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Research Digest

Corrective Services NSW

Current trends in NSW correctional management

It is the responsibility of Corporate Research, Evaluation and Statistics (CRES) to collect data on the performance management of Corrective Services NSW (CSNSW) each year. This information is used in official reporting capacities including: the CSNSW contribution to the DJAG *Annual Report*, Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services* and the NSW Auditor General's *Annual Report*. These statistics reflect the progress made by CSNSW over the past few years to improve the efficiencies and performance outcomes of our business.

CORRECTIONAL MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE — CUSTODIAL

Overall Cost Savings—cost per day per prisoner

The average recurrent expenditure per prisoner per day in 2009-10 was **\$197.99**, a decrease of **\$7.95** from 2008-09 which was **\$205.94**. Over the past five years CSNSW has been actively seeking to contain the operational costs of imprisonment and as a result NSW has managed to decrease the real recurrent cost per prisoner per day from **\$221.08** in 2005-06 to **\$197.99** in 2009-10. A reduction of **\$23.09**.

This is all the greater achievement for CSNSW as the prisoner population has increased on average 3% per year for the past 5 years.

Increases in prison population generally necessitate increases in staff numbers to maintain the current level of security and services to prisoners and staff.

CSNSW will continue to implement workplace reforms designed to improve efficiency and increase the safety and security of correctional environments.

Recidivism

The reported recidivism rates in the Productivity Commission's *Report on Government Services (ROGS) 2011* relate to prisoners and offenders released or completing order/s in 2007-08 who returned to prison or another form of correctional sanction within two years.

The table below shows the NSW average % of prisoners returning to prison and to corrective services compared with the Australian average % for 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Return to	Prison	Corrective Services*
NSW 2009-10	42.4	45.2
Aust. 2009-10	37.6	44.0
NSW 2008-09	42.9	44.9
Aust. 2008-09	39.3	44.6

The rate of prisoners returning to prison has decreased from **42.9** in 2008-09 to **42.4** in 2009-10.

This has been steadily decreasing over the last 4 years with a rate of return in 2006-07 of **43.8**. The average percentage of prisoners returning to corrective services in 2009/10 was **42.4%**. The average percentage of prisoners returning to corrective services from 2005/06 to 2009/10 is **43.1%**.

*refers to people returning to either prison or community based orders

In November 2006, the NSW Government launched the NSW State Plan. A key target of the Plan is to “reduce the proportion of offenders who re-offend within 24 months of being convicted by a court or having been dealt with at a conference by 10 per cent by 2016.” As the lead agency responsible for this target, CSNSW is working with other government agencies to achieve a 10% reduction.

The percentage of people returning to prison or corrective services cannot be considered in isolation from other performance measures within the criminal justice system. It is through a ‘whole of justice’ approach that significant advances can be made in decreasing offending behaviour. Recidivism rates are only a partial measure of the overall performance of the criminal justice system. For example, policing policy to target repeat offenders will impact on recidivism rates, as do throughput levels in the courts.

Other performance measures which should be included in any analysis of recidivism are:

- NSW’S divergent prison population compared with other jurisdictions including (mentally ill inmates etc),
- Variance in sentencing legislation across jurisdictions, and
- Variance in social indicators across Australian States i.e. homelessness, employment opportunities and other social issues etc.

CSNSW is currently refocusing its program delivery to target offenders with an identified higher risk of re-offending with programs such as ‘Think First’ and the ‘Sober Drivers Program’.

NSW is continuing to progress its ‘Throughcare’ initiative, which prepares prisoners for release and post release support such as the introduction of Community Offender Support Program (COSP) centres to assist prisoners with accommodation upon release and offenders under supervision in the community.

Offenders serving orders in the community can access targeted programs. In addition to program development aimed at addressing offending behaviour, NSW continues to use the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), an internationally actuarial recognised instrument used to measure the risk of re-offending in inmates and community based offenders. The administration of the LSI-R assists with the identification of higher risk offenders and assists with targeting programs to suit risk groups for maximum impact in reducing re-offending

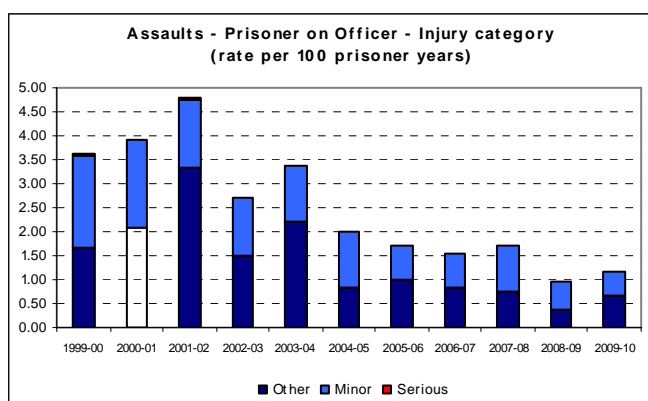
Incidence of Assault in prison

In 2009-10, CSNSW maintained nil **serious** assaults by prisoners on officers. NSW has only recorded one serious assault by prisoner on officer in the past nine years (this incident occurred in 2006-07). CSNSW recorded its lowest prisoner on officer assault rate. The rate decreased from **0.69** in 2005-06 to **0.56** in 2009-10.

NSW reported record low rates of prisoner on prisoner **serious** assaults, with a rate of **0.15** per 100 prisoners in 2009-10.

This rate was the second lowest recorded rate in Australia in 2009-10, **WA** recorded the lowest rate of **0.08**.

The 2009-10 prisoner on prisoner serious assault rate of **0.15** is the lowest rate since 2006-07 which was **0.49**. The 2009-10 national average rate for serious assault (prisoner on prisoner) was **0.53** per 100 prisoners.



CSNSW has implemented a number of programs and policies targeting offenders with a higher risk of assault (eg through its Violence Offenders Therapeutic Program and associated maintenance programs) and the operation of the Security Threat Groups – Intervention Program. Case management strategies have also contributed to the decrease in serious assaults.

These include:

- improved vocational and industry opportunities, and
- structured programs, to address offending behaviour.

Escapes

In 2009-10, CSNSW recorded a record low escape rate for Open custody (classified minimum security facilities). Over the past 15 years, the escape rate for Open custody has reduced from **4.80** in 1995-96 to **0.06** in 2009-10.

The escape rate for Secure custody (classified maximum security facilities) has decreased from **0.06** for 2008-09 to **0.01** for 2009-10. CSNSW has endeavoured to reduce the number of escapes by expanding the use of the following measures:

- A state wide review of security measures in correctional centres,
- Use of Intelligence/security information,
- Extensive communication through appropriate case management of prisoners,
- Maintenance of rigorous assessment of prisoners and their eligibility for external vocational, educational and work programs,
- Continuous monitoring and modification of the security classification process, and
- Extensive use of video conferencing for court appearances.

Apparent unnatural deaths in custody

For the first time in ten years NSW has had a marginal increase in the death rate from apparent unnatural causes.

Despite a slight increase from last year, NSW has maintained a low death rate from apparent unnatural causes of **0.06** in 2009-10. This is only marginally higher than the national average apparent unnatural death rate of **0.05**.

The 2009-10 death rate from apparent unnatural causes for Indigenous prisoners was **0.04**. This was only marginally higher than the national average of **0.03**.

Please Note: The actual number of deaths in custody in NSW and across Australia is only small but any death is significant.

Death from Apparent Unnatural Causes		
Year	Death Rate	Number of Deaths*
2000-01	0.15	11 (2)
2001-02	0.10	9 (1)
2002-03	0.11	9 (1)
2003-04	0.11	9 (0)
2004-05	0.09	8 (3)
2005-06	0.05	5 (0)
2006-07	0.07	8 (2)
2007-08	0.04	4 (0)
2008-09	0.04	4 (1)
2009-10	0.06	6 (1)

* () Number of Indigenous deaths in custody

Prison Employment

The total inmate employment rate for those eligible to work has increased from **74.03** in 2005-06 to **76.92** for 2009-10. In 2008-09, NSW recorded the second highest prisoner employment rate behind Victoria. The expansion of commercial industries to provide more employment opportunities and the improved reporting systems to identify prisoners eligible for employment in 2008-09, continues to assist with the increase in the NSW employment rate in 2009-10.

Prison Visits

- The number of prisoner visits in 2009/10 was **214,721**.
- In 2009-10 there was on average **20.74** visits per prisoner.

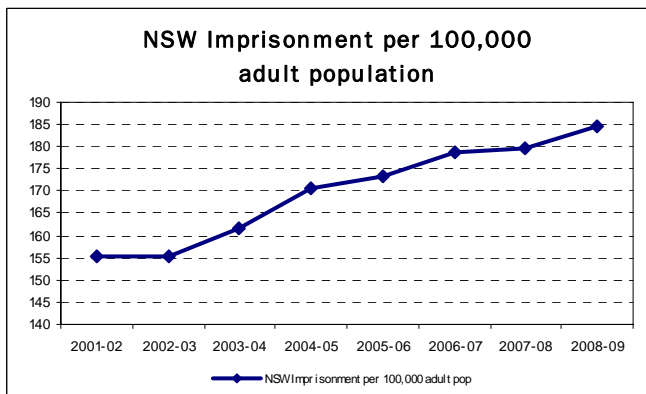
Video Conferencing

The establishment of the Cross Justice video conferencing Network is to facilitate Court, Parole and legal matters, via video conferencing. CSNSW has implemented 45 video conference studios throughout NSW correctional facilities and locations.

- Between 2005-06 and 2009-10 video conferencing usage has increased overall by **142.5%**.
- The highest increase of usage from 2005-06 and 2009-10 was in the category of 'With Legal Representatives' an increase of **181.6%**

Increase in overall imprisonment rates in NSW

The imprisonment rate of NSW is not a concise measure of efficiency in the justice sector and does not reflect levels of criminal activity within NSW; rather it can be viewed as an indicator of justice agency legislation and policy directions and effectiveness.



Since 2000-01, NSW has witnessed a steady increase in its overall rate of imprisonment per 100 000 adults. In 2009-10, the NSW imprisonment rate at **186.3** per 100,000 adults is higher than the national imprisonment rate of **169.1**.

The NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General is working collaboratively to introduce initiatives such as the Merit Program and Circle Sentencing Programs, both aimed at diverting offenders from full-time custody whilst completing community based programs aimed at reducing re-offending.

Even though, CSNSW is not responsible for sentencing policy or practice, it administers diversionary alternatives to full time custody with initiatives such as:

- The Home Detention Scheme (Intensive Supervision), which seeks to divert appropriate offenders from full-time custody to intensive supervision in the community.
- The NSW Drug Court (Intensive Supervision), which seeks to divert offenders with alcohol and other drug issues to appropriate intensive supervision regimes within the community.

From 1 October 2010, Periodic Detention ceased to be a sentencing option and a new community sentencing option called ICO (Intensive Correctional Order) become available. An ICO is an order of imprisonment for not more than 2 years made by a court, which directs that the sentence is to be served by way of intensive correction in the community. An ICO is served in the community under the strict supervision of CSNSW rather than in full-time custody.

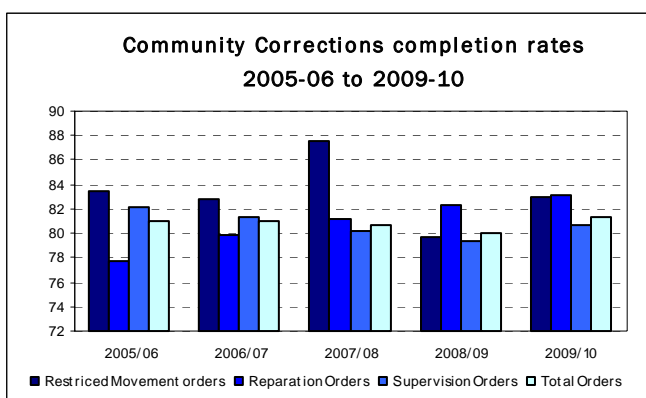
Increasing imprisonment rates are a world wide trend. In NSW the increasing imprisonment rate is at odds with the decreasing crime rate.

CORRECTIONAL MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE – COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Community Corrections orders in NSW are maintaining a high completion rate. **81.3%** of offenders successfully completing their order in 2009-10, the highest percentage of orders successfully completed in 5 years.

A number of factors have contributed to the maintenance of high percentages of successful completions of community correction orders in NSW. These are:

- The introduction of risk assessment (LSI-R) to identify high-risk offenders has enabled the Community Offender Services to work more effectively with these offenders,
- Enhanced monitoring of offenders by means of the Community Compliance and Monitoring Group,
- Increase in services provided to community based offenders, including psychologists and cultural Client Service Officers,
- Use of targeted group-work intervention programs, and
- Service ability to terminate supervision components of certain orders increases the ability to manage the number of offenders under supervision at any one time.



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