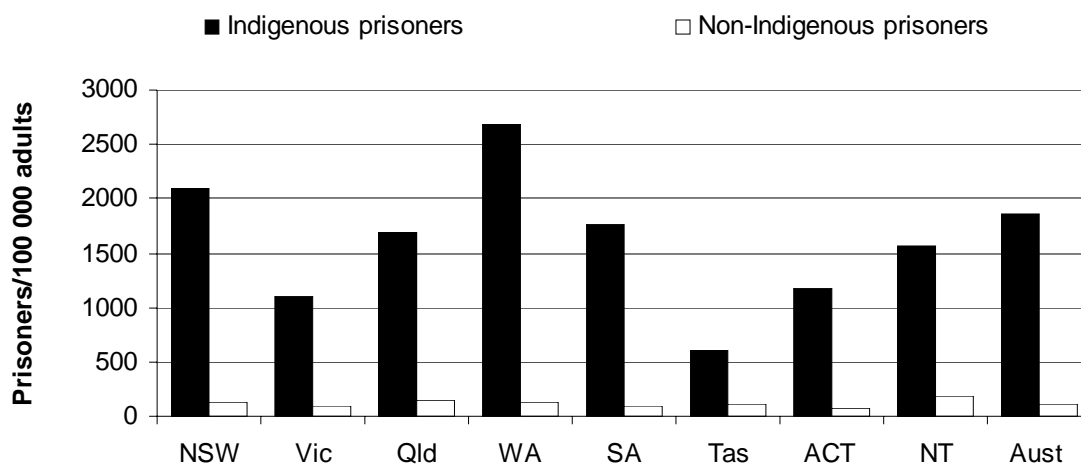
On average, 22 232 people per day (excluding periodic detainees) were held in Australian prisons during 2002-03 — 20 725 males and 1507 females (93.2 per cent and 6.8 per cent of the prison population respectively). This daily average was an increase of 2.6 per cent over the average daily number reported in the previous year (SCRCSSP 2003). Nationally, the daily average number of Indigenous prisoners was 4600 (compared with 4239 in 2001-02) — 20.7 per cent of prisoners nationally (table 7A.1).

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

The national imprisonment rate per 100 000 Indigenous adults was 1850.5 in 2002-03 compared with a rate of 115.4 for non-Indigenous prisoners per 100 000 non-Indigenous adults (figure 7.1). WA reported the highest rate of Indigenous imprisonment per 100 000 adults (2678.4) and Tasmania reported the lowest (600.8). The NT reported the highest non-Indigenous imprisonment rate per 100 000 adults (177.7) and the ACT reported the lowest (70.2) in 2002-03 (figure 7.1). 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 from 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, 77.1 per cent of prisoners were non-Indigenous in 2002-03 (table 7A.1).

Figure 7.1 **Indigenous and non-Indigenous imprisonment rates, 2002-03^{a, b, c, d}**



^a Based on the daily average prisoner population numbers 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 ACT rates include ACT prisoners held in the ACT and in NSW prisons. NSW rates exclude ACT prisoners held in NSW prisons. ^c Excludes prisoners reported as being of unknown Indigenous status. ^d Queensland was unable to report unknown Indigenous status separately and included prisoners of unknown Indigenous status as non-Indigenous prisoners.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ; ROGS 2004, p. 7.6; Table 7A.3.

Community corrections

All jurisdictions operate community corrections programs. Community corrections comprise a variety of non-custodial programs. 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 (for example, home detention). No single objective or set of characteristics is common to all community corrections programs, other than 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 court imposed non-custodial sentences that are administered by corrective services. These sentences may include suspended sentences, court imposed home detention, community service orders, probation, intensive supervision orders and recognisance. In most States and Territories, fine default orders are administered by community corrections, as is bail supervision in some jurisdictions. All jurisdictions have reparation and supervision orders. Restricted movement orders were available in all jurisdictions except Victoria and Tasmania in 2002-03. Community corrections also include post-custodial programs (for example, parole, release on licence,

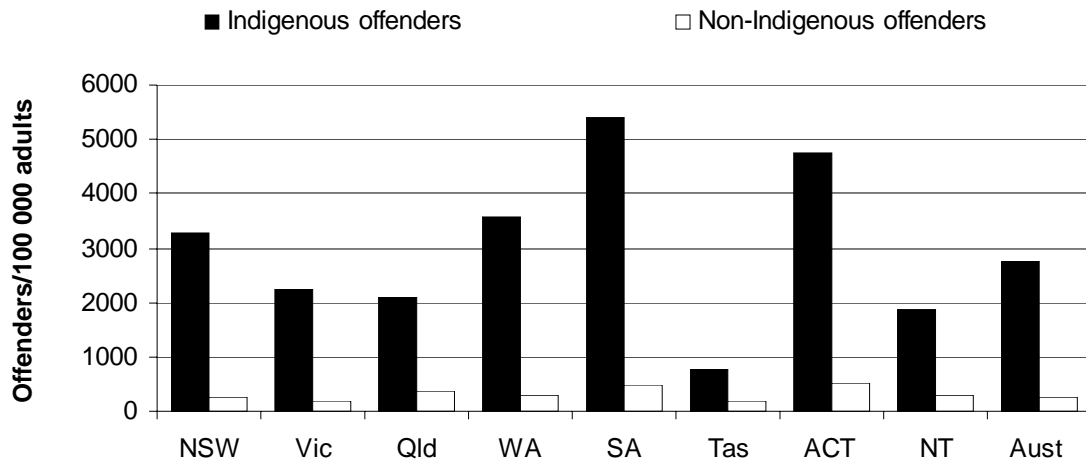
pre-release orders and some forms of home detention), under which prisoners released into the community continue to be subject to corrective services supervision.

A daily average of 51 929 offenders were serving community corrections orders across Australia in 2002-03 — a decrease of 0.7 per cent from the previous year's average (SCRCSSP 2003). This daily average comprised 42 329 males (81.5 per cent), 9225 females (17.8 per cent) and 375 offenders whose gender was reported as unknown. The daily average comprised 6871 Indigenous offenders (13.2 per cent of the total community correction population), 40 893 non-Indigenous offenders (78.7 per cent) and 4165 persons whose Indigenous status was unknown (table 7A.2).

The community corrections rate represents the number of offenders serving community corrections orders per 100 000 people in the corresponding adult population. The adult population includes people at or over the age of entry to the adult correctional system in each jurisdiction (17 years old in Victoria and Queensland and 18 years old in all other jurisdictions for the reporting period).

For Indigenous offenders, the national rate was 2764.1 per 100 000 Indigenous adults compared with 275.3 for non-Indigenous offenders (figure 7.2). South Australia reported the highest rate of Indigenous offenders per 100 000 Indigenous adults in 2002-03 (5398.1) and Tasmania reported the lowest (766.5). The ACT reported the highest rate of non-Indigenous offenders per 100 000 non-Indigenous adults (497.5) and Victoria reported the lowest rate (173.7) in 2002-03 (figure 7.2). As in the case of imprisonment rates, these comparisons need to be interpreted with care, especially for those jurisdictions 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 from other jurisdictions.

Figure 7.2 **Indigenous and non-Indigenous community corrections rates, 2002-03^a**



^a Rates are based on the daily average offender population numbers supplied by State and Territory governments, calculated against adult Indigenous and non-Indigenous population estimates (ABS data supplied by the National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics). Excludes offenders whose Indigenous status was reported as unknown. Queensland was unable to report unknown Indigenous status separately and included offenders of unknown Indigenous status as non-Indigenous offenders.

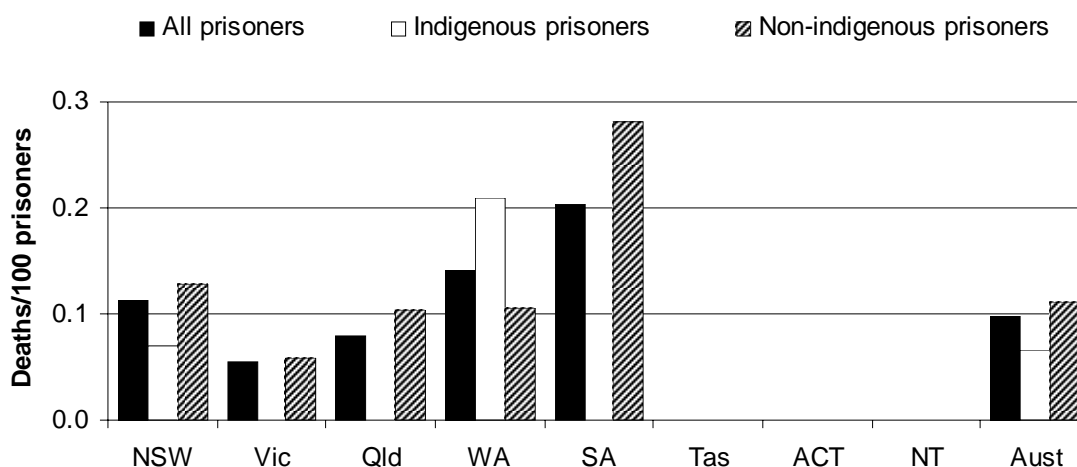
Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ROGS 2004, p. 7.9; Table 7A.3.

Custody — apparent unnatural deaths

Prison custody indicators 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 the small absolute numbers in many cases, care needs to be taken when comparing effectiveness indicators across jurisdictions and over time within jurisdictions. A single incident in the smallest jurisdiction can double the rate of some indicators, but have little apparent effect in the larger jurisdictions.

In 2002-03, the rate of death from apparent unnatural causes for all prisoners ranged from 0.20 per 100 prisoners in SA to zero in Tasmania, the ACT and the NT (figure 7.3). For Indigenous prisoners, WA reported the highest rate of death from apparent unnatural causes (0.21 — two deaths) and Victoria, Queensland, SA, Tasmania, the ACT and the NT reported the lowest (zero) (figure 7.3). Neither of the two jurisdictions operating periodic detention reported deaths of periodic detainees in 2002-03 (table 7A. 4).

Figure 7.3 Prisoner death rates from apparent unnatural causes, 2002-03^a



^a Indigenous death rates from apparent unnatural causes represent one death in NSW and two deaths in WA in 2002-03.

Source: State and Territory governments (unpublished); ROGS 2004, p. 7.15; Table 7A. 4.

The national rate of death by apparent unnatural causes for all prisoners declined from 0.22 in 1998-99 to 0.10 in 2002-03 (figure 7.4). Rates fell for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous prisoners (table 7A.5).

Jurisdictional data

Selected descriptive and effectiveness prisoner data across jurisdictions are reported in the corrective services attachment tables of this compendium.

References

SCRCSSP (Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision) 2003, *Report on Government Services 2003*, Productivity Commission, Canberra.