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Women in NSW Prisons: Population Trends 1970-1984

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Research Officer

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WOMEN IN N.S.W. PRISONS –

Population Trends 1970 - 1984

Prepared by Maureen Miner

Research and Statistics Division

**Department of
Corrective Services**
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PREFACE

In 1984, a N.S.W. Government Task Force on Women in Prison was set up to review the management of women prisoners and make recommendations especially about the construction of new prison accommodation for women. The Research and Statistics Division of the N.S.W. Department of Corrective Services carried out a substantial amount of research in support of the Task Force. Following submission of that Report in 1985, the government set up an Implementation Committee to put into effect those Task Force recommendations which have been adopted.

The research conducted for the Task Force obtained a large amount of new data on women prisoners. Time constraints limited analysis of the data and consideration of the conclusions which could be presented to the Task Force in time for the final Task Force report. Thus, the Corrective Services Commission and the Minister for Corrective Services agreed that further work should be done to produce substantial Research Publications based on further analysis of the data and consideration of relevant literature. This Research Publication is the third of a number which have been prepared in this way.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Minister for Corrective Services or the New South Wales Corrective Services Commission.

Public discussion of correctional policy and practice often is based on assumption, prejudice and general attitudes. Research carried out elsewhere can too easily be ignored, dismissed as irrelevant to local conditions, or misapplied through ignorance of the sometimes substantial differences in social context and correctional systems. I am pleased to be able to present this report which sets out locally obtained data in the context of a critical examination of the results and relevance of research in other societies. The processes of discussion and evaluation of policies can continue with a better factual basis, to which this report makes a useful contribution.

DON PORRITT
Chief Research Officer
December, 1986.

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SUMMARY

This study examined trends in the reception of female offenders into prison over the period 1971-1980, together with demographic and criminal record characteristics of women prisoners in 1972 and 1984. Total receptions into prison declined from 1971-80, with the proportion received for minor offences declining dramatically, apparently resulting from an increased use of non-penal sanctions for minor offences. The proportion of females among receptions for violent crimes, property crimes, driving and drug offences varied by age group and period of reception within the decade. Models obtained by logistic regression analysis and providing estimated proportions of female receptions were presented.

In comparison with women in prison in 1972, the 1984 sample were younger; had higher levels of schooling; were a little less likely to have children, and had fewer children. The mothers were more likely in 1984 to be single parents and to be responsible for their children's care. While fewer of the 1984 women had never worked, there was no change in the concentration of employment in 'traditional female occupations'.

Approximately one-third of women in both samples had juvenile records, and 80% had adult records prior to their imprisonment. The 1984 women were more likely to have committed a more serious offence, resulting in a longer sentence, than their 1972 counterparts. While women convicted of a more serious offence tended to have been convicted in the past there was no relationship between these two variables and any of the demographic variables studied. Very few of the women in the 1984 study were likely candidates for diversion through non-penal sanctions under present policies.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Compared with males, females form a very small proportion of the total prison population in Australia. According to the 1984 National Prison Census females comprised 3.9% of persons held in custody on 30 June. This is not an isolated finding - over a twenty year period from 1961 to 1981 the proportion of women in prison, based on daily average populations, varied from a low of 2.1% in 1975 to 3.3% in 1981. Similarly the rate of female imprisonments varied around four per 100,000 female population, compared with a variation around 140 per 100,000 for males over the same period (Mukherjee, Jacobsen and Walker, 1981).

Australia is not unique in this. Women comprise less than 5% of prison populations in many overseas countries. For example, in the decade to 1982 women comprised around 3% of the average prison population in England and Wales, with rates of imprisonment varying from 4 to 6 per 100,000 females in the population (Home Office, 1982). In the U.S., women comprised around 4% of persons in state and federal prisons from 1975-1983 but with slightly higher rates of imprisonment per 100,000 population: from 8.8 to 16.8 over the same period (Hatty, 1984, p.64).

The existence of women in the prison system is often obscured by the sheer size of the male prison population. As a result, it has been argued that administrators ignore empirical evidence concerning women in prison and that necessary changes have not been made. At a recent seminar on Women in the Prison System, organized by the Australian Institute of Criminology (12-14 June 1984) a number of speakers commented on the lack of data concerning women prisoners or failure of administrators to consider females separately from male offenders (Mukherjee and Sarri, quoted in Hatty, 1984). With the spread of the feminist movement in the 1970s a greater awareness of female crime has begun to emerge but:

"because of past neglect, insufficient attention has been given to basic issues related to causation, frequency of participation, offence patterns and the manner of processing females into and through the criminal justice system. Recently there has been a plethora of theoretical and descriptive statements attempting to explain similarities and differences in male-female criminal behaviour, but most of these are not based on systematic research" (Sarri, in Hatty, 1984, p.88).

A systematic approach to female criminality should include an analysis of changes in offend-

ing over time. It has been asserted that liberation of females would result in increased assertiveness reflected in accelerated rates of violent crime commission (Adler, 1975). Has this prediction been fulfilled? An increase in the proportion of women received into prison for drug offences has also been noted (Biles, in Hatty, 1984, p.50). How has this change affected the composition of women in prison in terms of offences and demographic characteristics? This study is an attempt to answer these and other questions as they relate to women in NSW prisons.

This report presents findings from one of a series of studies examining women in NSW prisons. A major aim of the series was to provide data for the NSW Task Force on Women in Prison. However several issues emerged as worthy of deeper analysis than was possible in the time allowed for submission to the Task Force. Hence these reports duplicate and expand much of the data that were prepared for the Task Force, and published in their 1985 report.

Data in this volume are presented in four chapters, each with its own aim, methodology and results. A final summary and discussion section provides an integrated perspective on trends in female prison populations.

CHAPTER 2: THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM

2.1 Aim

In order to place prison population trends for women within a wider perspective it was decided to examine court and prison statistics for males and females in N.S.W.

2.2. Methodology

Court statistics were obtained from the N.S.W. Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. For the period 1976-1983 figures were available on males and females found guilty at Courts of Petty Sessions.

In order to examine a sequence of decisions concerning females charged with criminal offences it would have been desirable to examine rates of sentencing female offenders to both custodial and non-custodial sentences by Courts of Petty Sessions over a similar period. However, sentences are not analyzed by sex in *Court Statistics*. Thus it was not possible to examine trends in the use of non-custodial sanctions for female offenders.

Figures relating to women received into prison under sentence over the period 1971-1980 were derived from *Prison Statistics* published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This period was

chosen because relatively stable data definitions were used from 1971 onwards and complete data were available for each year with the exception of 1978, for which no reception data were published. Unfortunately, no reception data were available after 1980. Reception data have the advantage that they reflect the flow of prisoners through a system rather than isolating a single day with possibilities of chance fluctuations.

Reception data and census data give two different perspectives on a prison population. Reception data provide statistics on all persons passing through the system. There is a relatively high turnover of prisoners serving short sentences, but such prisoners comprise a very small proportion of the prison population on any one day. People sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, on the other hand, accumulate in the system and so form a large proportion of the inmate population on a given day. However, they are received comparatively rarely. Thus reception data give a picture of people passing through the system whereas census data show the characteristics of the prison population that has to be managed on a daily basis.

2.3. Results

Table 1 - Changes in the numbers of women found guilty at Courts of Petty Sessions 1976-83

Year	Males	Number	Females	
			%	Total
1976	25,681	7,342	22.2	33,023
1977	23,911	7,349	23.5	31,260
1978	27,889	7,585	21.0	35,474
1979	26,113	6,426	20.0	32,539
1980	26,304	6,240	19.0	32,544
1981	28,131	6,670	19.0	34,801
1982	30,093	7,539	20.0	37,632
1983	30,143	7,382	19.7	37,525

Source: Court Statistics, published by the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice, N.S.W. Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research.

There has been an increase of 13.6% in the numbers of people found guilty at Courts of Petty Sessions over the period 1976-83. However, this increase can be attributed almost entirely to male findings of guilt: findings of guilt concerning females increased by less than 1% over this period. On average, females comprised 20.6% of persons found guilty during this period.

Table 2 - Receptions into custody under sentence 1971-80

Year Ended 30 June	Number received during the year (a)			
	Males	Females	%	Persons
1971 (b)	10,914	778	6.7	11,692
1972	11,730	805	6.4	12,535
1973	10,561	716	6.3	11,277
1974	8,452	410	4.6	8,862
1975	7,889	430	5.2	8,319
1976	7,969	439	5.2	8,408
1977	7,604	397	5.0	8,001
1978	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)
1979	8,457	545	6.1	9,002
1980	7,354	386	5.0	7,740

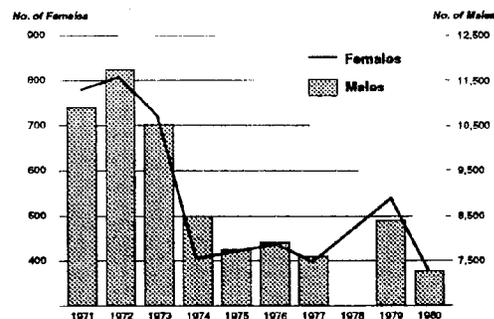
- (a) Counted each time received.
- (b) Prior to 1970-71 remands etc. sentenced without release from custody counted as one reception under sentence. After 1970-71 changes of status counted as separate receptions except for appeals resulting in no change of status as outcome.
- (c) Not available.

Source: NSW Prison Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

During the period from 30 June 1971 to 1980, overall there was a 34% decline in receptions into prison under sentence. Whereas male receptions declined by 33%, female receptions declined by 51%. On average, over this ten year period, females comprised 5.7% of all receptions under sentence.

Although the total decline in receptions under sentence was proportionally greater for females than for males, the pattern of receptions is similar for both groups (see Figure 1). However the magnitude of the change is greater for females because of their smaller numbers.

Figure 1: Receptions into prison under sentence for years ending 30 June 1971 to 30 June 1980



CHAPTER 3: OFFENCE AND AGE PATTERNS

3.1. Legislative changes

During the ten year period from 1971 to 1980 sentencing trends, as noted in the series Court Statistics, and legislative changes resulted in a decreasing use of imprisonment as a sanction for minor offenders.

From 1973 onwards failure to pay a fine imposed upon a person found guilty of public drunkenness increasingly resulted in detention until the rising of the court instead of a short prison sentence (Court Statistics, 1976, p.2).

The offence of public drunkenness was decriminalized under the Intoxicated Persons Act, 1979, whereby an intoxicated person was to be detained in a proclaimed place until the person ceased to be intoxicated or the expiration of 8 hours, whichever occurred first, instead of being convicted and sentenced at court.

With the repeal of the Summary Offences Act (1970), many of the minor offences ceased to be subject to criminal sanction on 11th May, 1979. Specifically, the following ceased to be offences: vagrancy, being in charge of premises frequented by reputed criminals, gathering alms, soliciting for prostitution, prostitute on premises habitually used for prostitution or soliciting, fortune telling and compounding prosecution.

At the same time it was expected that as a result of the Poisons Act No.31, 1966 and subsequent increases in the NSW Drug Squad the proportion of detected and punished drug offenders would increase.

Police enforcement of drink-drive legislation became more intense from 1974 onwards. Police campaigns against drink-driving offences were noted in Court Statistics (1974) while new breathalyzer units were set up in country areas (1978) and the maximum fine for drink-driving offences increased from \$400 to \$1000 in December 1978. Increasing convictions were recorded, and as fines became heavier it was to be expected that receptions into prison for failure to pay drink-driving fines would increase.

3.2. Aim

The aim of the analyses described in this section was to produce a model which would summarize trends in the receptions of sentenced female prisoners over a ten year period. Data were available with reception figures cross-tabulated separately by sex, offence and age for nine years within the period 1970-71 to 1979-80. Over this period total receptions into prison had declined. Some of the questions based on a preliminary inspection of these data included:

- a. were female receptions declining at the same rate as male receptions over this period?
- b. was the decline relative to males consistent across all age groups?
- c. was the change in receptions across various age groups the same for males and females?
- d. was the decline relative to males consistent across all offences?
- e. was the change in receptions across various offence groups the same for males and females?

Specifically, it was hypothesized that receptions into prison for minor offences would decline, while receptions for drug and drink-driving offences would increase. No hypotheses regarding 'violent' and property offences were formulated. No specific trends relating to age or sex were anticipated. Hence the analysis was viewed largely as an exploratory examination of the data. No data were available for the financial year 1977-78 so that only nine years within the decade were included in the study. For detailed tables on which the analyses were based see Appendix 1, Tables 1, 3 and 4.

3.3. Methodology

a. Data categorization

Over the period 1970-71 to 1979-80 receptions into NSW prisons under sentence were analysed by age, offence and sex. Four age categories were used: under 21 years, 21-24 years, 25-34 years and 35 years and over. Offences were classified into five categories:

1. Violent Offences

These included: murder; manslaughter; assault; kidnapping; rape; indecent assault on female; robbery; and driving offences occasioning death.

2. Property Offences

This group comprised: fraud; forging and uttering; break, enter and steal; larceny; receiving; and injury to property.

3. Driving and Traffic Offences

This covered a broad range of offences including: driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs; dangerous driving; negligent driving; driving without a licence; driving whilst licence suspended; registration and insurance offences; and parking offences.

4. Drug Offences

Major offences within this category comprised: use or possess drugs; obtain drugs by forgery or

false representation; and sell, import, export or make drugs.

5. Other Offences

This was a miscellaneous grouping of diverse offences including: drunkenness; obscene language; vagrancy; possess weapons; evade fare; breach of recognizance; fail to comply with maintenance order; and trespassing.

For the analysis of data in aggregated time periods it was decided to use three groupings. The first four years (July 1970 to June 1974) became period 1. In this period the early effects of measures against illegal drugs were likely to emerge, before extensive campaigns against drink driving. This was a time of instability within the prison system, with riots at Bathurst Gaol both in 1970 and 1974. The next three years (July 1974-June 1977) were combined as an intermediate period, with missing data for the financial year 1977-78 forming a natural division. Within this period events leading up to the Nagle Royal Commission and the inquiries of this Commission affected penal administration. The final two year period (July 1978-June 1980) reflected the decriminalization of many minor offences and legislation indicating a tougher attitude towards drink-driving. Some changes were gradually being made within the prison system as a result of the Nagle Commission recommendations.

b. Data analysis

Since the aim of the analysis was to examine how female receptions were changing relative to male receptions it was decided to express female receptions as a proportion of total receptions. By considering the ratio of numbers of sentenced females received to all receptions under sentence, both male and female, a measure of "control" was exercised over factors such as changes in legislation or shifts in sentencing policy which affect the numbers of receptions of both sexes to a considerable degree.

Other information available for analysis of reception trends comprised ages and offences, in grouped format, and year of reception. Logistic regression is an appropriate method for examining proportions having multiple covariates. Logistic regression analyses were performed separately for each of the five offence groups using the package GLIM (Generalized Linear Interactive Models).

The package allows different models to be fitted and compared easily. Separate analyses using an iterative fitting technique were performed for the five offence groups. The models presented below were chosen because they gave good fits to the data and were also parsimonious,

i.e. relied on as few parameters (grouping variables) as possible and had a simple structure.

For all but the 'other offences' the chosen model had the same simple structure which showed an increase over time in the probability of a person received into prison being female and also the dependence of this probability on age. The nature of this dependence on age varied between the different offence groups. The detailed results follow, presenting the estimated proportions for the selected models. [Further details of these modelling techniques can be found in Dobson (1983).]

3.4. Results

a. Offence and age trends

From Table 3 in Appendix 1 it can be seen that the 34% decline in total receptions into prison over the decade was not reflected in all offence categories. Although total receptions declined, the proportions of offenders received for violent crimes, property crimes, driving offences and drug offences increased, whereas the proportion of offenders received for other minor offences decreased. This was true for both males and females. These shifts are due to falling numbers received for minor offences. Receptions for drug offences and driving offences increased, and the other categories showed no clear trends.

Table 4 in Appendix 1 shows that for both sexes there were increases in the proportions of receptions within each age category under 35 years and a decline in the proportion aged 35 years and over. The latter age group declined from 51% of total receptions in 1970-71 to 19% in 1979-80. Again, a similar decline was observed for both sexes.

b. Drug offences

A number of models of female receptions for drug offences were examined and compared. These comprised:

1. year
2. period
3. age
4. year and age
5. period and age.

[Models (1), (3) and (4) were compared and then model (2) was compared to model (5)].

Acceptable correspondence between the model and data were obtained for models (1) year; (4) year and age; and (5) period and age. However, model (5), period and age, appeared to accord well with the data and to be reasonably parsimonious. See Table 2 in Appendix 1 for more detailed statistical data from the GLIM analysis. Table 3 below shows the probability of

being female for receptions of drug offenders estimated by the model (5). This shows that the proportion of females among drug offenders changed little from period 1 to period 2, and then doubled in period 3. There tended to be a higher proportion of female drug offenders in the younger age groups. In all age groups and periods, women remained very much the minority of receptions for drug offences.

Table 3 - Fitted probabilities using period and age (drug offences)

Period	Parameter Age	Fitted probability
July 1970- June 1974	Under 21 years	.080
	21 to 24 years	.069
	25 to 34 years	.046
	35 years and over	.044
July 1974- June 1977	Under 21 years	.089
	21 to 24 years	.077
	25 to 34 years	.051
	35 years and over	.049
July 1978- June 1980	Under 21 years	.169
	21 to 24 years	.148
	25 to 34 years	.101
	35 years and over	.096

c. Property offences

In a similar manner, models were fitted successively for the proportion of females received into prison for property offences using year, period, age, year and age, period and age. The latter two models were most successful, with period and age again preferred because of its parsimony as well as adequate fit.

Table 4 - Fitted probabilities using period and age (property offences).

Period	Parameter Age	Fitted probability
1970-1974	Under 21 years	.028
	21 to 24 years	.035
	25 to 34 years	.041
	35 years and over	.037
1974-1977	Under 21 years	.036
	21 to 24 years	.045
	25 to 34 years	.054
	35 years and over	.049
1978-1980	Under 21 years	.049
	21 to 24 years	.062
	25 to 34 years	.072
	35 years and over	.066

Again there was an increase in the proportion of female receptions, over time. The change from period 1 to period 2 was only slightly smaller than the change from period 2 to period 3.

For this offence group the most commonly occurring age group for women in each time period was 25-34 years.

d. Driving offences

Again, period and age represented an adequate model for the proportion of women received into prison for driving offences on the bases of closeness of fit and parsimony.

Table 5 - Fitted probabilities using period and age (driving offences).

Period	Parameter Age	Fitted probability
1970-1974	Under 21 years	.005
	21 to 24 years	.010
	25 to 34 years	.012
	35 years and over	.009
1974-1977	Under 21 years	.008
	21 to 24 years	.015
	25 to 34 years	.018
	35 years and over	.014
1978-1980	Under 21 years	.023
	21 to 24 years	.027
	25 to 34 years	.032
	35 years and over	.025

The fitted probabilities showed an increasing trend over the three periods. The shift from period 2 to period 3 was generally greater than the rise from period 1 to period 2. There was a consistent age effect with peaks for receptions in the 25-34 years age group.

e. Violent offences

Period and age also represented an adequate model for violent offences.

Fitted probabilities increased slightly over the periods, indicating a mild increase in female receptions for violent offences over time, compared with males. Age effects were again consistent over the three time periods, with peaks for receptions in the 35 years and over age group.

Table 6 - Fitted probabilities using period and age (violent offences).

Period	Parameter Age	Fitted probability
1970-1974	Under 21 years	.022
	21 to 24 years	.018
	25 to 34 years	.024
	35 years and over	.034
1974-1977	Under 21 years	.028
	21 to 24 years	.023
	25 to 34 years	.030
	35 years and over	.044
1978-1980	Under 21 years	.035
	21 to 24 years	.029
	25 to 34 years	.039
	35 years and over	.055

f. Other offences

The simple models found adequate for the previous offence groups using age and year or age and period as modelling variables, either alone or in combination, were not adequate for "other" offences.

g. Summary

The proportion of receptions that were female can be modelled for drug offences, property offences, driving offences and violent offences using information about the effects of age and year of reception. It appears that legislative changes over this period affected offences within the "other" category differently. Since some of these offences are sex specific (e.g. prostitution), the usefulness of males as a 'control group' with the logistic regression analysis is reduced. Further discussion of this finding requires an examination of both numbers and proportions of receptions and hence the interpretation of these patterns is discussed more fully in Chapter 6, Section 2.

CHAPTER 4: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

4.1. Aim

The aim of this section was to explore changes in a range of characteristics of female prisoners over twelve years from 1972 to 1984.

4.2. Methodology

Only a limited number of variables is recorded for all prisoners received into custody. For a more detailed picture of a prison population it is necessary to refer to census data. Information concerning birth place, marital status, last place of residence before imprisonment and Aboriginality were obtained from recent censuses carried out in 1982, 1983 and 1984. Comparisons were made with census data obtained in 1971 and 1974 for the birth place and marital status of the women.

While record data provide some consistently recorded material for an analysis of women in prison, a detailed profile can only be obtained through structured interviews, questionnaires or ratings. In 1972, a detailed study was made of 100 women in prison in NSW using structured interviews (N.S.W. Department of Corrective Services, 1975). Data from interviews conducted in August 1984 as a means of gathering information for the N.S.W. Task Force on Women in Prison were compared with similar items from the 1972 study, namely: highest level of schooling; usual occupation; job at arrest; number of children; usual carers of children and carers of children during the mother's imprisonment.

The 100 subjects interviewed in 1972 comprised all women in custody at Mulawa Training and Detention Centre for Women (then the only female gaol in NSW) on 30 June 1972 together with women received into custody during the following two weeks. Both sentenced and unsentenced prisoners were interviewed. From departmental records it is known that there were 75 women in custody on 30th June, comprising 57 sentenced and 18 unsentenced women. The number of women in custody on 30 June 1972 but not interviewed because of sickness, temporary absence or refusal was not recorded. Hence, at least 25 women included in the interview study must have been received in the two weeks after 30th June. Interviews were conducted by two female researchers.

Interviews for the 1984 study were conducted at Mulawa Training and Detention Centre, a reception and maximum security prison for women and at the Norma Parker Centre, a mini-

mum security centre for women prisoners. A total of 107 women were held in custody under sentence on 13 August, 1984 at the two centres, comprising the population under study. Interviews were completed with 90 women, a sample of 84%. Of the remainder, eleven women refused to be interviewed, four left the gaol before they could be interviewed and two commenced interviews which could not be completed. A team of fourteen interviewers, seven males and seven females, gathered the data.

While it is appropriate to compare the 1984 sample with other censuses, there may be a bias in the 1972 sample towards an over-representation of short-term offenders since the earlier study included two weeks' receptions as well as the population in custody on 30th June. In addition, the 1972 sample comprised both sentenced and unsentenced women.

Most of the comparisons between women imprisoned in 1984 and in previous years were based on frequencies expressed as percentages. The statistical significance of relationships between data items gathered for the 1984 women were examined by means of the chi-square statistic. Since the purpose of the statistical analysis was exploratory, rather than testing specific hypotheses, and repeated chi-square measures were based upon the same data, some significant results may be due to chance. Thus caution should be exercised in interpreting relationships based solely upon a chi-square statistic used as an exploratory tool. Where appropriate, this will be mentioned in the results section.

4.3. Results

a. Marital status

Details are given in Appendix 2, Table 2. Over the 1982-84 period the proportion of women claiming to be married varied between 21% and 33%. About half the women stated that they had never married. In contrast, proportions for males were more stable, with 25% claiming to be married and 64% never married. Fluctuations amongst women respondents could reflect sampling effects or inconsistent reporting of defacto relationships, normally included in the 'never married' category.

It was expected that a higher proportion of women prisoners would have been married in the early 1970s. This is because they comprised an older population who probably experienced greater social pressure towards marriage. However in 1971 33% of women were married,

but only 16% in 1974 when 25% of women claimed to be separated or in a defacto relationship. Thus there is no consistent trend in the reported marital status of female prisoners.

b. Place of birth

The proportion of Australian-born prisoners was relatively constant over 1982-84 for both males (78%) and females (75%). See Appendix 2, Tables 3 and 3a. Proportions of prisoners born in each overseas category remained stable for males but fluctuated a little for females. Since smaller numbers of females than males were included in each census these variations could represent "sampling fluctuations".

A slightly higher proportion of female prisoners in 1971 and 1974 were born in Australia and Europe than in the 1980s. Conversely, proportionately more women in the 1980s were born in New Zealand, the U.K. and the miscellaneous category comprising Africa, Asia and America.

c. Last known address

Almost two-thirds of the male prisoners and three-quarters of the female prisoners had lived in Sydney immediately before their current imprisonment. Conversely, female prisoners were less likely to have given other parts of NSW as their last address: about 10% of females compared with 24% of males had their last address outside the Sydney area.

The percentage of living interstate varied around 5% for both sexes, while those apprehended on entering Australia from overseas remained at less than 1% for males but declined from 4% to less than 1% for females. Those variations probably reflect chance differences arising from the small number of women prisoners obtained at each census.

d. Aboriginality

Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders comprise a very small proportion of the prison population. There has been a slight increase for male prisoners, from 5.9% in 1982 to 7.5% in 1984. However the percentage of female Aboriginal prisoners has fluctuated around 5%.

e. Children and care arrangements

Women interviewed in the 1972 study tended to be older and to have more children than their 1984 counterparts.

	1972 (No. = 100) %	1984 (No. = 92) %
18-20	14.0	10.9
21-24	31.0	30.4
25-29	12.0	35.9
30 and over	43.0	22.8

The greatest difference in the 1984 sample from 1972 was the trebling of the proportion of women prisoners aged 25-29 and halving of the proportion of prisoners aged 30 or more.

Whereas 59% of women prisoners in 1972 had given birth to, or assumed full responsibility for, a child, 46% of women prisoners in 1984 were mothers. The average number of children within the care of the 1972 mothers was three, compared with an average of two children for the 1984 mothers.

Fewer mothers in the 1984 sample had grown up children, reflecting age differences in the two samples. Fewer mothers cared for children in the nuclear family situation (9% compared with 39% in 1972) and it was more likely that children were

	1972 % of 59 mothers	1984 % of 41 mothers
In nuclear family		
- prisoner + husband	29	2
- prisoner + de facto	10	7
By others*	24	37
Children grown up	22	5
By mother as single		
parent	14	46
Not known	2	3

* By prisoners' relatives, friends etc., in childrens' homes or foster homes where mother does not have any financial responsibility.

being raised by mothers as single parents (46% in 1984 compared with 14% in 1972). There was an increasing trend towards the prisoner's relatives and friends or foster parents assuming the role of primary care giver as the usual arrangement before the mother's current imprisonment (37% in 1984 compared with 24% in 1972). However over half the mothers in each sample were in a vulnerable situation where they had been exercising primary care of dependant children within a nuclear family or as a single parent: these arrangements were likely to be radically affected by the mother's imprisonment.

f. Educational and occupational background

Data on education and occupation were available from the 1974 census in addition to the 1972 and 1984 studies. The 1971 census provided information on highest level of schooling.

A general improvement in the educational backgrounds of women prisoners can be observed since 1971, when 26% of the women had not progressed beyond primary schooling. Only 3% of women prisoners in 1984 had failed to proceed beyond primary schooling. In contrast 22% of the 1971 prisoners had finished the equivalent of years 10, 11 or 12 compared with 43% in 1984. This may be related to age differences in the samples, with younger women receiving more schooling than their older counterparts and to increasing receptions for drug offences during this period.

However, the pattern of post-school education has not changed. Over two-thirds of prisoners in 1972, 1974 and 1984 had not completed any course since leaving school. Approximately one-quarter stated that they had completed a technical, business or trade course, while less than 5% had completed tertiary studies leading to a degree or diploma. Only 7% of women in 1971 claimed to have completed any post-secondary school course, details of the types of courses were not available.

	1971 No. = 81	1972 No. = 100	1974 No. = 55	1984 No. = 90
Primary, partial or complete	26.0	26.0	14.6	3.3
Years 7, 8 or 9	50.6	61.0	58.2	52.2
Year 10	7.4	6.0	10.9	30.0
Years 11 or 12	14.8	4.0	9.1	13.3
Not known	1.2	3.0	7.2	1.1

Table 10 - Post-secondary school courses completed (%)

	1972 No. = 100	1974 No. = 55	1984 No. = 90
Nil completed	69.0	72.7	67.8
Technical, business college or trade course	26.0	21.8	23.3
University degree or diploma	2.0	-	4.4
Other (nursing, nurse's entrance, receptionist course)	3.0	5.5	4.4

Table 11 - Usual occupation (% - excludes 'not known' cases)

	1971 no. = 81	1972 No. = 98	1974 No. = 50	1984 No. = 90
Professional - accountant, nurse, etc.	3.7	5.1	4.0	6.7
Clerical - typist, receptionist	7.4	11.2	6.0	18.5
Sales	2.5	3.1	8.0	10.1
Farm work, fruit picking	2.5	2.0	2.0	1.7
Factory work	18.5	14.3	14.0	10.1
Service, sport & recreation - barmaid, cook, cleaner, hairdresser, prostitute*	33.3	28.6	36.0	30.3
Transport & communication	3.7	-	2.0	2.5
Other occupation	1.2	1.0	6.0	-
No usual occupation				
Home duties	23.5	19.4	18.0	5.9
Pensioner,	3.7	15.3	4.0	11.8
Illegal activities	-	-	-	2.5

* Note that the Australian Bureau of Statistics classifies prostitutes under the category 'service, sport and recreation workers'.

The majority of women who stated their usual occupation worked in the service, sport and recreation fields, in clerical or factory jobs. Over the period 1971-1984 there appears to be a marked decline in the proportion of women involved solely in home duties and an increase in the proportion working in clerical jobs.

However approximately four-fifths of women prisoners were unemployed at the time of their arrest (83% in 1972 and 78% in 1984). Those who were employed displayed a similar distribution of jobs over the two studies, with most working in the relatively unskilled service areas of cooking, cleaning and "entertaining", all of which mirror traditional female roles.

CHAPTER 5: PAST RECORD DATA

5.1. Aim

Past and current criminal records of female prisoners were examined in order to determine whether:

- a. there had been an increase in the number of violent offences recorded;
- b. any women prisoners would be likely candidates for non-penal alternatives.

5.2. Methodology

Details of past criminal records were obtained from police records for the women in the 1972 study. Results of this analysis were also com-

pared with the police records for women in custody under sentence at 30 June, 1984 (1984 census population).

Specifically, data collected from Corrective Services and Police records for women in custody under sentence on 30 June, 1984 comprised: date of first conviction; total number of convictions; past juvenile convictions; juvenile offences; juvenile sentences; adult convictions; adult offences; adult sentences and all offences in current matter. From these basic variables other measures were constructed, such as length of criminal career, age at first conviction and presence of any drug offence in past or current criminal record.

5.3. Results

a. Comparative data: 1972 and 1984 women contrasted

Juvenile record

	1972 No. = 100	1984 No. = 103
Nil	69.0	70.9
1	7.0	6.8
2	11.0	7.8
3	9.0	5.8
4-5	3.0	2.9
6 and over	1.0	5.8

A little under one-third of the women in both studies had juvenile records. However those in the 1984 sample with juvenile records had received, on average, 3.9 convictions compared with 2.7 convictions each for the women with juvenile records in 1972.

	1972 No. = 100	1984 No. = 103
Admonished and discharged	3.0	5.8
Fine	2.0	10.7
Bond	14.0	7.8
Probation	17.0	9.8
Juvenile institution	19.0	10.7
Care of juvenile authority	1.0	3.9

Women in the 1984 study were more likely to have been discharged or fined as juveniles, but less likely than their 1972 counterparts to have received a bond, probation or detention in a juvenile institution.

	1972 No. = 31	1984 No. = 30
Violent property offences (BES, assault & rob)	16.1	40.0
Non-violent property offences	61.3	83.3
Drug offences	9.7	13.3
Other minor offences	9.7	40.0
Escaping	6.5	6.7
Exposed to moral danger, neglected	61.3	30.0

The proportion of women who had committed offences against property, drug offences and other minor offences as juveniles increased substantially in the 1984 sample. However the proportion charged with being neglected or exposed to moral danger halved. It is of interest to note that over 80% of all women having juvenile records amongst the 1984 sample had committed a property offence such as stealing, larceny of a motor vehicle or receiving.

Adult Record

	1972 No. = 100	1984 No. = 103
Nil	23.0	22.3
1	9.0	6.8
2	8.0	1.0
3	7.0	7.8
4	3.0	2.9
5 and over	*50.0	**59.2

* Range 5 to 238 previous convictions.
** Range 5 to 119 previous convictions.

Over three-quarters of the women in both groups had had previous adult convictions and over half had at least five adult convictions in the past.

Table 16- Adult corrective measures experienced in the past (%: multiple categories used)

	1972 No. = 77	1984 No. = 80
Discharge	—	8.8
Rising of the court	—	21.3
Fine	80.5	90.0
Bond	57.1	48.8
Probation	14.3	51.3
Prison	64.9	55.0
Periodic detention	*	6.3
Community Service Order	*	7.5
Inebriate institution	7.8	—

* Not available in 1972

The records of the 1984 women revealed a less extensive experience of imprisonment and bonds than the 1972 "sample", but an increased experience of all other non-custodial measures. The use of probation is of particular interest: in 1972 only 14% of the women with adult records had been placed under probation supervision compared with 51% of the 1984 women who had been sentenced as adults in the past.

It is not possible to make comparisons with the 1972 study because the early data are presented in grouped format based on major offence type within the past history. From the 1984 results it appears that over half the women with past adult records had been convicted of stealing (72%) or using drugs (60%). Approximately one-third of the women had been convicted of fraud; break, enter and steal (BES) or goods in custody.

Table 17- Types of offences committed in the past as adults by women in the 1984 study (% : multiple categories used)

	Number	% of 80 with prior adult convictions
Violent Offences		
Assault	12	15.0
Other offences endangering life	3	3.8
Robbery	5	6.3
Property Offences		
Fraud	38	47.5
BES	27	33.8
Larceny motor vehicle	6	7.5
Stealing	58	72.5
Goods in custody	26	32.5
Other property offences	18	22.5
Driving offences		
PCA	5	6.3
Negligent driving	2	2.5
Licence, registration, parking, etc.	12	15.0
Drug offences		
Use drugs, possess drugs	48	60.0
Sell drugs, import drugs	6	7.5
Other minor offences		
Prostitution	16	20.0
Offences against order	24	30.0
Other minor offences	19	23.8

**Table 18- Most serious current offence:
1984**

	Number	Percentage
Violent offences		
Homicides	11	10.7
Assaults	2	1.9
Arson, person therein	2	1.9
Rape	1	1.0
Robbery	16	15.5
Property offences		
Fraud, misappropriation	16	15.5
BES	15	14.6
Steal, larceny m.v., receiving	18	17.5
Drug offences		
Use, possess	4	3.9
Import	6	5.8
Sell	3	2.9
Cultivate	3	2.9
Other offences		
Driving, registration, parking	3	2.9
Prostitution	2	1.9
Fail to comply with court order	1	1.0
TOTAL	103	100.0

Almost one-third (31%) of the sentenced women in prison on 30 June 1984 had been convicted of a violent crime, such as robbery, homicide or assault as their most serious current offence. Just under one half (48%) had been convicted of a property offence, with 16% convicted of a drug offence as the most serious charge.

In comparison, only 20% of the women in the 1972 study had a violent crime as the most serious, 37% had a property offence and 10% a drug offence. However, 31% had been convicted of other offences comprising drunkenness, vagrancy, prostitution and minor matters such as "use unseemly words" as the most serious. When this 31% was removed from the 1972 'sample' and percentages recalculated, then 30% of the remaining 69 women had been convicted of a violent crime, 54% of a property offence and 15% of a drug offence. These percentages are remarkably similar to the 1984 figures. Thus the higher percentage held for violent crime in 1984 seems to be due to decriminalization of some

minor offences rather than an increase in violent crime among women.

Table 19 - Aggregate sentence in months

	1972 % No.=100	1984 % No.=103
Less than 1 month	30.5	4.9
1 month and less than 6 months	13.4	11.7
6 months and less than 12 months	12.2	8.7
1 year and less than 3 years	17.1	30.1
3 years and less than 5 years	15.9	10.7
5 years and less than 10 years	6.1	23.3
10 years and up to 15 years	—	4.9
Life	4.8	5.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0

One-quarter of the women in the 1984 census were serving sentences less than 12 months, 30% were serving sentences from 1 year to less than 3 years while 45% were serving a maximum term of at least three years. The five women whose sentences did not exceed one month were all imprisoned in lieu of paying fines. In 62% of cases a minimum term (non-parole or non-probation period) had been set and in 27% of cases a fixed sentence with no minimum term had been given.

In comparison, 56% of women in the 1972 sample were serving sentences of less than 12 months, while only 27% were sentenced to a term of at least three years.

b. Relationships between past and current record data for 1984 women.

The relationships between past record data and current demographic or offence-linked variables were examined in several ways for the 1984 sample. Firstly, key items from each category were cross-tabulated and significant relationships examined by means of the chi-square statistic. Secondly, the records of women with no past convictions were compared in detail with those of women having past convictions but no prison sentences and with those with past prison sentences. This was done particularly to consider whether any of these women could have been dealt with by means other than imprisonment.

Cross-tabulations.

There were very few significant relationships between key variables and since related probabilities were generally less than .01, they can be treated with confidence. Most serious offence (MSO) was taken as a major indicator of current criminal behaviour. It was not significantly related to age at first offence, length of criminal career, number of past imprisonments, past drug offences or age. However, as could be expected, MSO was significantly related to length of sentence and number of past adult convictions (see Tables 1 and 2 in Appendix 3). Women convicted of serious offences such as homicide, robbery or assault were more likely to be serving sentences of two years and over and to have received one or more convictions in the past. Property offenders tended to receive sentences of less than 2 years and most had been convicted of at least one past offence. Drug offenders showed a slight tendency to receive sentences of two years or more, but a higher proportion than expected had no past convictions. Note that this result only applies to women whose most serious offence was a drug offence and not to women who had been given longer sentences for another offence, in addition to a drug conviction.

Number of past convictions was used as a key indicator of the extent of past criminal record. This variable was not significantly related to any demographic index such as birthplace, marital status, Aboriginality, or last known address, nor to aggregate length of sentence. However number of past convictions was strongly related to age, but in an unexpected direction. It could be hypothesized that the older the woman, the more opportunity for offending: hence older women should have received more convictions in the past than younger women. Instead it was found that young women aged under 30 tended to have received one or more convictions whereas a higher proportion than expected of women aged 30 or more tended to have received no convictions in the past. Age at first conviction was also strongly related to number of past convictions. First offenders were more likely to be aged 22 years or more at first conviction whereas those with one or more past convictions were more likely to have received their first conviction at 17-21 years (see Tables 3 & 4, Appendix 3).

Although the variables most serious offence (MSO), age and age at first conviction were found to be related to number of past convictions, these were not related to whether the woman had previously been imprisoned. Moreover, a third indicator of past record, length of criminal career, did not yield any significant relationships. This is probably because current age and tendency to have a long 'career' are having opposite effects.

Results may have been different if all women could have been investigated to a specific age (e.g. 40 years).

Detailed comparisons between women with and without past records

Over four-fifths of the women in prison under sentence on 30 June 1984 had been convicted of one or more offences in the past, according to police records. However 41% of the women whose records were studied received non-custodial sanctions such as fines, bonds, probation, community service orders or discharges for their past sentences. Forty-three women (42%) had received prison sentences in the past.

First conviction and first imprisonment

Only 18 women were first-timers in the sense of having no prior prison sentences nor convictions according to police records. Could any of these have been diverted from the prison system by being given an alternative sentence?

Almost half of these women had been convicted of drug offences (7 women). They had been charged with importing or supplying drugs, with sentences of 18 months to 15 years, or possessing quantities of drugs, with sentences of 7 to 11 years. Another four women had been convicted of murder or manslaughter, while two women had been sentenced to 7 years or more for fraud. From a consideration of the lengths of prison sentences imposed it appears that the sentencer would not have considered an alternative to imprisonment in these cases.

Of the remaining five women classified as first timers because the current offence was the only entry on their police record, two were serving sentences of 6 months for a breach of recognizance although no mention of the original recognizance order was made in the police record. It is doubtful whether these women were really being imprisoned on their first conviction, but even if they had breached a bond other non-penal sanctions such as a community service order could have been considered.

Another two women were serving sentences of 3-5 days in lieu of paying parking fines. Certainly these women could have been diverted from prison if a system for cutting out fines by community work or a similar sanction were in operation.

One woman was serving a sentence of 8 months for ill treating a child and assault. Without exploring the details of this case through court records it is difficult to suggest whether alternatives to imprisonment would have been appropriate, or even considered by the sentencer.

Thus, of the eighteen first timers, only four were serving sufficiently short sentences for minor offences to suggest that non-penal

measures should have been contemplated. In other words, in the majority of these cases it is unlikely that diversion from the prison system would have been an option, despite the fact that these women were all first timers.

First imprisonment but past convictions

Forty-two women were serving their first prison sentence having experienced alternative sentences in the past. The majority (57%) were serving prison sentences greater than twelve months.

Thirteen women had been sentenced to prison for the violent offences of murder, manslaughter, robbery and rape (aid and abet). These had largely committed property offences (9 women) or drug offences (3 women) as their most serious offence in the past.

Seven women had been imprisoned for fraud, of whom five had committed fraud offences as their past MSO. Another nine women had been imprisoned for Break, Enter and Steal (BES). Again fraud (4 women) and BES (2 women) were the most frequent past MSOs.

With respect to other offence categories, each corresponds to four women or less - too few for meaningful comparisons. However it is of interest to note that the two women imprisoned for using drugs had been convicted of larceny and had sold drugs as past MSOs while the four women imprisoned for selling drugs had a range of past MSOs - fraud, steal, use drugs and prostitution.

The only emerging pattern appears to be that women imprisoned for the first time for serious offences against people or property tended to have committed property offences resulting in non-prison sentences in the past.

Prior imprisonments

Forty-three women had a record of one or more past imprisonments. Of these, ten had a current MSO within the category of violent offences, of whom nine had committed robbery. Common past MSOs for the "violent" group comprised B.E.S. (3 women) and drug offences (2 women). Another nine women had been imprisoned for fraud as their major offence: of these, five had a history of fraud in the past. Eight women were serving a sentence largely for BES, with histories of fraud (3 women), BES (2 women) and acts against the person (2 women) as MSOs. A further nine women had a current MSO of stealing with BES (3 women) and stealing (3 women) as major past offences.

It appears that fraud, BES and stealing were common MSOs both in past and current records of these 43 women who had experienced prior imprisonments.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Court statistics

There was little change in the numbers and proportions of females found guilty at Courts of Petty Sessions during 1976-83, despite an increase in the numbers of males found guilty. It should not be concluded that the rate of offending was increasing more rapidly for males since there may also have been differences in the detection and processing of female offenders. Decriminalization of some behaviour could have had a proportionately greater impact for women.

6.2. Offence and age patterns

The numbers of both males and females received into prison declined over the period 1970-1980. It appears that this resulted from deliberate expansion of the use of non-penal sanctions. For the offences classified as violent, property, drugs and driving, knowledge of age group and period of reception could be used for adequate predictions of receptions over the same period. However, it appears that dramatic changes in male receptions for other minor offences 'swamped' the pattern of female receptions for these minor matters and no clear trend based on proportions could be discerned in terms of period of reception and age group. The successful modelling with four out of five offence groups indicates the importance of including the ages of offenders in any assessment of reception data.

Some preliminary observations will be made about trends over the decade from July 1970 to June 1980, followed by a detailed discussion of trends within each offence category.

a. Trends by sex

Overall numbers of receptions were declining for both males and females. However female receptions were not declining at the same rate as male receptions. According to Table 2, female receptions as a percentage of sentenced persons received into prison varied from 4.6% to 6.7%. The logistic regression analyses for the different offence groups demonstrated that year of reception or years grouped into periods, had to be included for adequate modelling of the data, indicating that significant changes were occurring in receptions of females relative to males.

In other words, factors operating to reduce receptions were different for males and females. It was suggested that legislative changes resulting in the decriminalization of some behaviours were affecting males and females differently.

b. Trends by age

The logistic regression analyses showed that age was also an essential variable for adequate modelling of reception data for women prisoners. From Appendix 1, Table 4 it is clear that for both males and females, receptions over the decade were declining largely for the 35 years and over age group: numbers of receptions for younger age groups fluctuated and the proportions of receptions in younger age categories increased.

c. Trends by offence

1. Drug offences

Total receptions into prison for drug offences increased from 148 in 1970-71 to 494 (or 6.4% of total receptions) in 1979-80. It must be emphasized that this category comprises receptions whose only or major offence related to drugs, but does not include receptions having committed a more serious offence in addition to a drug offence, nor to those receptions whose offence may have been motivated by the need to obtain money in order to buy drugs.

From 1975-76 onwards proportionately more females than males were received for drug offences. By 1979-80 6% of male receptions related to drug offences by males compared with 17% of female receptions relating to drug offences by females.

Fitted probabilities for drug offending by females as a proportion of total receptions increased markedly in Period 3 (1978-80) but declined with increasing age. This indicates that the rate of female to male drug offenders received into prison was increasing over this period and was concentrated in the younger age groups (18-24 years).

2. Property offences

Receptions for property offences increased from 25% of total intake in 1970-71 to 32% in 1979-80. There was a trend for the proportion of property offenders who were female to increase. This can be seen clearly in the increase in fitted probabilities from mid-1974 onwards. There was an increasing probability of female property offending with age, peaking in the 25-34 category and then declining slightly. The upward trend in female receptions for offences against property is suggestive of more serious offending by females who are received into prison but other data are required to confirm this pattern. It could be an artefact of the major reduction in female receptions for minor offences.

3. Driving offences

As a proportion of total receptions into prison, receptions for driving offences increased from

12% in 1970-71 to 39% in 1979-80. From the fitted probabilities it appears that female receptions for driving offences as a proportion of total receptions increased faster than the corresponding proportions for males. However, this trend must be viewed against very low base rates for females in 1970-71, with only 12 receptions in this offence category. Age trends were similar to those observed with property offences. There was an increased probability of female driving offences with age peaking at 25-34 years and then decreasing slightly. These patterns appear to reflect the increased police activity in detecting drink-drive offenders, with marked increases for females in relation to low base rates. It could reflect a decrease in sex bias in detection following the introduction of random breath testing.

4. Violent offences

This offence group includes homicides, robberies, assaults and sexual offences such as rape. Total receptions of both males and females for this offence group increased from 7% of all receptions in 1970-71 to 12% in 1979-80. There was a slight increase over time in the proportion who were female, according to the fitted probabilities. Receptions dropped in the 21-25 years category compared with males but peaked in the 35 and over category.

In short, there is a slight trend that women were being received more frequently for violent offences as the decade progressed. However the evidence is not clear cut and should be followed up when later reception data become available.

5. Other offences

This category includes a wide range of minor offences from prostitution, drunkenness and vagrancy to breach of recognizance, resisting arrest and begging alms. Total receptions for 'other' offences declined from 55% of total receptions for males and females in 1970-71 to 10% in 1979-80. There were no clear trends in male-female comparisons analysed by period or age.

There could be several reasons for this result:

i. Different types of offences were grouped under this category and the component offences could have been affected differently by the explanatory variables.

ii. In some year and age groups there were very large numbers of males compared with relatively few female receptions. That is, the contingency table was dominated by a few cells. The large and sudden decline in male receptions within the 35 years and over age group severely limited the use of male receptions as a 'control' for female receptions over the period of study and hence undermined the rationale for modelling proportions using logistic regression.

6.3. Demographic features

There were no consistent trends with respect to marital status, birthplace and Aboriginality. However, females were even more likely than males to give their last address as a location in Sydney. It is outside the scope of this report to comment on differences between urban and rural areas in crime commission, detection and sentencing. Yet since about three-quarters of the women had lived in Sydney, dispersing female prisoners to gaols in other parts of NSW could adversely affect their social and family ties.

There was a decline in the proportion of women prisoners aged thirty years and over, with a corresponding increase in the 25-29 years age group. This seems partly to be associated with the decline in receptions for minor offences such as drunkenness and vagrancy which were often committed by older women (see Appendix 1, Table 1, 'other' offences).

A general improvement in the number of years of schooling completed was also noted, as perhaps could be expected from a younger population of prisoners. However, there was little change in the proportions completing any post-secondary school course. This may reflect lack of motivation and commitment to vocational goals despite improved schooling. From an analysis of criminal record data it does not appear that women imprisoned more recently were prevented from pursuing courses because of greater rates of imprisonment or juvenile detention. In fact the 1984 sample was less likely to have experienced these measures in the past than their 1972 counterparts.

6.4. Family and work

Possibly because the women in the 1984 sample were younger, there were proportionally fewer mothers, who had fewer children, among prisoners in 1984 than in 1972. This could also reflect a societal trend towards smaller families. There was a tendency for the mothers of 1984 to raise their children as single parents, rather than in a nuclear family. This probably reflects greater social acceptance of single parenting, together with improved social service benefits for single parents.

A marked decline in the proportion of women who gave "home duties" as their usual occupation was observed. This finding is consistent with a younger population of women prisoners living in a society which emphasizes career paths rather than domestic roles for women. However, involvement in traditional female work such as cleaning, hairdressing or bar service remained heavy in 1984 and four-fifths of women were unemployed at their arrest. These results suggest

that while some young women were moving into clerical and sales work, the majority remained in unskilled occupations with either little motivation to enter new fields, inability to use job opportunities or, more likely, decreasing job opportunities for unskilled women. Both skills training and job awareness programmes for women in prison may be required, together with assistance in finding scarce jobs on release.

6.5. Criminal record

Since 30% of women prisoners in 1972 and 1984 had juvenile records there was no evidence of increasing juvenile crime amongst these samples. However, the records of the 1984 women with juvenile offences appeared more serious, with more convictions and a higher proportion of convictions for both violent and non-violent property crimes. On the other hand, sentencing measures for these juvenile offences appeared less severe. These findings may indicate a growing leniency in sentencing female juvenile offenders, but it is not possible to generalize beyond these two samples of women prisoners with confidence.

Similar proportions of women in both samples had adult records (78%). However, it appears that the 1984 group had experienced a wider range of corrective measures previously, with slightly fewer having been imprisoned.

6.6. Current matter

The typical 1984 female prisoner was most likely to have committed a property offence or violent offence, with a sentence of at least three years. In comparison the 1972 women had largely committed property offences or minor offences such as drunkenness or prostitution, with sentences of less than twelve months most common. Clearly, a shift towards more serious offences with longer sentences can be discerned. This shift may reflect the decriminalization of some behaviours, and increased use of non-custodial penalties for other non-violent offences, rather than an increase in violent offending by women.

6.7. Diversion

Of 103 sentenced women in prison in 1984 only 18 (17%) were first offenders. From an examination of their current matters it appeared that only four women had committed minor offences attracting short sentences thus making them likely candidates for non-penal sanctions under present policies. The recidivists largely had records of property offending and those sentenced to imprisonment for the first time tended to receive sentences greater than twelve months. Diversion from the prison system would not ap-

pear likely for these women unless radical changes were made to sentencing policies.

6.8. Final evaluation

It appears that decriminalization of various offences during the 1970s has resulted in a dramatic decline in receptions for minor offences. Yet these offenders, with short sentences, form a small proportion of the prison population on a daily basis. Hence this decline would probably have had little effect on the overall composition of women to be managed in prison, while saving time normally spent in the processing of large numbers of short term prisoners. The legislative changes of the 1970s appear to have succeeded in diverting most minor offenders from prison and there is little scope for further diversion under current policies.

Another result of decriminalization has been an increase in the numbers and proportions of more serious offenders received into prison, in the sense of having longer sentences and more extensive criminal records. However these are not necessarily more violent offenders. With a more stable population to manage there is more opportunity for establishing programmes directed towards change.

In particular, there is potential for programmes catering for women with a basic education but who are underachievers vocationally or educationally. Women caring for children as single parents could also benefit from specific programmes in prison. For further discussion of this issue see Miner and Gorta (1986 b).

This study has also pointed to an increase in young female drug offenders received into prison. Again these are likely to be better educated than previous prisoner groups, yet vocational under-achievers, with particular needs relating to their drug habits. These matters are further investigated in Miner and Gorta (1986 a).

The reception data on which a major part of this study was based relates to women sentenced to imprisonment during the 1970s. No reception data are available after 1980 and will not be available until a computer system used by the Department of Corrective Services becomes fully operational. When information can be accessed it will be important to replicate at least some of this study and check for long-term trends.

The focus of this study has been on sentenced prisoners. However in terms of receptions and daily averages unsentenced prisoners form a significant proportion of the total prison population. Whereas legislative changes effectively decriminalizing certain offences have greatly reduced receptions under sentence in the 1970s, it is possible that overcrowding of court schedules, extended provision of legal aid resulting in more defended matters and many other court procedures could have resulted in changes to the unsentenced prisoner population. A separate study examining this population is recommended. In addition, a study of the relationship between the two populations (e.g. how many unsentenced prisoners subsequently receive a prison sentence, how subsequent sentences reflect periods spent on remand, etc.) would be valuable.

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APPENDIX 1

**Table 1: Offence by age classification for male and female
prison receptions from 1970-71 to 1979-80**

1970-71 Offence	Age			
	Under 21	21 - 24	25 - 34	35 and over
1. Homicides, Sexual Offences, Robbery				
Males	192	211	213	170
Females	4	1	6	8
2. Fraud & Property Offences				
Males	849	645	645	689
Females	26	18	26	37
3. Driving Offences				
Males	351	328	363	328
Females	1	5	2	4
4. Drug Offences				
Males	64	48	21	2
Females	8	3	2	0
5. Other Offences				
Males	322	355	724	4352
Females	100	116	111	299
1971-72				
1. Homicides, Sexual Offences, Robbery				
Males	261	253	253	228
Females	4	6	2	5
2. Fraud & Property Offences				
Males	868	705	729	863
Females	20	28	26	28
3. Driving Offences				
Males	434	430	476	424
Females	2	1	4	5
4. Drug Offences				
Males	63	46	23	10
Females	3	7	3	0
5. Other Offences				
Males	322	439	784	4076
Females	115	111	143	290
1972-73				
1. Homicides, Sexual offences, Robbery				
Males	244	251	246	194
Females	8	7	9	10
2. Fraud & Property Offences				
Males	817	634	697	794
Females	23	20	38	36
3. Driving Offences				
Males	436	465	527	474
Females	2	3	8	4
4. Drug Offences				
Males	60	63	35	9
Females	7	3	3	0
5. Other Offences				
Males	341	434	709	3081
Females	85	116	108	222

**Table 1: Offence by age classification for male and female
prison receptions from 1970-71 to 1979-80 (Continued)**

1973-74	Age			
	Under 21	21 - 24	25 - 34	35 and over
1. Homicides, Sexual Offences, Robbery				
Males	271	218	238	187
Females	6	3	8	2
2. Fraud & Property Offences				
Males	650	464	503	647
Females	21	12	23	25
3. Driving Offences				
Males	431	507	617	435
Females	3	9	6	4
4. Drug Offences				
Males	66	86	37	9
Females	5	3	0	0
5. Other Offences				
Males	425	344	518	1902
Females	57	57	82	83
1974-75				
1. Homicides, Sexual Offences, Robbery				
Males	306	212	249	184
Females	7	4	9	6
2. Fraud & Property Offences				
Males	839	524	571	628
Females	39	22	30	18
3. Driving Offences				
Males	521	461	621	403
Females	6	4	16	3
4. Drug Offences				
Males	106	134	52	8
Females	6	6	1	0
5. Other Offences				
Males	267	317	463	977
Females	65	65	76	43
1975-76				
1. Homicides, Sexual Offences, Robbery				
Males	270	209	274	178
Females	9	4	16	16
2. Fraud & Property Offences				
Males	764	481	565	562
Females	28	24	45	32
3. Driving Offences				
Males	620	593	713	486
Females	6	13	9	11
4. Drug Offences				
Males	152	180	101	12
Females	14	12	8	1
5. Other Offences				
Males	245	316	417	822
Females	35	50	80	28

**Table 1: Offence by age classification for male and female
prison receptions from 1970-71 to 1979-80 (Continued)**

1976-77		Age			
Offence	Under 21	21 - 24	25 - 34	35 and over	
1976-77					
1. Homicide, Sexual Offences, Robbery					
Males	228	253	268	236	
Females	5	4	3	8	
2. Fraud & Property Offences					
Males	834	566	642	571	
Females	27	34	28	29	
3. Driving Offences					
Males	631	560	664	451	
Females	2	11	11	4	
4. Drug Offences					
Males	150	164	128	27	
Females	19	19	9	2	
5. Other Offences					
Males	159	179	255	647	
Females	26	50	79	27	
1978-79					
1. Homicide, Sexual Offences, Robbery					
Males	246	271	329	195	
Females	8	9	8	12	
2. Fraud & Property Offences					
Males	859	595	611	537	
Females	40	49	44	41	
3. Driving Offences					
Males	804	836	916	650	
Females	11	17	30	16	
4. Drug Offences					
Males	107	171	214	36	
Females	23	30	20	4	
5. Other Offences					
Males	169	228	327	352	
Females	25	74	73	11	
1979-80					
1. Homicide, Sexual Offences, Robbery					
Males	201	248	299	164	
Females	10	10	12	9	
2. Fraud & Property Offences					
Males	756	547	564	481	
Females	40	32	43	32	
3. Driving Offences					
Males	629	812	936	545	
Females	9	24	36	14	
4. Drug Offences					
Males	77	126	185	41	
Females	14	27	19	5	
5. Other Offences					
Males	131	184	280	148	
Females	8	12	20	10	

Table 2: Scaled deviance of models fitted for each offence group

Offence group	Model	Scaled deviance*	df
Drugs	Year	33.56	27
	Period	46.95	33
	Age	67.83	32
	Year + age**	17.77	24
	Period + age	32.24	30
Property	Year + age	28.14	24
	Period + age	34.17	30
Driving	Year + age	24.66	24
	Period + age	28.84	30
Violent	Year + age	21.53	24
	Period + age	42.48	30
Other	Year	1339.0	27
	Age	354.5	32
	Year + age	127.8	24
	Period + age	295.4	30

* Note that differences in the scaled deviances provide a measure of the improvement in fit after adding a term to the model or the deterioration in fit after deleting it.

** GLIM notation.

Table 3: Receptions under sentence 1970-1980: Offence category by year and sex

YEAR	MALES					Total	FEMALES					Total
	Hom., Aslt. & Sex. & Rob	Fraud & Prop. Offen.	Other Driv. Traf. Offen.	Drug Offen.	Other Offen.		Hom., Aslt. & Sex. & Rob	Fraud & Prop. Offen.	Other Driv. Traf. Offen.	Drug Offen.	Other Offen.	
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)		(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	
1970-71	786	2828	1370	135	5753	10872	19	107	12	13	624	775
	7.2*	26.0*	12.6*	1.2*	52.9*		2.5	13.8	1.6	1.7	80.5	(.071)
1971-72	995	3165	1764	142	5621	11687	17	102	12	13	659	803
	8.5	27.1	15.1	1.2	48.1		2.1	12.7	1.5	1.6	82.1	(.069)
1972-73	935	2942	1902	167	4565	10511	34	117	17	13	531	712
	8.9	28.0	18.1	1.6	43.4		4.8	16.4	2.4	1.8	74.6	(.068)
1973-74	914	2264	1990	198	3046	8412	19	81	22	8	279	409
	10.9	26.9	23.7	2.4	36.2		4.6	19.8	5.4	2.0	68.2	(.049)
1974-75	951	2562	2006	300	2024	7843	26	109	29	13	249	420
	12.1	32.7	25.6	3.8	25.8		6.1	25.6	6.8	3.1	58.5	(.054)
1975-76	931	2372	2412	445	1800	7960	45	129	39	35	191	439
	11.7	29.8	30.3	5.6	22.6		10.3	29.4	8.9	8.0	43.5	(.055)
1976-77	985	2613	2306	459	1240	7603	20	118	28	49	182	397
	13.0	34.4	30.3	6.0	16.3		5.0	29.7	7.1	12.3	45.8	(.052)
1977-78	Not available											
1978-79	1041	2602	3206	528	1076	8453	37	174	74	77	183	543
	12.3	30.8	37.9	6.2	12.7		6.8	31.9	13.6	14.1	33.6	(.064)
1979-80	912	2348	2922	429	743	7354	41	147	83	65	50	386
	12.4	31.9	39.7	5.8	10.1		10.6	38.1	21.5	16.8	13.0	(.052)

(a) Homicides, assaults, sexual offences and robberies.

(b) Fraud and property offences.

(c) Other driving and traffic offences.

(d) Drug offences.

(e) Other offences (includes prostitution for females).

* Row percentages.

** Proportion of female to male receptions.

Table 4: Receptions under sentence 1970-1980: Age category by year and sex

	<u>MALES</u>					<u>FEMALES</u>				
	Under 21	21-24	25-34	35 & Over	Total	Under 21	21-24	25-34	35 & Over	Total
	1778	1587	1966	5541	10872	139	143	147	348	777
1970-71	16.4	14.6	18.1	50.9		17.9	18.4	18.9	44.8	
	1948	1873	2265	5601	11687	144	153	178	328	803
1971-72	16.7	16.1	19.4	47.9		17.9	19.1	22.2	40.8	
	1898	1847	2214	4552	10511	125	149	166	272	712
1972-73	18.1	17.6	21.1	43.3		17.6	20.9	23.3	38.2	
	1700	1619	1913	3180	8412	92	84	119	114	409
1973-74	20.2	19.3	22.7	37.8		22.5	20.5	29.1	27.9	
	2039	1648	1956	2200	7843	123	101	132	70	426
1974-75	26.0	21.0	24.9	28.1		28.9	23.7	31.0	16.4	
	2051	1779	2070	2060	7960	92	103	158	86	439
1975-76	25.8	22.4	26.0	25.9		21.0	23.5	36.0	19.6	
	1992	1722	1957	1932	7603	79	118	130	70	397
1976-77	26.2	22.7	25.7	25.4		19.9	29.7	32.8	17.6	
1977-78										
				Not available						
	2185	2101	2397	1770	8453	107	179	175	84	545
1978-79	25.9	24.9	28.4	20.9		19.6	32.8	32.1	15.4	
	1794	1917	2264	1377	7352	81	105	130	70	386
1979-80	24.4	26.1	30.8	18.7		21.0	27.2	33.7	18.1	

APPENDIX 2
DETAILED CENSUS TABULATIONS

1. Aboriginality (excludes not known)						
	Yes	MALES No	Total	Yes	FEMALES No	Total
1982	210 5.9*	3345 94.1*	3555	6 4.4	131 95.6	137
1983	226 6.5	3225 93.5	3451	10 5.6	169 94.4	179
1984	234 7.5	2889 92.5	3123	8 4.8	158 95.2	166

* Row percentages

2. Marital status						
	1982	MALES 1983	1984	1982	FEMALES 1983	1984
Never married	2287 63.8*	2302 64.8	1989 62.4	66 48.2	100 54.9	79 47.6
Married	927 25.9*	887 25.0	806 25.3	45 32.8	39 21.4	51 30.7
Separated	68 1.9*	43 1.2	69 2.2	14 10.2	22 12.1	17 10.2
Divorced	244 6.8*	248 7.0	245 7.7	8 5.8	16 8.8	15 9.0
Widowed	33 0.9*	40 1.1	22 0.7	4 2.9	5 2.7	4 2.4
Unknown	23 0.6*	31 0.9	57 1.8	— —	— —	— —
TOTAL	3582	3551	3188	137	182	166

* Column percentages

3. Place of birth						
	MALES			FEMALES		
	1982	1983	1984	1982	1983	1984
NSW	2316	2350	2134	80	118	99
	64.7*	66.2	66.9	58.0	64.8	59.6
Other Australia	457	442	360	17	23	27
	12.8*	12.5	11.3	12.4	12.6	16.3
New Zealand	144	104	86	14	14	8
	4.0*	2.9	2.7	10.2	7.7	4.8
Other Oceania	14	23	19	1	1	-
	0.4*	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.5	-
Other Asia	39	51	56	-	4	2
	1.1*	1.4	1.8	-	2.2	1.2
UK, Eire	208	190	184	12	8	12
	5.8*	5.4	5.8	8.8	4.4	7.2
Other Europe	262	227	201	5	8	7
	7.3*	6.4	6.3	3.6	4.4	4.2
USA	4	11	12	2	-	-
	0.1*	0.3	0.4	1.5	-	-
Other America	27	21	20	-	-	1
	0.8*	0.6	0.6	-	-	0.6
Africa, Middle East	101	116	109	6	3	9
	2.8*	3.3	3.4	4.4	1.6	5.4
Not known	10	16	7	-	3	1
	0.3*	0.5	0.2	-	1.6	0.6
TOTAL	3582	3551	3188	137	182	166

* Column percentages

3a) Place of birth - women prisoners (%)						
	1971	1972	1974	1982	1983	1984
Australia	82.7	88.0	76.3	70.4	77.5	75.9
New Zealand	1.2	2.0	1.8	10.2	7.7	4.8
UK, Eire	3.6	2.0	5.5	8.8	4.4	7.2
Europe	10.1	6.0	7.3	3.6	4.4	4.2
Other						
(Africa Asia, America)	2.4	2.0	3.6	6.6	4.4	7.2
Not known	-	-	5.5	-	1.6	0.6
TOTAL NO. IN STUDY	81	100	55	137	182	166

	MALES			FEMALES		
	1982	1983	1984	1982	1983	1984
Sydney	2246 62.7*	2201 62.0	1961 62.9	96 70.1	139 76.4	125 75.3
Other NSW	838 23.4*	840 23.6	762 24.4	17 12.4	15 8.2	16 9.6
Other Aust. States	231 6.5*	203 5.7	192 6.2	8 5.8	10 5.5	7 4.2
Overseas	28 0.8*	24 0.7	27 0.9	6 4.3	5 2.7	1 0.6
No fixed address	165 4.6*	211 5.9	100 3.2	5 3.7	5 2.7	6 3.6
Not stated	74 2.0*	72 2.0	76 2.4	5 3.7	8 4.4	11 6.6
TOTAL	3582	3551	3118	137	182	166

* Column percentages

APPENDIX 3 Significant Cross-Tabulations

MSO	Under 2 years	2 years and over	TOTAL
Robbery, assault, manslaughter	3	23	26
Property offence (fraud, BES, steal)	33	16	49
Drug offence	6	10	16
TOTAL	42	49	91

chi² = 22.083 df = 2 p.<001

MSO	Nil past convictions	1 or more past convictions	TOTAL
Homicides, robbery, assaults	7	25	32
Property (fraud, BES, steal)	5	44	49
Drug offence	7	9	16
TOTAL	19	78	97

chi² = 8.7959 df = 2 p.<02

Table 3: Age by number of past convictions

AGE	Nil past convictions	1 or more past convictions	TOTAL
Under 30 years	9	63	72
30 and over years	12	19	31
TOTAL	21	82	103

$\chi^2 = 7.63$ df = 1 p.<01

Table 4: Age at first conviction by number of past convictions

AGE AT FIRST CONVICTION	Nil past convictions	1 or more past convictions	TOTAL
17-21 years	4	56	60
22 years and over	17	26	43
TOTAL	21	82	103

$\chi^2 = 14.708$ df = 1 p.<001