

VICTORIA

Auditor General
Victoria

Addressing the needs of Victorian prisoners

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AUDITOR GENERAL
VICTORIA

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Under the provisions of section 16AB of the *Audit Act 1994*, I transmit my performance audit report on *Addressing the needs of Victorian prisoners*.

Yours faithfully

J.W. CAMERON
Auditor-General

19 November 2003

Contents

	Foreword	vii
Part 1	Executive summary _____	1
	<i>Introduction</i> 3	
	<i>Overall conclusion</i> 3	
	<i>Key findings and recommendations</i> 5	
Part 2	Background _____	11
	<i>Imprisonment in Australia</i> 13	
	<i>Prison services in Victoria</i> 13	
	<i>Profile of Victorian prisoners</i> 16	
	<i>Growth in prisoner numbers</i> 17	
	<i>Corrections Long Term Management Strategy</i> 20	
	<i>Focus of this audit</i> 23	
Part 3	Developing tools to assess prisoner needs _____	25
	<i>Introduction</i> 27	
	<i>Development and implementation of prisoner assessment tools</i> 27	
Part 4	Management of change _____	41
	<i>Introduction</i> 43	
	<i>Implementing change in prisoner management</i> 43	
Part 5	Assessment and management of prisoners _____	53
	<i>Introduction</i> 55	
	<i>Assessment and management of prisoners</i> 58	
Part 6	Provision of rehabilitation programs _____	67
	<i>Introduction</i> 69	
	<i>Prisoner access to rehabilitation programs</i> 69	
Part 7	Performance measurement and reporting _____	77
	<i>Introduction</i> 79	
	<i>Monitoring framework</i> 79	
Appendix A	Conduct of the audit _____	83
Appendix B	Glossary _____	89

Foreword

Over the past decade, there has been significant growth in the number of offenders held in Victorian prisons. This has impacted heavily on the criminal justice system, putting pressure on prison infrastructure and the cost of maintaining prisoners in custody.

Victorian prisoners are increasingly characterised by complex personal needs and problems such as drug and alcohol issues, low literacy standards, and unemployment. It is also common for prisoners to be involved in a cycle of re-offending behaviour.

The Department of Justice has introduced new approaches to the management of prisoners designed to reduce the rate of prisoner re-offending and the growth in prisoner numbers. These initiatives target prisoners with a high risk of re-offending for participation in rehabilitation programs.

This program of reform is in its early stages of implementation. Notwithstanding the progress made by the Department in implementing these reforms, this report identifies areas needing further attention if all of the benefits foreshadowed in the new approach to prisoner management, are to be achieved.



J.W. CAMERON
Auditor-General

19 November 2003

Part 1

Executive summary

INTRODUCTION

The Victorian prison population rose by over 50 per cent between 1994 and 2003, reaching 3 796 prisoners at October 2003. A significant contributing factor to this trend has been an increasing rate of prisoner re-offending. Currently, almost 43 per cent of prisoners re-offend and return to prison or corrective services within 2 years of being released. Prisoners are also exhibiting increasingly complex needs associated with drug and alcohol use, and social problems such as unemployment and low literacy levels.

In 2001, the Department of Justice developed a blueprint for reform of the corrections system known as the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy. The aim of this strategy is to build a cohesive corrections system that introduces programs of rehabilitation and diversion as well as infrastructure in order to break the costly cycle of prisoner re-offending, to create a safer community and, where possible, to keep less serious offenders out of prison. The strategy encompasses bail advocacy and support services, redevelopment of Community Corrections, pre- and post-release initiatives and the Reducing Re-offending Framework. Corrections Victoria, a business unit of the Department of Justice, has overall responsibility for implementing the strategy over a 5-year period.

This audit focused on Corrections Victoria's progress in implementing a key element of the strategy, the Reducing Re-offending Framework. The framework incorporates the targeting of appropriate rehabilitative interventions to those prisoners with the highest risk of re-offending.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

In January 2002, Corrections Victoria commenced implementation of the Reducing Re-offending Framework. This new approach to the management of prisoners involves a major change to correctional practice, requiring both organisational and cultural change. The implementation of the framework presents a significant challenge for the Victorian correctional system. It involves correctional staff adopting a new approach to assessing, managing and treating prisoners. In implementing this approach, Corrections Victoria sought to:

- develop a prisoner assessment tool which was specific to the Victorian setting;
- undertake assessments of prisoners;
- use assessment information to inform the management of prisoners;
- develop and implement prisoner rehabilitation programs; and
- manage the change process.

In mid-2002, Corrections Victoria employed a contractor to develop a Victorian-specific tool for assessing the needs of prisoners and their risk of re-offending. As the tool was not going to be ready for use until May 2004, a Canadian tool was employed from 1 September 2002, as an interim measure. Currently, the development of the Victorian tool is around 9 months behind schedule. Shortcomings in Correction Victoria's management of the project has contributed to this delay.

All prisoners sentenced since 1 September 2002 and meeting Corrections Victoria's eligibility criteria (refer to Figure 3C) were to be assessed. At the time of this audit, some 55.5 per cent of eligible males and 79.9 per cent of eligible females had received an assessment. Although not all prisoners meeting the criteria were assessed, the assessments that were conducted were completed in a comprehensive manner.

At 1 September 2002, there were around 3 560 prisoners in custody, almost one-third of whom would meet the eligibility criteria for assessment. Corrections Victoria has yet to determine whether these prisoners will receive an assessment of their needs and risk of re-offending.

Assessments provide the basis for developing prisoner management plans and referring prisoners to rehabilitation programs. Currently, assessment information is not consistently being used by prisons to develop management plans for prisoners, nor as a basis for referring prisoners to rehabilitation programs. Prisons are awaiting guidance from Corrections Victoria on these matters.

Our examination indicated that Corrections Victoria has adopted a well-researched approach to the development of its 4 new prisoner rehabilitation programs. The cognitive skills and sex offender programs have been implemented within prisons. New drug and alcohol and violence programs are still in the process of being developed. The full range of expected benefits will not be achieved until the full suite of programs is available and operationalised.

Corrections Victoria's performance measurement and reporting framework incorporate measures of prisoner participation in rehabilitation programs and rates of prisoner re-offending. However, the performance data currently being reported by prisons is of limited value as not all programs have been fully implemented.

It is acknowledged by Corrections Victoria that this new approach to assessing, managing and treating prisoners represents a significant shift in correctional practice. However, they have not developed an overarching strategy to guide the change management process. In the absence of such a strategy, individual prisons are adopting different approaches to using prisoner assessment information.

Although Corrections Victoria has introduced a range of strategies to reduce prisoner recidivism, implementation aspects need further attention before the full benefits of the Reducing Re-offending Framework can be achieved.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Developing tools to assess prisoner needs

In January 2002, Corrections Victoria commenced implementing a new approach to the assessment of sentenced prisoners (known as a Tier 1 assessment), as well as their management and treatment. This new approach aims to reduce Victoria's growing rate of prisoner re-offending. This initiative represents a significant challenge for Corrections Victoria, prison managers and staff, and will take several years to fully implement.

Corrections Victoria's strategic management of this initiative has been supported by a comprehensive business case that included an ambitious 2-year time frame for completing the project. However, project management and governance arrangements for the development of the Victorian-specific assessment tool did not provide sufficient controls over the development process. This has resulted in increased risk, such as the non-fulfilment of contractual obligations, and contributed to continuing delays in the project. Corrections Victoria acknowledges these deficiencies and has commenced remedial action.

Corrections Victoria's decision to implement an interim assessment tool was well considered, given the delays experienced in developing a Victorian-specific assessment tool.

From 1 September 2002, the interim assessment tool was piloted for 3 months to assess a cross-section of sentenced prisoners according to eligibility criteria based upon sentence length. In December 2002, an in-house evaluation of the introduction of the tool's implementation indicated that all sentenced prisoners should receive an assessment of their risk of re-offending and specific needs rather than only those prisoners who meet certain eligibility criteria.

For the 11 months ended 31 July 2003, around 37 per cent of sentenced prisoners were not eligible to receive an assessment (due to the short length of their sentence) and, therefore, no information has been established about their needs and likelihood of re-offending. In addition, there were around 3 560 prisoners in custody prior to the introduction of Tier 1 assessments. Almost one-third of these prisoners would meet the eligibility criteria for assessment. Corrections Victoria has yet to determine whether these prisoners will receive an assessment of their needs and risk of re-offending. If prisoners do not receive an assessment and appropriately targeted programs, the opportunity for reducing their risk of re-offending through early intervention, is lessened.

Paras 3.2 to 3.28

We recommend that Corrections Victoria:

1. Continue to review its project management and governance arrangements for the Reducing Re-offending Framework in order to strengthen managerial oversight and the identification and management of risks; and
2. Monitor the rate of re-offending behaviour of those prisoners who have not received an initial risk and need assessment. If a significant level of re-offending is evident, Corrections Victoria will need to consider assessment and rehabilitative strategies for this group.

Management of change

While Victorian prisons commenced undertaking risk and need assessments of prisoners around 12 months ago, the implementation of Victoria's new approach to prisoner management has been considerably hampered by delays in finalising guidelines and other documentation to support the Offender Management System.

Corrections Victoria has acknowledged that this new approach to prisoner management represents a significant shift in correctional practice, and extensive staff consultation together with a strategic approach to managing the change process is the key to successfully implementing this initiative. However, their communication strategy remains in draft form, and communication activities have been undertaken on an ad hoc basis. Corrections Victoria has also not developed an overarching strategy to guide the change management process.

To successfully implement the Reducing Re-offending Framework, prison staff will require training and support. Ensuring all staff receive the necessary training is an ongoing challenge for Corrections Victoria in view of the large number of staff who require training and the diverse geographical locations of Victoria's prisons. At the date of audit around 22 per cent of the custodial staff who required training had received it.

Paras 4.4 to 4.25

We recommend that Corrections Victoria:

3. take immediate action to finalise those key strategic documents that support the implementation of the Offender Management System;
4. develop a formal change management strategy and a communications strategy in order to effectively engage stakeholders in their program of reforms; and
5. implement a systematic and co-ordinated approach to ensure that prison staff complete relevant training in a timely manner in order to maximise opportunities for the management of prisoners.

Assessment and management of prisoners

The implementation of a detailed initial prisoner assessment process is a central element of the Reducing Re-offending Framework. In September 2002, Corrections Victoria began to undertake prisoner assessments. The next stage of the implementation process is to ensure that assessment information is used to inform all aspects of a prisoner's management.

Prison staff consider the Tier 1 prisoner assessments provide valuable information in understanding prisoner behaviour and has potential to significantly enhance their ability to plan for the management of prisoners and address their offending behaviour. However, in the absence of any formal direction from Corrections Victoria, prisons have adopted their own local practices regarding the nature and extent to which assessment information is utilised.

All prisoners sentenced since 1 September 2002 and meeting the eligibility criteria were to be assessed. In the 11-month period to July 2003, 55.5 per cent of eligible male prisoners and 79.9 per cent of eligible female prisoners received an assessment. These assessments were completed in a comprehensive manner.

The proportion of eligible male and female prisoners receiving an assessment has improved in recent months. For eligible female prisoners sentenced during May to July 2003, almost all had received an assessment. However, 17 per cent of eligible male prisoners sentenced during this time, had not received an assessment. If prisoners do not receive an assessment this may preclude them from accessing the rehabilitation programs required to address their offending behaviour.

For nearly all prisoners, a local management plan which outlines such details as a prisoner's goals, and the services and programs required to meet their needs, had been completed. However, there was little evidence indicating that the Tier 1 assessments had been consistently used to inform the development of prisoner management plans. In addition, there was limited documentation on prisoner files documenting the assessment of prisoner's program needs, and their participation in programs. Prison staff advised that this was due to the limited guidance provided to prisons by Corrections Victoria.

Paras 5.9 to 5.35

We recommend that Corrections Victoria:

6. establish processes to ensure that all eligible prisoners receive a Tier 1 assessment in a timely manner; and
7. prison staff actively monitor prisoner progress against the local management plan and record this information in the prisoner's file.

Provision of rehabilitation programs aimed at reducing re-offending

A key component of the Reducing Re-offending Framework is the implementation of newly designed and consistently implemented programs aimed at reducing prisoner offending behaviour. This will provide prisons with programs to target those prisoners with the highest risk of re-offending.

Our examination indicated that Corrections Victoria has adopted a well-researched approach to the development of its 4 new prisoner rehabilitation programs. The cognitive skills and sex offender programs have been implemented within prisons. New drug and alcohol and violence programs are still in the process of being developed. The full range of expected benefits will not be achieved until the full suite of programs is available and operationalised.

The development and implementation of rehabilitation programs was not planned to ensure timely access by prisoners to appropriate and effective programs.

A number of barriers are present in the correctional system which impact on the ability of prisoners to participate in rehabilitation programs. These barriers include the matching of prisoner demand for programs to program availability, prisoners' readiness to engage in programs and the movement of prisoners between correctional facilities.

Paras 6.3 to 6.23

We recommend that Corrections Victoria:

8. continues to further develop its rehabilitation programs to ensure that prisoners' needs are addressed in a timely manner, consistent with the aims of the Reducing Re-offending Framework; and
9. develops strategies to address barriers in the correctional system which affect prisoner participation in rehabilitation programs.

Performance measurement and reporting

Corrections Victoria has established a performance measurement and reporting framework incorporating performance standards and targets related to reducing re-offending and the participation of prisoners in rehabilitation programs. This framework will be used to progressively monitor the success of the Reducing Re-offending initiative as well as prison management and delivery of rehabilitation programs.

Prisons have now commenced reporting their performance against targets for the new programs. The information currently being reported by prisons relates only to those programs that have been fully implemented. As a result, the performance data is of limited value in supporting the management of the Reducing Re-offending initiative.

The delay in the development and implementation of prisoner rehabilitation programs may also hinder Corrections Victoria's efforts to reduce both the rate of prisoner re-offending and the number of prison beds, as required by the Reducing Re-offending initiative.

Paras 7.3 to 7.17

We recommend that Corrections Victoria:

10. continues to further develop its performance measurement and reporting framework to ensure that its management of the Reducing Re-offending initiative is supported by both timely and high quality information.

RESPONSE provided by Secretary, Department of Justice

The Department of Justice welcomes this audit, which provides a timely opportunity to take stock of progress by the Department of Justice in implementing key components of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy. This Strategy provided a co-ordinated action framework for responding to continuing demand growth in the prison system. Strategies have been developed to reduce demand through diversion programs and reducing re-offending, balanced by a program of capital expansion. The Department of Justice notes that the audit recognises the importance of the work being undertaken by Corrections Victoria.

The recommendations of the audit are accepted by the Department. Three of the recommendations are that Corrections Victoria continue current activities; the majority of the remainder relate to activities such as finalising draft documents that were scheduled to occur in any case in the normal course of developing and implementing such a significant and extensive change agenda.

The Department emphasises, and audit has accepted that the Reducing Re-offending Framework involves a major change to correctional practice and a significant challenge for the Victorian correctional system. The Reducing Re-offending Framework is part of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy, which encompasses a range of initiatives. The Corrections Long Term Management Strategy is overseen by the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy Steering Committee. Members of the Steering Committee include the Secretary, Department of Justice, Correctional Services Commissioner, Department of Treasury and Finance and Department of Premier and Cabinet. The Steering Committee over the next five years will assess the achievements of all elements of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy and make changes where necessary in order to ensure there is achievement of goals.

Audit acknowledges that the new approach to the assessment, management and treatment of sentenced prisoners represents a significant challenge for Corrections Victoria, and will take several years to fully implement. The report describes the time frame for implementation as overly ambitious, and suggests that Corrections Victoria underestimated the complexities associated with specific tasks. The audit notes that the Offender Management Framework is still in the developmental stage, that certain rehabilitation programs and elements of the Offender Management System have yet to be formally implemented across the system, and that the full benefits of the new arrangements will not be realised until this occurs.

RESPONSE provided by Secretary, Department of Justice - continued

On the other hand, while acknowledging the enormity of the task, the audit is overly critical of the stage of implementation in general, and of the fact that the development and implementation of different initiatives has occurred at different rates. In doing so, the audit report does not fully identify or acknowledge the extent or significance of the work done by Corrections Victoria to date. The Department of Justice acknowledges that timelines for some aspects of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy have been adjusted in response to emerging issues but stresses that, in overall terms, progress against the Strategy including achievement of prison bed savings targets for the whole strategy as of 30 June 2003 was ahead of target. This is an exceptional outcome given the absence of models for change on an international basis in this important area of reform. This change agenda places Victoria at the leading edge of correctional reform internationally.

The Department of Justice firmly believes that the current stage of development and implementation of the Reducing Re-offending aspects of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy is appropriate.

The Department has responded in detail where necessary in the body of the report, but wishes to highlight the following:

Developing tools to assess prisoners

- *While project management and governance arrangements for Corrections Victoria have recently been strengthened, gaps in this area did not result in non-fulfilment of contractual obligations, nor did they contribute to continuing delays in the project.*

Management of change

- *The Corrections Long Term Management Strategy represents a fundamental shift in the business framework of the corrections system in Victoria. The change process includes numerous, complex projects being implemented simultaneously across multiple fronts. Given the magnitude and complexity of the change, a range of activities was undertaken by the Department of Justice to support change management.*

Assessment and management of prisoners

- *Integration of assessment information into prisoners' local management plans is expected to increase gradually over time. It is not realistic to expect full implementation of all aspects of a new initiative at this time. It is appropriate that individual prisons trial different approaches. Innovation is encouraged, and provides important operational feedback in the development of a system-wide approach. The percentage of eligible prisoners receiving an assessment has increased significantly since the initial trial period.*

Provision of rehabilitation programs aimed at reducing re-offending

- *Different aspects of the Reducing Re-offending Framework are being developed and implemented at different rates, as would be expected. It is not reasonable to expect that all assessment processes and treatment opportunities will have been fully implemented at this time.*

Performance measurement and reporting

- *Reduction in re-offending rates and prison capacity requirements relate to all aspects of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy, not just to the Reducing Re-offending initiatives. The Department of Justice remains committed to delivering against the overall targets of the Strategy.*

Part 2

Background



IMPRISONMENT IN AUSTRALIA

2.1 As in many countries around the world, Australia's rate of imprisonment is rising. Tougher approaches towards crime are resulting in more severe punishment for offenders which, in turn, leads to increases in the size of the prison population¹.

2.2 Prison services across Australia face the twin challenges of efficiently managing a large (by historical standards) and growing prison population while seeking to introduce a range of initiatives to contain future growth in prisoner numbers. These initiatives include a greater emphasis within prisons on the assessment, management and rehabilitation of offenders.

PRISON SERVICES IN VICTORIA

2.3 The Government's key objectives for the correctional services system are containment and supervision of offenders, rehabilitation and reparation to the community. The management of prisoners aims to effectively:

- achieve high levels of individual safety and security for prisoners, prison staff and the community;
- ensure prisoners and offenders are treated in a just and humane manner and encouraged to adopt law-abiding lifestyles and non-violent participation in the community; and
- provide prisoners with opportunities for rehabilitation.

Legislative framework

2.4 The *Corrections Act* 1986 provides the legislative basis for correctional services. Specifically, the Act provides for:

- the establishment, management and security of prisons and the welfare of prisoners;
- the administration of services related to community-based corrections and for the welfare of offenders; and
- other correctional services.

¹Australian Institute of Criminology, "Imprisonment in Australia: Trends in Prison Populations & Imprisonment Rates 1982-1998", *Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice*, October 1999, p.1.

Roles and responsibilities

Correctional Services Commissioner

2.5 The Department of Justice is responsible for the management of the State's system of correctional facilities.

2.6 On 1 July 2003, the Department of Justice introduced a new structure to enhance the effectiveness of correctional programs and promote greater cohesiveness and integration across the prison system². Under this new arrangement, the Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner and CORE, the Public Correctional Enterprise, were merged to become a single entity known as Corrections Victoria, with a budget of \$277 million for 2003-04.

2.7 Corrections Victoria has responsibility to develop Statewide directions, policy and standards for Victoria's correctional system. This includes:

- strategic and prison infrastructure planning, development and implementation;
- monitoring and reviewing the delivery of correctional services by the State's prisons and community corrections locations;
- management of prisoner sentences, including prisoner assessment, classification (security) and placement (location); and
- provision of administrative support to the Adult Parole Board of Victoria.

Individual prisons

2.8 Victoria has a network of 13 prisons in both rural and metropolitan locations. Eleven of these prisons are operated by Corrections Victoria and 2 by private providers. Approximately 60 per cent of all prisoners are held in the publicly managed prisons with the remaining 40 per cent held in the 2 privately operated prisons.

2.9 Each prison performs somewhat different functions, provides services to prisoners with differing treatment and supervision needs, and is unique in terms of size, location, security rating and physical infrastructure. Figure 2A provides an overview of Victoria's 13 prisons.

² For further details on the need for this restructure, see P. Kirby (Chairperson), *Report of the Independent Investigation into the Management and Operations of Victoria's Private Prisons*, State of Victoria, October 2000.

FIGURE 2A
VICTORIAN PRISONS (a)

<i>Prison (location)</i>	<i>Operator</i>	<i>Security level</i>	<i>Design capacity (b)</i>	<i>Prison profile</i>
Ararat (Ararat)	Corrections Victoria	Medium	256	This is a protection prison which includes a treatment facility for its high proportion of sex offenders.
Barwon (Lara)	Corrections Victoria	Maximum	325	Only maximum security prison located outside of the metropolitan area, includes a 20-bed facility for high security prisoners and a 60-bed facility for protection prisoners.
Beechworth (Beechworth)	Corrections Victoria	Medium	123	Mainstream prison providing a range of industry, rehabilitative and education programs.
Bendigo (Bendigo)	Corrections Victoria	Medium	80	Facility with a focus on providing treatment for those prisoners with substance abuse and addictive/compulsive behaviours.
Dhurringile (Murchison)	Corrections Victoria	Minimum	106	Prison has a pre-release focus and involves prisoners engaging in both onsite employment and community reparation via community assistance programs.
Fulham (West Sale)	Private	Medium/Minimum	658	Predominantly mainstream prisoners with a drug and alcohol treatment and a 115-bed protection unit. Accommodation is a mix of medium security cell blocks and lodges, and minimum security cottages.
Langi Kal Kal (Trawalla)	Corrections Victoria	Minimum	100	Facility is a large working farm and a minimum security pathway for protection prisoners.
Loddon (Castlemaine)	Corrections Victoria	Medium	320	Mainstream prison with focus on release preparation and drug-free lifestyles. Also offers placement and support for HIV positive prisoners and for intellectually disabled prisoners undergoing release preparation.
Melbourne Assessment Prison (West Melbourne)	Corrections Victoria	Maximum	250	Statewide reception facility providing assessment and orientation services for all male prisoners received into the prison system. Includes a 15-bed psychiatric facility.
Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (Deer Park)	Corrections Victoria	Maximum	175	Reception, maximum security and specialist accommodation for remand and sentenced women prisoners. Has separate accommodation for prisoners requiring protection, and those with a history of poor behaviour.
Port Phillip Prison (Laverton North)	Private	Maximum	614	Mix of remand and sentenced, mainstream, protection and specialist accommodation for maximum and medium security prisoners. The prison also operates a 20-bed inpatient hospital unit.

FIGURE 2A
VICTORIAN PRISONS - *continued*

<i>Prison (location)</i>	<i>Operator</i>	<i>Security level</i>	<i>Design capacity (b)</i>	<i>Prison profile</i>
Tarrengower (Maldon)	Corrections Victoria	Minimum	38	Women's prison with an emphasis on release preparation and community integration. It is the only minimum security female prison in Victoria.
Won Wron (Won Wron)	Corrections Victoria	Minimum	127	Prison farm focusing on reparation and community work.
Total capacity			3 172	

(a) At 10 October 2003, there were 3 796 prisoners in Victoria's prisons.

(b) Design capacity includes additional permanent beds.

Source: Information provided by Corrections Victoria.

2.10 Prison-based staff are responsible for ensuring the safe transition of prisoners into the prison system, accommodating prisoners' immediate needs and monitoring prisoners' progress. Custodial staff work in collaboration with prison management and other prison support staff (such as program facilitators, health and mental health staff, education and industries staff) to meet the objectives of the *Corrections Act 1986*.

PROFILE OF VICTORIAN PRISONERS

2.11 The majority of prisoners received into the Victorian prison system are characterised by complex personal needs and problems, as well as by repeat offending. Currently, 61 per cent of both male and female prisoners have previously been in prison³. International research suggests that there is a strong but complex link between crime and drug use. This is reflected in the increasing number of drug offences, and in the incidence of other serious crimes such as robberies, assaults and homicides⁴. Illicit drugs have a pervasive influence on prisoner behaviour and the nature of their offences, and are believed to be a significant factor in the increase in the incidence of repeat offending.

2.12 Figure 2B illustrates that a typical prisoner is male, aged between 25 and 50 years of age, and is serving a jail sentence of less than 12 months.

³ Includes prisoners on remand (in custody awaiting sentencing or a court appearance) or sentenced.

⁴ The Ministerial Review of the Custodial Community Permit Program Panel, *Ministerial Review of Custodial Community Permit Program Report*, June 2002, p. 52.

FIGURE 2B
PROFILE OF VICTORIAN PRISONERS, 30 JUNE 2003
(per cent)

<i>Prisoner profile information</i>	<i>Male prisoners</i>		<i>Female prisoners</i>
Composition of the prison population (a) -	92.5		7.5
Age profile -			
Under 25 years	17.6		20.6
25 – 50 years	71.5		71.2
Over 50 years	10.9		8.2
Length of sentence -			
< 12 months	29.0		39.9
1 < 3 years	24.6		22.4
3 < 10 years	20.2		11.7
Over 10 years	7.9		5.7
Unsentenced prisoners	18.3		20.3
Most frequent offence for sentenced or remanded prisoner -			
Robbery/extortion	13.3	Robbery/extortion	14.6
Justice procedure charges (b)	10.3	Justice procedure charges (b)	14.6
Deal/traffic drugs	10.0	Deal/traffic drugs	16.4
Murder	8.4	Murder	7.1
Break and enter	13.8	Other theft	12.8
Sex offences	10.7	Fraud/misappropriation	6.8

(a) Includes both sentenced and unsentenced prisoners.

(b) Includes such offences as breaches for suspended sentences, parole and community-based orders, contempt of court and failing to appear.

Source: Information provided by Corrections Victoria.

GROWTH IN PRISONER NUMBERS

2.13 During the period 1994 to 2003, Victoria experienced significant growth in prisoner numbers. At 10 October 2003, there were 3 796 prisoners compared with 2 522 at 30 June 1994 – an increase of 50.5 per cent. In the absence of policy and program interventions, Corrections Victoria predicts continuing strong growth in prisoner numbers to around 4 220 prisoners by June 2006. At an average annual cost of \$66 530 per prisoner per year, continued growth in prison numbers has significant funding implications for government⁵.

⁵ This figure includes both recurrent and capital costs, refer Steering Committee for the Review of Commonwealth/State Service Provision, *Report on Government Services 2003*, Productivity Commission, Canberra, pp.7.23 –7.25.

2.14 Victoria’s growth in prisoner numbers is attributed to a number of factors and trends⁶, including:

- An increasing rate of imprisonment (from 79.1 people per 100 000 adult population in 1998-99 to 95.6 in March 2003) due to both an increase in the number of offenders sentenced to imprisonment and to the impact of longer sentence lengths for serious offences;
- Increasing recidivism among prisoners – the rate of re-offending has increased in recent years with 33.4 per cent of prisoners returning to prison within 2 years of their release from custody (refer to Figure 2C);
- Limited availability of rehabilitation programs in prisons;
- Limited resources and effort in preparing and supporting the return of prisoners to the community; and
- Increasing complexity of offender profiles and characteristics. It is estimated that around 50 to 80 per cent of prisoners have drug or alcohol problems, with backgrounds of social disadvantage, low education, high unemployment, significant health issues (including mental illness), and poor family and social links⁷.

2.15 Figure 2C highlights the trend of an increasing proportion of prisoners being returned to prison or to other areas of the correctional system within 2 years of their release or completion of a community-based order.

FIGURE 2C
RECIDIVISM – PRISONERS RETURNING TO CORRECTIONS WITHIN 2 YEARS OF RELEASE OR ORDER COMPLETION (a)
(per cent)

	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
Prisoners returning to -							
Prison (b)	n.a.	n.a.	27.6	31.3	33.7	34.1	33.4
Corrective services (c)	35.0	33.3	36.0	39.3	42.9	44.3	42.9

(a) Figures for 2002-03 not available.

(b) n.a.: figures not available.

(c) Includes returning to corrective services as a sentenced prisoner; on a community-based order, community work order, parole etc.

Source: Information provided by Corrections Victoria.

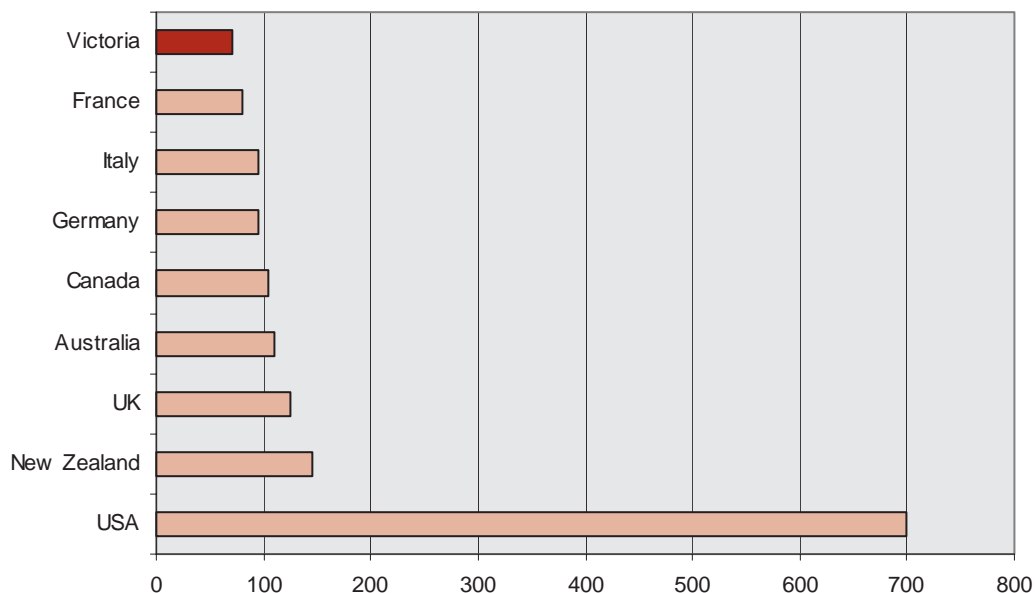
2.16 As a result of the increase in prisoner numbers, there continues to be considerable pressure on Victorian prisons to provide adequate and appropriate accommodation. The system is currently operating at around 20 per cent above its design capacity of 3 172 beds (2 959 men and 213 women). This has necessitated the use of relocatable and temporary beds (i.e. stretchers and bunk beds).

⁶ Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner, *Strategic Plan July 2001-June 2004*, p. 3.

⁷ Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner, *Building a responsive corrections system, Corrections Long Term Management Strategy, The next five years*, July 2002.

2.17 Notwithstanding Victoria’s growing imprisonment rate, by national and international standards, Victoria has a very low rate of imprisonment (see Figures 2D and 2E). Furthermore, nearly all developed nations have experienced a substantial growth in prisoner numbers in recent years.

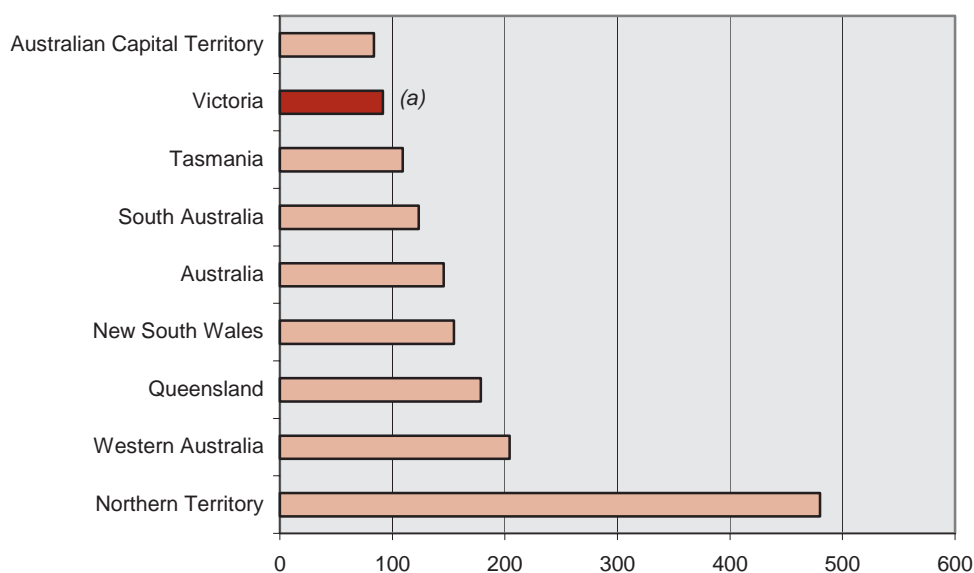
FIGURE 2D
COMPARISON OF INTERNATIONAL IMPRISONMENT RATES, 2001 (a)
 (per 100 000 of total population)



(a) Imprisonment rate are at varying dates as follows: USA 31/12/2000; New Zealand 6/2000; United Kingdom 31/8/2001; Canada 1999-2000; Australia 1/3/2001; France 1/7/2001; Germany 31/8/2000; Italy 1/9/2000; Victoria 2001-02.

Source: Roy Walmsley, *World Prison Population List (3rd edition)*, UK Home Office, 2002. Victoria’s imprisonment rate was provided by Corrections Victoria.

FIGURE 2E
COMPARISON OF NATIONAL IMPRISONMENT RATES, 2001- 02
 (per 100 000 of adult population)



(a) At March 2003, Victoria’s imprisonment rate was 95.6 compared with 91.7 at 2001-02.

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

CORRECTIONS LONG TERM MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

2.18 In 2001, the Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner developed the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy (CLTMS) which includes a range of initiatives to respond to the continuing growth in prisoner numbers⁸. The CLTMS aims to significantly reform the management of Victorian prisons and offenders in order to achieve reductions in both the demand for prison beds (by up to 600 by 2006) and in the level of recidivism (prisoners by 10 per cent, and community correctional services by 15 per cent, respectively). Additional funding of \$334.5 million has been provided to cover the development, implementation and evaluation of the CLTMS over the 5 years to 2006.

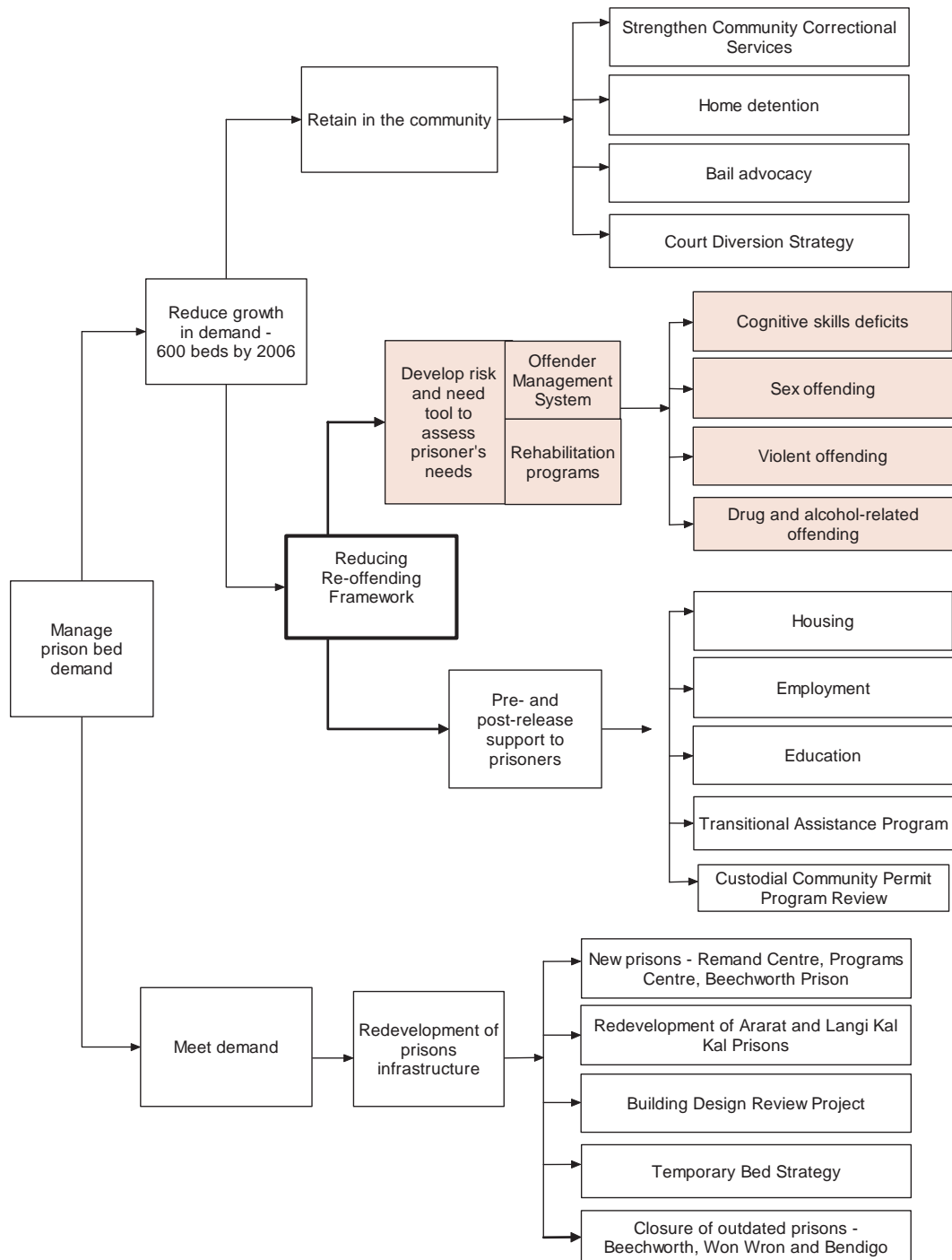
2.19 Key elements of the CLTMS include:

- Redevelopment of the community correctional services system, including 100 new specialist staff positions; revised court advisory service; intensive services to deal with high-risk offenders; and programs to assist offenders find employment, education or training (funding of \$42.3 million);
- Continued funding of the bail advocacy and support service to assist defendants who would otherwise be remanded in custody (funding of \$800 000);
- Piloting of a home detention program which will enable up to 80 non-violent, low-risk offenders to serve a home-based sentence or provide a pre-release option (funding of \$4.8 million);
- Improvement in pre-release preparation programs and the piloting of transitional support services centred around housing and employment (funding of \$10.3 million);
- Other initiatives, including an Aboriginal Justice Agreement, drug initiatives and evaluation strategy (funding of \$9.2 million);
- A major infrastructure program due to be completed in 2004-05 which will result in the redevelopment of select prisons and construction of 3 new facilities: a 600-bed maximum security remand centre in metropolitan Melbourne; a 300-bed medium security prison dedicated to the provision of rehabilitation programs; and a 120-bed minimum security prison in north-eastern Victoria, designed to have a rehabilitative focus and be more responsive to shifts in prisoner profile. The new facilities will replace 3 outdated prisons (funding of \$260 million); and
- Development of a Reducing Re-offending Framework for use in prisons and community corrections (pre-sentencing and to assist offender management throughout an order, funding of \$7.1 million).

2.20 The diversionary and rehabilitation initiatives within the CLTMS, supported by major additions to infrastructure, are intended to slow the dramatic rise of prisoner numbers in Victoria. Figure 2F illustrates the key elements of the CLTMS and the focus of this audit; the framework for reducing re-offending.

⁸ At 30 June 2001, there were 3 391 prisoners compared with 2 522 at 30 June 1994 – an increase of 34.5 per cent.

**FIGURE 2F
KEY ELEMENTS OF THE CORRECTIONS LONG TERM MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**



Legend: Focus of audit
 Source: Corrections Victoria, 2002.

2.21 Under the Framework for Reducing Re-offending, those prisoners/offenders who have the highest risk of re-offending are targeted for intensive rehabilitation program interventions. This encompasses the development and introduction of:

- an actuarially-based tool which facilitates assessment of a prisoner’s risk of re-offending;

- new cognitive-behavioural programs based on international research, including a program for violent offenders and expansion of the existing program for sex offenders; and
- new and revised service approaches to assessment, intervention, offender management and staff training.

2.22 A key element of the framework is the Offender Management System (OMS). Assessments of prisoners are made at reception prisons (known as Tier 1 assessments), using a risk and need tool for male prisoners serving a sentence of more than 6 months, and 4 months or more for female prisoners.

2.23 Following the assessment, an assessment report is prepared outlining:

- analysis of the prisoner's offending behaviour (i.e. identification of triggers leading to and behaviour associated with the offending, and the consequences);
- a prisoner's risk of re-offending/level of need;
- a prisoner's readiness to engage in programs;
- the risk of self-harm and identification of special needs and institutional risk;
- post-release needs and pre-release referrals (i.e. transitional/exit planning); and
- a summary of recommended actions, programs, and services to address the prisoner's needs.

2.24 Offender Management Plans are prepared integrating information from Tier 1 assessments with classification matters, e.g. security classification, placement needs, sentence planning. For prisoners assessed as having a:

- *low* risk and need: plans will focus on life skills programs which aim to enhance prisoner capabilities in family and personal relationships, education and vocational learning; and
- *moderate to high* risk and need: plans will focus on life skills programs and recommend attendance at a cognitive skills program to teach problem solving, self-control, moral reasoning and social skills and, offence-specific programs to address violent, sexual and/or drug and alcohol-related offending.

2.25 Prior to entry into an offence-specific program, a more detailed Tier 2 assessment of moderate to high-risk prisoners will be conducted at prison locations and will include a detailed clinical analysis of the prisoner's needs and issues.

2.26 Offender management supervisors (12 in total) assist custodial staff with managing offenders. This will involve mentoring staff, one-on-one supervision, providing leadership in offender management and acting as change agents during implementation of the OMS.

2.27 Enhanced offender management processes will involve:

- adaptation of Offender Management Plans into Local Management Plans based on available services and programs;

- contact officers having at least monthly contact with prisoners to monitor prisoner progress with established goals; and
- prisoners with complex needs (i.e. self-harm, high risk of re-offending, psychiatric problems, acquired brain injury, intellectual disability) will be subject to prisoner case-conferences with multi-disciplinary teams formulating prisoners support plans.

2.28 It should be noted that the OMS is still in the developmental stages with the introduction of Tier 1 assessments (using an interim tool pending the development of a tool specifically for use in Victoria's correctional system) occurring from September 2002. Other key elements of the OMS, at the date of preparation of this report, had yet to be formally implemented across the prison system.

FOCUS OF THIS AUDIT

2.29 The Reducing Re-offending Framework describes a service delivery model which includes the implementation of a thorough prisoner assessment process, targeted programs and provision of offender management processes designed to lead to rehabilitation. The initiative has been allocated funding of \$7.1 million to be expended over the 4 years, 2001-02 to 2004-05.

2.30 The audit focused on the progress of Corrections Victoria in implementing an offender management system which utilises prisoner assessments to target rehabilitative program interventions.

2.31 The assessment of the risk and needs of 158 prisoners and utilisation of that information by staff in the management of prisoners across 4 prisons, was examined in detail during the course of the audit.

2.32 This report examines:

- Developing tools to assess prisoner needs (Part 3);
- Management of change (Part 4);
- Assessment and management of prisoners (Part 5);
- Provision of rehabilitation programs (Part 6); and
- Performance measurement and reporting (Part 7).

2.33 Further information is provided on the *Conduct of the audit* in Appendix A. A *Glossary* of terms is provided in Appendix B.

Part 3

Developing tools to assess prisoner needs

INTRODUCTION

3.1 This Part of the report examines Corrections Victoria's progress in implementing aspects of the Offender Management System. It examines the development and implementation of Corrections Victoria's prisoner risk and need assessment tools. We assessed whether:

- a strategic, co-ordinated and integrated approach to the assessment tools' development and implementation was adopted; and
- adequate resources and systems are in place to support the implementation of the interim tool for assessing prisoner needs.

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PRISONER ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Strategic management of revised prisoner assessment processes

Business case

3.2 In November 2000, Corrections Victoria prepared a business case for the development and implementation of a rehabilitation framework to reduce re-offending. Central to this was the development of an evidence-based tool to accurately identify the needs of sentenced prisoners, their risk of re-offending, and to improve prisoner classification and planning decisions. As well as being used in prisons, this evidence-based tool will also be used by Community Correctional Services¹ to assess offenders.

3.3 Corrections Victoria's business case was comprehensive and outlined key costings for a staged tool development, options, impacts, and reflected consultation with academics, the legal profession, the community and correctional organisations both interstate and overseas about their experiences in managing a growing prisoner population. It further proposed a 2-year time frame for tool development and implementation.

3.4 In late 2001, Corrections Victoria was allocated funding of \$800 000 to develop and implement a revised assessment process for sentenced prisoners.

¹ The unit in Corrections Victoria that manages the provision of non-custodial sentencing alternatives for offenders supervised in the community, e.g. home detention, parole and community service orders. This includes helping offenders released from prison on parole to make successful transitions back into the community.

Engagement of a contractor to develop tool, and project status

3.5 Following a public tender process in October 2001 to develop a tool for assessing prisoner needs and their risk of re-offending, a contractor was engaged in June 2002 for a fixed fee of \$495 659. The successful contractor could either adapt an existing tool to meet Victoria’s needs or develop an entirely new tool.

3.6 Timelines for the project are shown in Figure 3A.

**FIGURE 3A
KEY TIMELINES FOR TOOL DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION**

<i>Contract task</i>	<i>Contractual timelines for completion of task by:</i>
Stage 1: Research and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 October 2002
Stage 2: Development of specification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 December 2002
Stage 3: Design, adapt tool, commence pilot roll-out and complete final roll-out across the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 March 2004
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot commencement • Commence final roll-out • Complete final roll-out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 July 2003 • 1 December 2003 • 1 March 2004
Stage 4: Empirical testing and evaluation of tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 May 2006

Source: Information provided by Corrections Victoria.

3.7 Our review of the contractual arrangements highlighted that the payment terms were not in accordance with government purchasing policies² in that:

- A payment of \$250 000 (about 50 per cent of the contract’s value) was immediately payable to the contractor³ upon signing. A bank guarantee was not obtained to mitigate the risks to the State should the contractor fail to deliver under the contract; and
- As a result of the large upfront payment to the contractor, the schedule of subsequent payments to the contractor was distorted and did not reflect the risks to the State at the project stages. Almost 71 per cent of the contract sum is due and payable to the contractor at the end of Stage 2 prior to the design of the tool being completed. Only 15 per cent of the contract sum remains to cover the work of rolling-out the tool across the entire corrections system, and to empirically test and evaluate the tool.

² Victorian Government Purchasing Board guidelines and Department of Treasury and Finance, *Best Practice and Advice, Terms and Conditions of Contract*.

³ Contractor is a public sector company.

3.8 We were advised by Corrections Victoria that the up-front payment was due to a desire to bring forward the expenditure of funding allocated for the tool development prior to the end of 2001-02. This has resulted in Corrections Victoria having a major up-front investment in the project, and yet the financial incentives for the contractor to achieve contractual milestones are limited. Corrections Victoria has unnecessarily accepted risks, such as project delays and non-fulfilment of contractual obligations (refer paragraph 3.9), that should have been borne by the contractor. It will need to ensure that the contractor's performance is appropriately monitored until the project is completed.

Status of tool development

3.9 At August 2003, Corrections Victoria's contractor was around 9 months behind schedule in the development of the Victorian-specific tool for assessing prisoner risk and needs. Discussions with both Corrections Victoria and the contractor indicated the following reasons for delays in meeting contractual timelines:

- the contractor experienced difficulties in accessing both re-offending data and prisoner assessment reports (which had yet to be fully entered into Corrections Victoria's computer system); and
- issues in developing the tool for use in Community Correctional Services.

3.10 It would appear that Corrections Victoria has underestimated the complexities associated with the task and, hence, established overly ambitious timelines for completion of the tool's development.

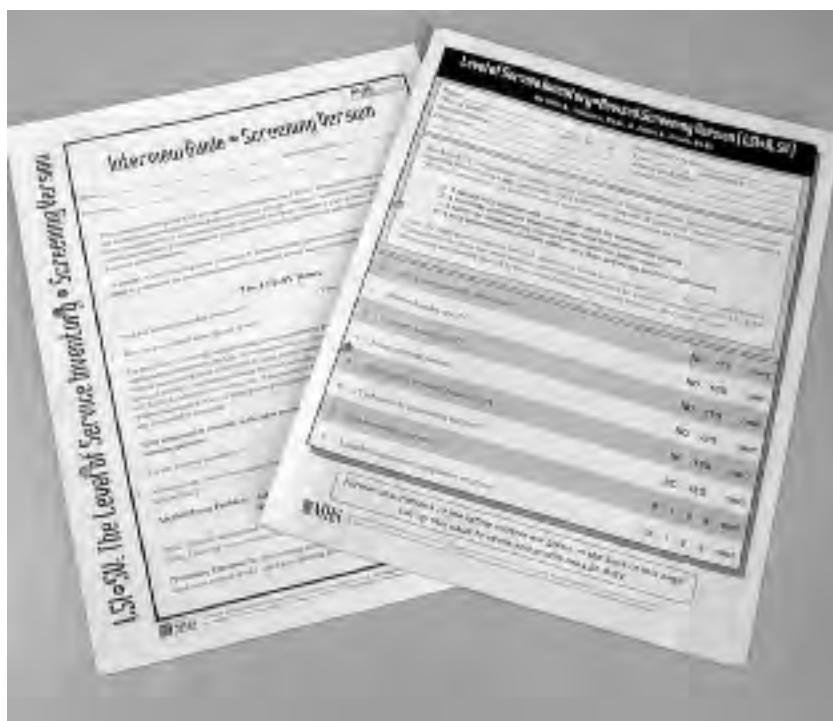
Decision to implement an interim prisoner assessment tool

3.11 As the development and implementation of the Victorian-specific assessment tool was expected to take around 2 years, a pre-existing assessment tool was selected for use in the short-term. The Level of Service Inventory–Revised Screening Version (LSI-R:SV) tool developed in Canada, was implemented in Victorian prisons (and Community Correctional Services) as an *interim* measure to provide immediate support to the implementation of the Offender Management System.

3.12 Selection of the LSI-R:SV tool to facilitate the interim assessment of prisoners was recommended above other instruments used internationally, as it:

- has been shown to be a valid predictor of re-offending behaviour in a range of prisoner and offender populations in Canada and the United States;
- has been validated in a wider range of prison populations than any other risk and need assessment tool;

- informs the development of intervention plans that specifically target criminogenic⁴ needs (most other widely used risk and needs tools do not do this); and
- has been found to be a better predictor of re-offending than any other risk assessment tool studied.

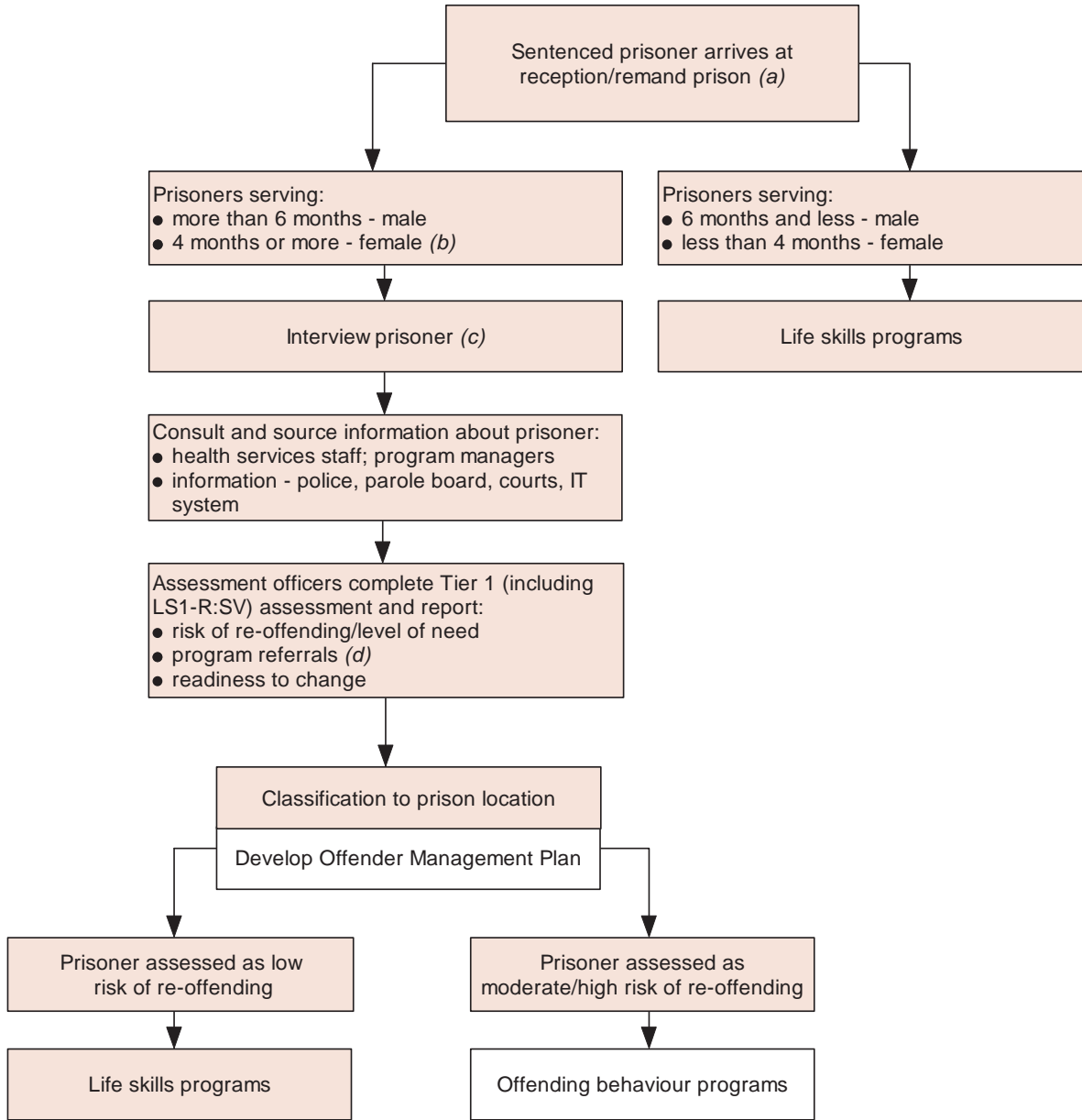


The LSI-R:SV assessment tool has been implemented in the 3 reception/remand prisons pending the development of the Victorian-specific prisoner assessment tool.

3.13 The LSI-R:SV assessment is administered as part of a structured interview between a Corrections Victoria assessment officer and the prisoner where information is collected on 8 items highly associated with the risk of re-offending. This information is then verified by officers through official records and other information sources. Prisoners are assigned a *low*, *moderate* or *high* risk of re-offending depending on the resulting score. This information provides a basis for prisoner classification and placement, offender management planning and the targeting of treatment resources. Figure 3B provides an overview of the prisoner assessment process.

⁴ Criminogenic needs are those factors that have been empirically shown to be directly related to offending such as anti-social peers, low motivation, poor parental supervision, difficulties in education and employment, poor problem-solving skills etc.

**FIGURE 3B
OVERVIEW OF THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**



(a) Reception/remand prisons are Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, Melbourne Assessment Prison and Port Phillip Prison.

(b) Tier 1 assessment criteria at August 2003.

(c) Initial interview with prisoner is to complete a “social history” which includes gathering details of a prisoner’s current offence, pending legal matters, institutional history, medical condition, family issues etc.

(d) The Level of Service Inventory – Revised Screening Version (LSI-R:SV) has 8 key components: previous criminal history (prior adult convictions and arrests under the age of 16); employment; use of drugs or alcohol; criminal associates; attitude about crimes committed; indicators of psychological assessment; and level of parental support.

Legend: Elements of revised prisoner assessment process currently in place.

Source: Information provided by Corrections Victoria; diagram developed by the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office.

Status of the implementation of the interim assessment tool

3.14 The primary focus of Corrections Victoria to date has been on the implementation of the revised prisoner assessment process, primarily the conduct of the Tier 1 assessment (using the LSI-R:SV), in the State's 3 reception prisons. While there were some initial delays in piloting the LSI-R:SV assessment process as a result of tight timelines established early in February 2002, these delays have not had a significantly adverse impact on the implementation of the revised assessment process.

3.15 Elements of the Offender Management System yet to be implemented and critical to ensuring the effective utilisation of Tier 1 assessment reports in prisoner management include:

- the development of Offender Management Plans reflecting information collected during prisoner assessments;
- a mandatory requirement for all prisons to utilise Tier 1 assessments in prisoner management;
- the engagement of offender management supervisors to mentor prison staff in revised assessment and offender management practices; and
- Tier 2 clinical assessments to provide a more detailed analysis of how to meet the needs of moderate to high risk prisoners.

3.16 Corrections Victoria's decision to implement an interim assessment tool (the LSI-R:SV) pending the development of a Victorian-specific tool was sound, especially given delays in the development of the Victorian specific tool. However, until all aspects of the Offender Management System are in place, the value of Tier 1 prisoner assessments will not be maximised during this interim period.

Project governance and management

3.17 To assist with the development and implementation of prisoner assessment tools, several working groups were established and assisted by a Specialist Advisory Group which provided independent and technical advice to Corrections Victoria. The working groups managed and monitored the progress of the development of the tool and the revised assessment process, and reported to the Reducing Re-offending Steering Committee. The Committee, comprising the Correctional Services Commissioner and senior management of the States' public and private prisons, was responsible to guide the development of the risk and need assessment tool together with other aspects of the Offender Management System.

3.18 A review of meeting minutes and discussions with project staff identified the following deficiencies in Corrections Victoria's management of the development and implementation of the risk and need tools:

- There has been an absence of formal monitoring of the performance of the contractor (developing the risk and need tool) to achieve contractual timelines. There was no discussion in the meeting minutes of the Risk Needs Tool Working Party/Steering Committee of the contractor's progress in meeting timelines, corrective action to address project slippage, or the preparation of a project plan outlining revised milestone dates to guide the remaining development activities;
- A detailed project plan to facilitate the efficient monitoring of progress against key milestones was not developed and progress reports on the development of the tool were not provided to, or requested by, the Reducing Re-offending Steering Committee;
- Management of the contractor has not been rigorous. Although the project was around 9 months behind schedule at August 2003, project meetings with the contractor had not occurred since May 2003;
- In relation to the implementation of the *interim* assessment tool, project implementation plans contained activities for completion, however, specific timelines for their completion were not established to enable progressive monitoring of the implementation of the revised assessment process; and
- Monitoring the progress of the implementation of the revised assessment processes was inadequate. For example, status reports developed by staff to monitor key aspects of the roll-out of the interim assessment tool were, at times, incomplete with respect to task timelines, status and responsibility for completion of tasks.

3.19 Discussions with relevant staff highlighted the following additional factors which impacted upon their ability to effectively manage the projects:

- a lack of formal project management training as well as limited experience in managing projects of similar size and complexity;
- increased workloads impacted on the time available to manage the project; and
- some uncertainty as to actual roles and responsibilities, i.e. for monitoring progress of projects, decision-making, and managing the contract and the project.

3.20 The implementation of the Reducing Re-offending Framework has been affected by shortcomings in project management and monitoring. However, it is pleasing to note that Corrections Victoria has recently taken action to address the deficiencies identified in project management practices. This included conducting project management training for appropriate staff in late August 2003.

Resources for prisoner assessments

Staff for prisoner assessments

3.21 In August 2002, 5 officers were appointed⁵ to administer the Tier 1 assessment of prisoners at the 3 reception/remand prisons. These officers have a knowledge of correctional services and the Victorian criminal justice system, and possess qualifications in mental health and social sciences.

3.22 Tier 1 assessments should normally occur within a few days of a sentenced prisoner entering a reception prison. Generally, prisoner assessment reports take around 2 hours to complete (i.e. 45 minute interview with the prisoner; 15 minutes to check file information and consult with staff; 45 minutes to complete the assessment report; and 15 minutes for other matters).

Workloads and eligibility criteria for prisoner assessments

3.23 In September 2002, prisoner assessments commenced by targeting a limited cross-section of prisoners (as opposed to the assessment of all sentenced prisoners). The purpose of this trial was to help identify operational workloads and funding requirements.

3.24 Initial eligibility criteria for the conduct of prisoner assessments was established as follows:

- male prisoners with a sentence of 6 months or more; and
- female prisoners with a sentence of 4 months or more.

3.25 During the 3-month prisoner assessment pilot (September 2002 to November 2002), the eligibility criteria for prisoner assessments was amended for *male* prisoners, to include males sentenced to a 4 month or greater sentence, in line with the minimum sentence length required for participation in treatment programs. However, due to workload pressures on assessment officers, the criteria for male prisoners reverted back to prisoners with sentences of over 6 months. Figure 3C outlines the amendments that have occurred in the eligibility criteria for prisoner assessments since the commencement of assessments in September 2002.

⁵ Assessment officers were appointed to the position (some seconded) for an initial 12-month period.

FIGURE 3C
AMENDMENTS TO ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PRISONER ASSESSMENTS

<i>Eligibility criteria for prisoner assessments</i>	<i>Period during which criterion was applied</i>
Male prisoners who received a sentence of:	
• 6 months and over	9 September 2002 to 15 November 2002
• 4 months and over	16 November 2002 to 7 March 2003
• over 6 months	8 March 2003 to present date (a)
Female prisoners who received a sentence of:	
• 4 months and over	9 September 2002 to 7 March 2003
• 6 months and over	8 March 2003 to 31 March 2003
• 4 months and over	1 April 2003 to present date (a)

(a) Date of audit, August 2003.

Source: Information provided by Corrections Victoria.

3.26 At the end of July 2003, there had been 1 238 prisoner assessments conducted by assessment officers, and around 1 230 prisoners who had not been assessed, due to the length of their sentences⁶. Those prisoners not assessed receive automatic referrals to participate in life skills programs (i.e. family and personal relationships, education and training, and leisure programs).

3.27 Prisoners assessed as having a low risk of re-offending are given the opportunity to participate in life skills programs. Those assessed as having a moderate to high risk of re-offending are recommended to participate in cognitive skills programs which are a prerequisite for attending sex offender, violence, or drug and alcohol offence-specific programs.



Female prisoners with sentences of 4 months or more receive a Tier 1 assessment within a few days of entering prison.

⁶ At 31 July 2003, a further 898 prisoners (43 females and 855 males sentenced in the period September 2002 to July 2003) were eligible for assessment, however, had not received one.

3.28 For prisoners who do not qualify for a Tier 1 assessment, as well as those prisoners in the system prior to the implementation of prisoner assessments (around 3 560 prisoners at 1 September 2002), Corrections Victoria has only limited information on their needs and no assessment of their risk of re-offending. In December 2002, Corrections Victoria conducted an evaluation of the 3-month pilot implementation of the Tier 1 assessment tool and revised assessment process at the State's 3 reception/remand prisons. The evaluation reported that, "Ideally all prisoners should receive an assessment to provide them with an opportunity to better understand their needs, assist them and staff in making linkages with appropriate services to address needs, as well as provide information to the prison system that will better inform future service provision". Of the 3 560 prisoners in custody at 1 September 2002, almost one-third would meet the eligibility criteria for assessment. At the date of our audit, Corrections Victoria had not determined how it will undertake Tier 1 assessments of those prisoners existing in the prison system prior to September 2002.

3.29 We further note that currently no analysis is undertaken by Corrections Victoria concerning rates of re-offending by particular types of prisoners (i.e. length of sentence, severity of crime, age). If undertaken, such analysis would support the targeting of rehabilitative services to prisoners.

3.30 Assessment officers are an integral element of the Reducing Re-offending Framework, responsible for the administration of Tier 1 assessments to all eligible sentenced prisoners.

3.31 At the end of their 12 month appointment/secondment period, 2 officers remained in the position, 2 returned to their substantive positions and one officer resigned. We consider it appropriate for Corrections Victoria to review the role of assessment officers with a focus on job enrichment opportunities, given the:

- significance of the assessment officer position to the management of prisoners;
- considerable level of skills and experience possessed by current assessment officers invested by Corrections Victoria; and
- potential disruption to the process of prisoner assessments caused by staff turnover.

Quality assurance

3.32 Quality assurance mechanisms have yet to be developed to ensure prisoner assessments are properly conducted. Assessment officers advise that while there has been some informal quality assurance over the assessment process and the reports produced by assessment officers, e.g. observation of assessments, weekly staff meetings and the review of Tier 1 assessment reports, this has not occurred consistently and is not inclusive of all aspects of the Tier 1 assessment function.

3.33 In the absence of comprehensive and systematic assurance processes, management cannot be assured of the quality, rigor and integrity of prisoner assessments.

Evaluation of Tier 1 assessment process

3.34 Corrections Victoria's December 2002 evaluation of the implementation of the Tier 1 assessment processes examined the value of the assessment process and how it may be improved.

3.35 The evaluation identified a need for:

- current assessment practices to accommodate the needs of *all* prisoners and not exclude prisoners ineligible for assessment due to their shorter sentence;
- staff training to assist in the assessment and identification of prisoners' special needs, i.e. prisoners with acquired brain injury, psychiatric issues and other forms of disability;
- quality control processes over Tier 1 assessments to be formalised;
- efficient information collection that minimised duplication associated with undertaking prisoners' social histories and Tier 1 assessments; and
- improved processes to ensure assessment reports are readily accessible by assistant managers in the prisoner classification/placement process.

3.36 We note that at the date of audit, the evaluation report remains incomplete and in draft form.

Information systems

3.37 Prisoner assessments have been recorded by assessment officers in a central database and this information is now being transferred into Corrections Victoria's Prisoner Information Management System (PIMS). PIMS is an operational database which records details on all prisoners in custody, past and present, and is utilised in the day-to-day management of prisoners.

3.38 The Department of Justice is currently undertaking a project to improve the access, quality and efficiency in the criminal justice system through the development and integration of information technology systems across the police, courts, community corrections and prisons. Known as the Criminal Justice Enhancement Program (CJEP), this project is due to be operational in March 2004⁷. When completed, CJEP will also include the results of prisoner assessments based on the Victorian-specific risk and need assessment tool.

⁷ A review of CJEP was undertaken by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office in May 2003, refer Auditor-General of Victoria, May 2003, *Report on Public Sector Agencies, Results of special reviews*, pp. 11-17.

Conclusions

3.39 In January 2002, Corrections Victoria commenced implementing a new approach to the assessment of sentenced prisoners (known as a Tier 1 assessment), as well as their management and treatment. This new approach aims to reduce Victoria's growing rate of prisoner re-offending. This initiative represents a significant challenge for Corrections Victoria, prison managers and staff, and will take several years to fully implement.

3.40 Corrections Victoria's strategic management of this initiative has been supported by a comprehensive business case that included an ambitious 2-year time frame for completing the project. However, project management and governance arrangements for the development of the Victorian-specific assessment tool did not provide sufficient controls over the development process. This has resulted in increased risk, such as the non-fulfilment of contractual obligations, and contributed to continuing delays in the project. Corrections Victoria acknowledges these deficiencies and has commenced remedial action.

3.41 Corrections Victoria's decision to implement an interim assessment tool was well considered, given the delays experienced in developing a Victorian-specific assessment tool.

3.42 From 1 September 2002, the interim assessment tool was piloted for 3 months to assess a cross-section of sentenced prisoners according to eligibility criteria based upon sentence length. In December 2002, an in-house evaluation of the introduction of the tool's implementation indicated that all sentenced prisoners should receive an assessment of their risk of re-offending and specific needs rather than only those prisoners who meet certain eligibility criteria.

3.43 For the 11 months ended 31 July 2003, around 37 per cent of sentenced prisoners were not eligible to receive an assessment (due to the short length of their sentence) and, therefore, no information has been established about their needs and likelihood of re-offending. In addition, there were 3 560 prisoners in custody prior to the introduction of Tier 1 assessments. Almost one-third of these prisoners would meet the eligibility criteria for assessment. Corrections Victoria has yet to determine whether these prisoners will receive an assessment of their needs and risk of re-offending. If prisoners do not receive an assessment and appropriately targeted programs, the opportunity for reducing their risk of re-offending through early intervention, is lessened.

Recommendations

3.44 We recommend that Corrections Victoria:

- Continue to review its project management and governance arrangements for the Reducing Re-offending Framework in order to strengthen managerial oversight and the identification and management of risks; and
- Monitors the rate of re-offending behaviour of those prisoners who have not received an initial risk and need assessment. If a significant level of re-offending is evident, Corrections Victoria will need to consider assessment and rehabilitative strategies for this group.

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Justice

Para. 3.3

The Department of Justice welcomes the finding that the rehabilitation framework to reduce re-offending was based on a comprehensive business case involving extensive consultation.

Paras 3.7 to 3.8

The establishment of a Contract Administration unit within Corrections Victoria in August 2003 now ensures that significant commercial expertise in the area of contract management is available in-house. This unit reviews all contractual arrangements relating to the provision of services within the corrections environment, including contract renewals and variations, to ensure conformance in relation to contractual and administrative processes, including appropriate risk mitigation strategies.

It is considered that the risk in the contractual arrangements was minimal because the contractor was a large, well-established public sector organisation that is highly regarded and has an excellent reputation for performance.

Paras 3.9 to 3.10, 3.18 to 3.20

The Department of Justice is aware that the development of the Victorian-specific tool for assessing prisoner risk and needs is behind the original schedule, but notes that revised time lines were accepted by the Commissioner in August 2003. Development of a tool such as this is a highly complex task. Given the critical contribution of the tool to the overall strategy, it is imperative that the tool be sound. Risk factors that may have impacted on timelines were identified at the commencement of the project. Corrections Victoria determined that the need to establish a valid tool is the primary objective of the project, and tool development should not be compromised by timelines. This view contributed to Corrections Victoria's decision to implement the interim assessment tool - a decision that the audit describes as "sound".

While Corrections Victoria previously acknowledged gaps in project management, and has since adopted a project management framework and approach to address these issues, the Department rejects the implication that these shortcomings contributed to delays in tool development.

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Justice - continued

Paras 3.28 to 3.29, 3.44

Monitoring re-offending rates

The Department of Justice agrees that re-offending rates of all prisoners should be monitored. The Department agrees that research should enable re-offending rates to be segmented based on a variety of factors including sentence length and notes that such research is currently being undertaken. The targeting of rehabilitative services to prisoners is based on assessed risk and need.

A planning, research and evaluation team was established within Corrections Victoria in 2001 to conduct research into rates of re-offending and to inform evaluation of the various Corrections Long Term Management Strategy initiatives. While there is a 2-year lead time to measuring re-offending rates, a study of over 2 000 discharges since 1999 will assist in estimating survival probabilities and predictors of re-incarceration.

The programs aimed at reducing re-offending are based on "what works" principles and supported by an international body of research. As these initiatives focus on prisoners serving sentences of more than 6 months who are at high risk of re-offending, the eligibility criteria for application of the risk and needs assessment tool is appropriately aligned to this group.

The Department of Justice accepts that, if a significant level of re-offending is evident among prisoners who are serving shorter sentences, then Corrections Victoria will need to consider assessment and rehabilitative strategies for this group. However, there is no current body of research to inform development of programs in this area, and resourcing levels do not extend to this group.

Para. 3.31

Corrections Victoria's Statewide Services unit, which has responsibility for Sentence Management, is currently developing a Workforce Management Plan which addresses roles and job enrichment opportunities across the Sentence Management unit, including assessment officers.

Para. 3.44

Project management and governance arrangements

The Department of Justice believes there has been governance arrangements in place in relation to the Reducing Re-offending Framework. The Corrections Long Term Management Strategy Steering Committee, as stated previously, comprises interdepartmental committee members. This Steering Committee meets on a quarterly basis to review progress of all the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy initiatives, including the Reducing Re-offending Framework.

However, the Department of Justice accepts the recommendation regarding continuation of existing review activities. In late 2002, Corrections Victoria commenced action to strengthen managerial oversight of all strategic projects in corrections, including adoption of a project management framework based on PRINCE2 methodology. This methodology ensures consistency of approach, clear lines of accountability and responsibility, and a more rigorous project scheduling and monitoring process. Identification and analysis of all potential risks is undertaken during project planning, and exception reporting ensures early identification of non-conformance and deployment of risk mitigation strategies.

The project management framework sits within a corporate governance model for Corrections Victoria that provides clear business planning, financial reporting, performance monitoring, and cross-government and cross-agency procedures. Structured, detailed and integrated approaches to risk management are also prescribed within the model.

Part 4

Management of change

INTRODUCTION

4.1 Implementation of the Reducing Re-offending Framework and the Offender Management System represents, for the Victorian correctional system, a significant change in philosophy in the management of prisoners. Prisons' custodial staff will be required to fulfil the role of case workers and assist prisoners to engage in rehabilitative interventions.

4.2 To ensure the success of the initiative, implementation of new processes and systems requires effective management and communication both within Corrections Victoria, with other government agencies and the broader community.

4.3 This Part of the report examines the adequacy of the practices adopted by Corrections Victoria in implementing changes in its management of prisoners. We assessed whether:

- Corrections Victoria had developed a change management strategy;
- there were processes and strategies established to communicate details of the new directions embodied in the Reducing Re-offending Framework and the Offender Management System;
- assessment policies and procedures had been developed; and
- appropriate training and ongoing support was provided to staff in undertaking prisoner assessments.

IMPLEMENTING CHANGE IN PRISONER MANAGEMENT

Change management strategy

4.4 Developing effective strategies for both structural and cultural change presents a major challenge for Corrections Victoria in its administration of the corrections system. International research indicates that most correctional agencies fail to adequately consider staff resistance to change, especially in relation to staff-prisoner relationships¹. It is important, therefore, that prison managers are provided with appropriate incentives to efficiently implement desired changes.

4.5 It is generally held that “positive and lasting cultural change can be achieved in large organisations provided that a change program is implemented through a highly developed strategy and managed in accordance with key principles”². A selection of key principles considered fundamental for any organisation in achieving cultural change is outlined in Figure 4A.

¹ *Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner Staff Training Strategy, Standards & Specifications*, Draft No. 2. June 2003, p.2.

² M Neil Comrie, “Achieving Cultural Change in a Major Organisation, The Victorian Police Experience”, *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration* No. 108, June 2003, pp. 64-7

FIGURE 4A
KEY PRINCIPLES IN ACHIEVING CULTURAL CHANGE

- Clear identification of the cultural aspect you wish to change.
- Establish the change program as a high priority issue.
- Ensure your executive management team is completely committed to this change.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of the program.
- Set a firm time frame (realistic and manageable) for various stages and final completion of the program.
- Allocate adequate resources (human) to undertake the program.
- Ensure the reasons for reform are known and understood by the work force.
- Ensure every training program is used to instil the new culture.
- Periodically review progress against strategy timelines – adjust if necessary.
- Conduct a post-implementation review to ensure reform elements have been successfully bedded down.

Source: M Neil Comrie, "Achieving Cultural Change in a Major Organisation The Victorian Police Experience", *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration* No. 108, June 2003, pp. 64-7.

4.6 Corrections Victoria has supported change management through:

- the establishment, from 1 July 2003, of a revised organisational structure within Corrections Victoria designed to streamline the initiation of change associated with the Reducing Re-offending Framework in public prisons;
- ongoing communications with key stakeholders and staff;
- the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy Steering Committee³ (which was established by government) to oversight progress of the various initiatives including the Reducing Re-offending Framework;
- the development of, in consultation with staff, new values and mission for Corrections Victoria; and
- the development of a training program for corrections staff which aims to raise staff consciousness about "what works" in offender management, use persuasive communication strategies and active participation to promote a cultural shift towards rehabilitation.

4.7 Discussions with Corrections Victoria staff indicated that preliminary action had been taken to contract appropriate specialists to develop and implement the change process. However, due to the potential cost (estimated to be around \$10 000 - \$15 000) and the tight timelines surrounding the development and implementation of the revised assessment processes (Tier 1) and the Offender Management System, Corrections Victoria did not proceed to contract the services of a change management specialist.

4.8 Although Corrections Victoria has taken some steps to initiate change, the activities were not undertaken in the context of an overarching change management strategy.

³ Committee is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Justice and has representatives from each of the central agencies, Treasury and Finance, and Premier and Cabinet.

Communications

Draft communications strategy

4.9 In October 2002, Corrections Victoria developed a draft communications strategy in recognition that, "... it is critical that appropriate levels of consultation occur in order to develop a sense of ownership and acceptance through various levels of the Department of Justice, including prison operators, and with other key stakeholders ... Extensive consultation and information sharing with staff and prisoners is paramount to the success of the Framework"⁴.

4.10 This draft strategy included an action plan which outlined the following key communication activities:

- information sessions, workshops and provision of pamphlets, information sheets and flow charts to correctional staff;
- establishment of implementation committees at the 3 reception/remand prisons to disseminate information and gain feedback about revised prisoner assessment processes;
- distribution of information to key stakeholders; and
- prisoner forum to test proposed materials.

4.11 Although the draft communications action plan was partially implemented, it was never formally adopted due to delays in approval of the Reducing Re-offending Framework supporting the Offender Management System. Consequently, several plans were prepared by different areas within the Department to "manage and track" communication activities that were occurring. These plans were also only partially implemented.

4.12 The focus of communications to date has largely targeted reception staff at the Melbourne Assessment Centre, Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and Port Philip Prison who are directly involved in implementing the revised prisoner assessment processes. In the absence of a comprehensive and co-ordinated strategy, we noted that communication activities have largely been undertaken in an ad hoc manner in response to the operational needs of the various prison locations. Our discussions with prison staff confirmed that staff across the system do not have a clear conceptual appreciation of the various components of the Offender Management System, and only pockets of staff have had exposure to the Tier 1 assessment process.

4.13 While we noted some periodic reporting of communications activities to various working parties, i.e. Offender Management Working Party and the Training Working Party, there was no formal monitoring that the various communications activities outlined in the draft strategy/plans had been completed in a satisfactory or timely manner.

⁴ Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner, *Victorian Prisons Offender Management Framework, Communications Strategy in Brief*, Draft, January 2003, p. 5.

4.14 Notwithstanding this, a considerable number of communications activities were undertaken by Corrections Victoria between October 2002 and February 2003, including information sessions and workshops, and dissemination of printed material.



Information sessions about the Offender Management System were conducted in prisons according to operational need.

4.15 For staff directly involved in the reception and assessment of prisoners, we consider that there has been appropriate communication and opportunity for feedback on the revised assessment processes. However, staff not based at reception prisons and those at reception prisons but not directly involved in the reception process, have not been provided the same level of information.

4.16 Our review of Corrections Victoria's draft communications strategy and supporting action plan identified the following opportunities to enhance the strategy:

- broader consideration of the target audience for communications, e.g. prisoner families, departmental staff, advocacy groups, representatives from the legal community, media and other key stakeholders;
- development and inclusion of measurable objectives for major communication activities;
- incorporation of key timelines, cost estimates and priorities for various communications activities;
- an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) which could potentially impact upon the success of the strategy should be undertaken together with development of remedial strategies to manage identified risks; and
- adoption of procedures to monitor and evaluate the success of communication activities.

Assessment policies and procedural guidance

4.17 The following key strategic and procedural documents supporting the operation of the Offender Management System and revised prisoner assessment processes are either yet to be finalised by Corrections Victoria or are in need of revision:

- *Offender Management Framework*⁵, January 2003 (of which prisoner assessments are a central element). This document is being reviewed with the aim of integrating community correctional services with prisons services. The full implementation of the Offender Management System within the prison system cannot occur until the framework has been finalised;
- *Offender Management System in Victorian Prisons: Standards and Guidelines for Practice*, January 2003. The standards were initially developed in May 2002 by a multi-provider working party and approved by a Specialist Advisory Committee and the Reducing Re-Offending Steering Committee. Due to some concerns expressed by the Acting Correctional Services Commissioner regarding the level of detail on offender management activities and processes, the guidelines are currently being revised. Further revisions will be required to ensure consistency with the final framework; and
- *Guidelines for Administration of Tier One Assessment Reports*, February 2003. Notwithstanding that correctional staff commenced undertaking prisoner assessments in September 2002, these guidelines remain incomplete and in draft format at August 2003. The draft guidelines have been issued to assessment officers to provide some direction in undertaking prisoner assessments. The guidelines should be completed and reviewed once the framework has been approved.

4.18 The absence of complete and up-to-date guidance in the conduct of prisoner assessments may compromise the conduct and quality of prisoner assessments. It will be important for staff to receive appropriate training once the guidelines have been completed.

⁵ Seeks to provide a strategic framework to identify prisoners' issues and co-ordinate their access to appropriate programs, services and activities to promote wellbeing and reduce re-offending.

Training of staff

4.19 If Correction Victoria's new focus on providing rehabilitative services to prisoners is to succeed, correctional staff will require training and support in offender management principles and practices, and in conducting risk and need assessments.

4.20 In consultation with correctional staff, a system-wide training program has been developed to equip Corrections Victoria management, head office and assessment officers, prison-based reception staff, correctional officers, clinicians and senior prison management with the appropriate skills to adequately assess and manage prisoners. To date, Corrections Victoria has spent \$752 600 on staff training, and a further \$250 000 is anticipated to be spent during 2003-04⁶.

Training programs

4.21 Currently, 2 main training programs are being delivered to Corrections Victoria and prison staff to support the Offender Management System and facilitate cultural change:

- *Setting the scene* is designed to educate management and correctional staff about the Reducing Re-offending Framework and contemporary prisoner rehabilitation. Around 508 staff have undertaken this training (36 per cent) and a further 892 custodial staff are to be trained. Around 200 staff are scheduled to complete training prior to mid-2004); and
- *Motivational interactions* provides staff with skills to encourage prisoner participation in treatment programs and assist prisoners in changing their offending behaviour. This training program was specifically developed for use in the Victorian corrections system. At the end of July 2003, 27 Corrections Victoria staff had been trained to provide this course to around 1 000 custodial staff.

4.22 At the date of audit, around 22 per cent of the custodial staff who required training had received it. Training is also to be provided to offender management supervisors who will monitor and mentor custodial staff in the rehabilitation and management of prisoners.

4.23 It is pleasing to note that Corrections Victoria has adopted a systematic approach to the continuous improvement of its staff training programs, including pre- and post-surveys of program participants.

Timeliness of training

4.24 Ensuring that all appropriate staff receive the necessary training will be an ongoing challenge for Corrections Victoria. This is particularly so given the large number of staff who require training and the diverse geographical location of prisons.

⁶ Includes an amount of \$370 000 for the replacement of staff while they attended training. Figures for 2003-04 include \$60 000 for staff replacement costs.

4.25 Our examination of Correction Victoria’s co-ordination and delivery of staff training raised the following concerns about the timeliness of staff training:

- Some assessment officers have yet to receive *setting the scene* or *motivational interactions* training, despite their primary involvement with prisoners in the initial period following their sentencing. The December 2002 evaluation of the Tier 1 assessment process⁷ identified motivational interviewing skills a priority area for staff training; and
- Prison staff are required to complete *setting the scene* training before undertaking training in motivating and engaging prisoners. Delays have been experienced in appointing contractors to provide *setting the scene* training. This will delay staff acquiring the skills necessary to motivate prisoners to participate in rehabilitation programs.

Conclusions

4.26 While Victorian prisons commenced undertaking risk and need assessments of prisoners around 12 months ago, the implementation of Victoria’s new approach to prisoner management has been considerably hampered by delays in finalising guidelines and other documentation to support the Offender Management System.

4.27 Corrections Victoria has acknowledged that this new approach to prisoner management represents a significant shift in correctional practice, and extensive staff consultation together with a strategic approach to managing the change process is the key to successfully implementing this initiative. However, their communication strategy remains in draft form, and communication activities have been undertaken on an ad hoc basis. Corrections Victoria has also not developed an overarching strategy to guide the change management process.

4.28 To successfully implement the Reducing Re-offending Framework, prison staff will require training and support. Ensuring all staff receive the necessary training is an ongoing challenge for Corrections Victoria in view of the large number of staff who require training and the diverse geographical locations of Victoria’s prisons. At the date of audit, around 22 per cent of the custodial staff who required training had received it.

⁷ Corrections Victoria, “*Evaluation Report, Tier One Assessment Process*”, Draft No. 5, April 17th 2003.

Recommendations

4.29 We recommend that Corrections Victoria:

- take immediate action to finalise those key strategic documents that support the implementation of the Offender Management System;
- develop a formal change management strategy and a communications strategy in order to effectively engage stakeholders in their program of reforms; and
- implement a systematic and co-ordinated approach to ensure that prison staff complete relevant training in a timely manner in order to maximise opportunities for the management of prisoners.

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Justice

Para. 4.29

Finalising key strategic documents

The Department of Justice supports this recommendation. Finalisation of documents after an iterative process of drafting, consultation, feedback and review is, of course, normal practice in developing and implementing any new initiative. Corrections Victoria wishes to ensure that the Offender Management Framework is consistently applied across community corrections and prisons, and the Offender Management Framework is currently being developed to consolidate opportunities for integration. This document will supersede the Offender Management System in Victorian Prisons: Standards and Guidelines for Practice. Guidelines for Tier 1 assessments are also being reviewed to ensure consistency with the Offender Management Framework. This work will be completed by the end of December 2003.

Change management and communications strategies

The Corrections Long Term Management Strategy (CLTMS) represents a fundamental shift in the business framework of the corrections system in Victoria. The change process includes numerous, complex projects being implemented simultaneously across multiple fronts. Given the magnitude and complexity of the change, a range of activities was undertaken by the Department of Justice to support change management. These included:

- *Adoption of implementation principles that underpinned structural and project management arrangements for the new initiatives;*
- *Establishment of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy Steering Committee;*
- *Establishment of a revised organisational structure within the Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner - the unit within the Department of Justice that initially had primary responsibility for implementation of the Corrections Strategy. Structural changes included the establishment of the then Strategic Planning and Program Development unit, which was to carry a broader change management role for the successful introduction into the Correctional Services system of the key policy and program aims in reducing offending that underpinned all program initiatives and the relevant aspects of the correctional infrastructure program; and*
- *Implementation of processes to strengthen transparency, project and financial control and accountability, performance monitoring and reporting, and support.*

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Justice - continued

More recently, the integration of the Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner and CORE - the Public Correctional Enterprise to form Corrections Victoria has provided the opportunity to achieve greater operational consistency and continuity for prisoners. Ongoing implementation of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy has been identified as one of the key strategic priorities for the new organisation.

These actions taken by the Department of Justice represent a flexible, responsive approach to change management. The change management and communication activities have been modified over time in light of experience and to ensure that emerging issues continue to be addressed. While audit is critical that communication activities have largely been "ad hoc", it is the Department's firm view that any communication activities must be responsive to the needs of operational staff.

The communication strategy implemented over the past 2 years has utilised a wide range of mediums. Regular forums have been held (e.g. regular Stakeholder forums, information forums, consultative forums and providers' forums) and information and performance reporting has been presented at numerous meetings (e.g. Steering Committees and Boards). Presentations have been complemented by the wide availability of a range of printed media, including information sheets on various aspects of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy, and featuring of progress in relation to specific initiatives in newsletters and bulletins produced by the former Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner and CORE - the Public Correctional Enterprise. The Department of Justice remains committed to the ongoing engagement of its customers, stakeholders and partners in the development and implementation of initiatives to reduce re-offending, and does not accept the implication that the absence of a formal document has in any way minimised the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement.

Staff training

The Department of Justice agrees that the provision of training and support to prison staff is critical to the successful implementation of the Reducing Re-offending Framework, and is a key element in the change management process.

The first stage of the system-wide training program - "Setting the Scene" - was delivered initially to senior managers to facilitate management support, and subsequently to approximately 500 correctional staff. A further 200 custodial staff, together with 200 community corrections staff, are scheduled to complete the training by mid-2004, bringing the proportion of trained prison-based staff to around 50 per cent. This is in line with the progressive roll-out of reducing re-offending initiatives.

The second stage of the system-wide training program - "Motivational Interactions" - has adopted the train-the-trainer model of delivery as it is considered the most effective and efficient method within correctional services in Victoria. This assists in ensuring that geographically isolated staff receive appropriate training.

Part 5

Assessment and management of prisoners

INTRODUCTION

5.1 For the first time in Victorian prisons, assessments of risk and need are being conducted to direct prisoners towards appropriate rehabilitation and transitional programs from the commencement of their sentence. The implementation of a more detailed initial prisoner assessment process is a key aspect of the Reducing Re-offending Framework.

5.2 At the date of our audit, the Tier 1 assessment process¹ was operating at the State's 3 reception/remand prisons. However, the requirement for correctional staff to utilise this information in the management of prisoners has been delayed pending the finalisation of key documentation (refer paragraph 4.17) that supports the Reducing Re-offending Framework. Consequently, in the absence of formal direction from Corrections Victoria, individual prisons have adopted their own local approaches towards the use of the Tier 1 assessment in the management of prisoners.

5.3 The audit sought to examine the extent to which prisoners who were eligible to receive a Tier 1 assessment had been assessed. We also examined the manner in which Tier 1 assessments were currently used in placing prisoners within the correctional system and to inform prisoner planning and ongoing management.

Audit methodology

Audit of prisoner files

5.4 We examined 158 files² for prisoners who had received a Tier 1 assessment in the period September 2002 to April 2003. The files were proportionally drawn from 4 prison locations and took account of the following criteria:

- prisons in both rural and metropolitan Victoria;
- public and privately operated prisons;
- male and female prisoners; and
- availability of treatment and rehabilitative programs and services developed under the new Offender Management System.

¹ Prisoner assessments conducted on newly sentenced prisoners (according to specific eligibility criteria based on sentence length) by assessment officers. Refer also to the Glossary in Appendix B.

² A random sample of 158 prisoner files was drawn proportionally from across 4 prisons giving an overall margin of (sampling) error of 6.1 per cent, with a 95 per cent level of confidence. A total number of 409 Tier 1 assessments had been conducted of prisoners located in the 4 prisons at the date of drawing the sample, namely, April 2003, and 815 across Victoria's 13 prisons.

5.5 Details of the files selected for auditing at each prison location are presented in Figure 5A.

**FIGURE 5A
PRISONER FILES AUDITED**

<i>Files reviewed (a)</i>	<i>Ararat (M)</i>	<i>Barwon (M)</i>	<i>Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (F)</i>	<i>Fulham Correctional Centre (M)</i>	<i>Total</i>
On-site files	19	17	27	28	91
Discharged files (b)	5	12	13	14	44
Replacement files (c)	6	9	2	6	23
Total	30	38	42	48	158

(a) M: male prisoners; F: female prisoners.

(b) These prisoners were discharged from prison prior to their file being audited. These files were retrieved and reviewed at the Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

(c) Where prisoners had been transferred to another prison following their selection for audit review, a replacement file of current prisoners from that prison location was randomly selected by audit for review.

Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office.

Interviews with staff and prisoners

5.6 Interviews were undertaken with executive managers, program staff and prison officers (including case workers, unit supervisors and operation managers). The focus of these discussions were on prison staff's understanding and perceptions of:

- the purpose, significance and processes for Tier 1 assessments in meeting prisoner needs; and
- existing barriers or enhancements which could be made to the Tier 1 assessment process, including:
 - factors that preclude provision of appropriate offence-specific programs (e.g. resource shortages, structural barriers, inefficiencies); and
 - the identification of processes which require enhancement.

5.7 Discussions were also held with assessment officers responsible for conducting Tier 1 prisoner assessments and completion of assessment reports.

5.8 Between one and 3 prisoners were interviewed in each location and selection was based upon their recent exposure to the Tier 1 assessment. We sought their perceptions on the assessment process and the manner in which they were referred to offence-related (e.g. cognitive skills) or offence-specific programs (e.g. violence, drug and alcohol, sex offending). In addition, a selection of prisoners who were acting as peer supervisors or peer educators were interviewed to gain their perceptions of recent changes experienced by the prisoner population.



Prisoner files were reviewed at 4 prisons: Barwon Prison, Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, Fulham Correctional Centre and Ararat Prison.

ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF PRISONERS

Completion of Tier 1 assessments

5.9 The revised prisoner assessment process, incorporating the Tier 1 assessment, was implemented in Victoria's 3 reception/remand prisons in September 2002. Figure 5B outlines the key elements in a prisoner's Tier 1 assessment.

**FIGURE 5B
KEY ELEMENTS OF A PRISONER'S TIER 1 ASSESSMENT**

<p>Summary of assessment and outcome.</p> <p>Current offence/s and institutional issues.</p> <p>Summary of offending behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• behaviour and consequences; and• previous offences and pattern of offending, details of victims. <p>Risk of re-offending/level of need.</p> <p>Other significant issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• offence-specific needs (which relate directly to offending, such as violent behaviour);• offence-related needs (issues around a prisoner's wellbeing or functioning); and• needs analysis comments. <p>Readiness to engage in programs.</p> <p>Recommended actions, programs and services.</p>
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Source: Tier 1 Assessment Report, Corrections Victoria, 2002.

Assessment of eligible prisoners

5.10 Prisoner assessments for both males and females are undertaken in accordance with eligibility criteria based on the length of sentence, established by Corrections Victoria.

5.11 We obtained details of sentenced males and females in the 11-month period 9 September 2002 to 31 July 2003 to determine the extent to which prisoners meeting the eligibility criteria (refer to Figure 3C), received a Tier 1 assessment. Our analysis was undertaken in 2 separate periods for both males and females so that any improvement in the level of eligible prisoners assessed, could be identified.

5.12 The results of our analysis are highlighted in Figure 5C and indicate that over the 11-month period examined by audit, 44.5 per cent of male and 20.1 per cent of female prisoners who met the eligibility criteria did not receive an assessment.

FIGURE 5C
EXTENT TO WHICH ELIGIBLE PRISONERS RECEIVED AN ASSESSMENT (a)

<i>Prisoners and sentence period</i>	<i>Number of eligible prisoners</i>	<i>Number of eligible prisoners who received an assessment</i>	<i>Proportion of eligible prisoners receiving an assessment</i>
Males -	(no.)	(no.)	(%)
September 2002 - April 2003	1 419	650	45.8
May 2003 - July 2003	503	417	82.9
Total prisoners	1 922	1 067	55.5
Females -			
September 2002 - April 2003	159	118	74.2
May 2003 - July 2003	55	53	96.4
Total prisoners	214	171	79.9

(a) Figures relate to those prisoners who have received a Tier 1 assessment and does not take into account when the assessment was undertaken, i.e. on newly sentenced prisoners or some time into a prisoner's sentence.

Source: Analysis undertaken by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office from information obtained from Corrections Victoria.

5.13 Figure 5C highlights that for the 11-month period to July 2003, only around 55 per cent of eligible male prisoners received an assessment. During this period, 1 067 eligible male prisoners received a Tier 1 assessment, and a further 855 male prisoners did not. The completion of assessments has improved considerably overtime, although 17 per cent of eligible male prisoners sentenced between May and July 2003, did not receive a Tier 1 assessment.

5.14 Corrections Victoria's performance in assessing all eligible females has improved significantly over the 11-month period to July 2003 to a position where almost all eligible female prisoners received an assessment. In this period, a total of 171 eligible female prisoners received a Tier 1 assessment and 43 female prisoners did not.

Introduction of prisoner assessments into the prison system

5.15 We examined the following key aspects of the conduct and quality of prisoner assessments:

- the presence of an assessment on each prisoner's file and whether each assessment was properly completed;
- information sources used to conduct prisoner assessments;
- whether assessment reports were appropriately signed-off by relevant staff;
- the level of risk of re-offending identified in assessments; and
- the accessibility to Tier 1 assessment reports by prison staff.

5.16 Our audit of prisoner files found that:

- Assessment reports could not be located on prisoner files in 16 per cent of cases;
- Assessment officers who prepare the reports and assistant managers who review reports, had only signed-off completed assessments in 15 per cent and 29 per cent of files, respectively;
- Reports were not consistently located in the same section of a prisoner file, impacting upon the efficiency with which prison staff could access assessment reports; and
- Assessment officers obtained information to assist completion of Tier 1 assessment reports from the prisoner (83 per cent of files), Corrections Victoria's information systems (84 per cent) and community corrections or prison staff (3 per cent of cases). Alternative sources of information to corroborate the information provided by the prisoner, e.g. from Victoria Police, parole board and magistrates courts, were not accessed. Assessment officers indicated that they experienced considerable difficulty in gaining timely access to other agency reports on prisoners, largely due to the absence of protocols between Corrections Victoria and other agencies.

Prison staff comments

5.17 Most correctional staff interviewed considered the Tier 1 assessment provided high quality and in-depth prisoner information. Program staff indicated that they currently have difficulties identifying the needs of every prisoner in a systematic manner, and it is likely that some prisoners are likely to “slip through the cracks”. The introduction of the Tier 1 assessment was, therefore, welcomed.

5.18 Staff also expressed concern that the results of Tier 1 assessments are not yet being fully utilised in the system due to:

- lack of provision of information to staff about the objectives, expected use and implementation time frames of Tier 1; and
- inconsistent location of the Tier 1 assessment in prisoners' files.

5.19 Staff expressed concern that they had not been advised of the general directions of the Offender Management System, the time frame for the pilot, the links between the development of a final Victorian-specific risk and need tool and the present Tier 1 assessment.

Prisoner comments

5.20 Interviews with prisoners indicated that their understanding of the Tier 1 assessment process was limited. This is not surprising given the numerous meetings attended by prisoners upon entering the correctional system. One prisoner did, however, suggest that conducting the assessment when the prisoner was more settled and less stressed would improve the quality of the information gathered.

Use of Tier 1 assessments in prisoner placement and initial planning

5.21 Following prisoner assessment, a classification panel comprising assistant managers and assessment officers use the assessment report as the basis for prisoner classification (security issues) and placement (prison location decision).

5.22 Prisoners are classified to a prison location following consideration of such factors as vacancies within the system, the prisoner's security classification (minimum, medium or maximum security), as well as the needs of the prisoner (availability of treatment programs, safety, management and protection issues, prisoner preference etc.).

5.23 Once placed at a prison location, the Tier 1 assessment and classification documentation should be used to formulate a local management plan (LMP) for the prisoner. This plan identifies how a prisoner's needs will be addressed using the programs and resources available at that particular prison.

5.24 We examined prisoner files to assess the extent to which the following prisoner assessment and management practices were operating in prisons:

- Tier 1 assessments were conducted *prior* to classification and placement decisions;
- assessments were incorporated into decisions about prisoner classification; and
- LMPs were completed for individual prisoners based on the results of the Tier 1 assessment.

5.25 We found that:

- Seventy-six per cent of prisoner assessments were conducted prior to classification of prisoners. Nine per cent were undertaken after the prisoner's classification. In 15 per cent of cases, we could not ascertain from our review of the file, the date the prisoner was classified;
- There was a clear indication in 75 per cent of cases that the Tier 1 assessment had been considered by the classification panel;
- For 99 per cent of prisoners, a LMP had been completed. However, there was little evidence indicating that the Tier 1 assessments were used to develop the prisoner's plan. Prison staff indicated that this was due to a lack of guidance on how to use assessment information in planning a prisoner's management; and
- Limited documentation existed within prisoner files documenting program-specific assessment, participation or program completion. This is of particular concern if prisoner progress is to be effectively monitored by case workers on a monthly basis.

Prison staff comments

5.26 Staff considered that prisoner assessments assisted the local reception and assessment process by providing valuable background information about the prisoners' offending behaviour. This background information also helped to validate information obtained from the prisoner at the time of their initial local reception.

5.27 Staff felt that the Tier 1 assessment process could be better integrated into the prison reception process through:

- providing prison staff with more information on the revised assessment process, what it is, and how it can be used in prisoner management; and
- more timely access of staff to Tier 1 assessment results, particularly when a prisoner enters a new prison location and/or when a local management plan is being developed for the prisoner.

5.28 Specific issues raised by staff included instances where prisoners have been sent from police cells direct to Barwon or Ararat Prisons without a Tier 1 assessment having been conducted. This was attributed to throughput pressures in the police cells or reception prisons, or the need to move prisoners expediently due to protection or management issues. Assessment officers advised that at the end of July 2003, staff visited 3 prisons to undertake the assessment of 13 prisoners who had not been initially assessed but directly transferred to a prison location. Delays in the assessment of these prisoners ranged from 2 to 9 months, after their date of sentencing.

5.29 Depending on local prison processes, Tier 1 information may not be considered or incorporated into a prisoner's LMP until review and assessment meetings. At Fulham Correctional Centre, this occurs 6 months after a prisoner arrives, and at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, this occurs 6 weeks after arrival of the prisoner.

5.30 Staff at Fulham Correctional Centre and Ararat and Barwon Prisons questioned whether there was a sufficient number of assessment officers to efficiently undertake the required level of Tier 1 assessments. Staff also suggested that it may be preferable to train additional correctional staff to conduct the assessments at certain prison locations.

5.31 Staff acknowledged that the Tier 1 assessment could potentially provide "valuable additional information" to a prison's reception process. The challenge for Corrections Victoria is to ensure the timely flow of assessment information to individual prisons, and to ensure prisons use this information when preparing a prisoner's LMP.

Use of Tier 1 assessments in prisoner management

5.32 Following development of the prisoner’s LMP, its implementation by prison staff and the prisoner’s progress should be monitored on a monthly basis and at review and assessment meetings held in each prison.

5.33 At each of the 4 prisons examined, we found that the prisoner’s progress against their LMP was not always being recorded on file. For example, 27 per cent of files reviewed at Ararat Prison and Dame Phyllis Frost Centre did not contain evidence of monthly monitoring of prisoner progress; Barwon Prison, 39 per cent; and Fulham Correctional Centre, 46 per cent of files.

5.34 The extent to which Tier 1 assessments were used to support the management of prisoners varied between prison locations. Due to the absence of formal direction by Corrections Victoria, local processes have been adopted, as shown in Figure 5D.

**FIGURE 5D
USE OF TIER 1 ASSESSMENTS IN PRISONER MANAGEMENT**

Ararat Prison

Assessments were reported to be used *informally* in prisoner management. Staff indicated, “they would need the rest of the package” to use it better (e.g. motivational training, setting the scene training, introduction to the cognitive skills program).

Barwon Prison

Given the prisoner flows and lack of other staff to complete reception assessments, staff are currently focusing on completing prisoner intakes rather than promoting the integration of assessments into local planning and management. It was acknowledged that the focus upon prisoner needs represented both a significant challenge to implement cultural change within a prison environment, and a shift in perspective for some prison staff.

Dame Phyllis Frost Centre

Some case workers (prison officers) were reported to use the Tier 1 information as part of day-to-day case management. “You can never know too much about prisoners. Normally you have to go through the IMP [prisoners file], the Tier 1 acts as a prompt upon reception”. Other staff did not use the Tier 1 assessment information due to its limited access (Tier 1 was placed on section 4 of the file).

Fulham Correctional Centre

Tier 1 was seen to be an important source of information to help identify the causes of the behaviour of prisoners in relation to their crimes and, possibly, day-to-day behaviour in prison.

Source: Discussions between staff of the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office and prison staff.

5.35 Key factors reported to influence the use of Tier 1 information by prison officers included training, information or staffing to help promote the use of such Tier 1 assessments, and access to assessments. Notwithstanding this, the potential for use of Tier 1 information in prisoner management appears promising. Major advantages reported by prison staff in relation to the use of Tier 1 information included:

- increased knowledge of prisoner behaviour, both past and present;
- increased opportunity to engage prisoners in relation to their behaviour and direct them towards appropriate rehabilitative programs; and
- increased opportunities to manage prisoners according to a uniform plan.



Correctional staff consider that prisoner assessments provided valuable information to assist staff in engaging prisoners and encouraging their participation in rehabilitation programs.

Conclusions

5.36 The implementation of a detailed initial prisoner assessment process is a central element of the Reducing Re-offending Framework. In September 2002, Corrections Victoria began to undertake prisoner assessments. The next stage of the implementation process is to ensure that assessment information is used to inform all aspects of a prisoner's management.

5.37 Prison staff consider the Tier 1 prisoner assessments provide valuable information in understanding prisoner behaviour and has potential to significantly enhance their ability to plan for the management of prisoners and address their offending behaviour. However, in the absence of any formal direction from Corrections Victoria, prisons have adopted their own local practices regarding the nature and extent to which assessment information is utilised.

5.38 All prisoners sentenced since 1 September 2002 and meeting the eligibility criteria were to be assessed. In the 11-month period to July 2003, 55.5 per cent of eligible male prisoners and 79.9 per cent of eligible female prisoners received an assessment. These assessments were completed in a comprehensive manner.

5.39 The proportion of eligible male and female prisoners receiving an assessment has improved in recent months. For eligible female prisoners sentenced during May to July 2003, almost all had received an assessment. However, 17 per cent of eligible male prisoners sentenced during this time, had not received an assessment. If prisoners do not receive an assessment this may preclude them from accessing the rehabilitation programs required to address their offending behaviour.

5.40 For nearly all prisoners, a local management plan which outlines such details as a prisoner's goals and the services and programs required to meet their needs, had been completed. However, there was little evidence indicating that the Tier 1 assessments had been consistently used to inform the development of prisoner management plans. In addition, there was limited documentation on prisoner files documenting the assessment of prisoner's program needs, and their participation in programs. Prison staff advised that this was due to the limited guidance provided to prisons by Corrections Victoria.

Recommendations

5.41 We recommend that Corrections Victoria:

- establish processes to ensure that all eligible prisoners receive a Tier 1 assessment in a timely manner; and
- prison staff actively monitor prisoner progress against the local management plan and record this information in the prisoner's file.

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Justice

Para. 5.41

Tier 1 assessment of eligible prisoners

The Department of Justice agrees that all eligible prisoners should receive a Tier 1 assessment in a timely manner, and is pleased to note that, since May 2003, 83 per cent of eligible male and 96 per cent of eligible female prisoners have been assessed. This represents a significant improvement from the proportion at the commencement of the trial period.

Monitoring of prisoner progress against local management plans

The Department of Justice accepts this recommendation. The appointment of Offender Management Supervisors at each prison will further support prison staff in incorporating information from the Tier 1 assessment into prisoners' local management plans, and these staff will also provide guidance and support in monitoring progress against local plans. Three Offender Management Supervisors are currently employed and a further 9 are expected to commence in February 2004.

Part 6

Provision of rehabilitation programs

INTRODUCTION

6.1 The Government’s objectives for the correctional services system are containment and supervision of offenders, rehabilitation and reparation to the community. Key responsibilities of Victorian prisons are to:

- encourage prisoners to develop responsibility for their actions and reinforce law-abiding and non-violent participation in the community; and
- provide prisoners with opportunities for rehabilitation.

6.2 This Part of the report details our findings following examination of processes to ensure that prisoners have timely access to the rehabilitative programs identified in their Tier 1 assessment. This included whether:

- rehabilitative programs provided to prisoners supported the Offender Management Framework and focused on reducing re-offending/offending behaviour; and
- processes were in place (or being developed) to enable prisoners to access programs to reduce re-offending in a timely manner, as identified within individual Tier 1 assessments.

PRISONER ACCESS TO REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

6.3 The “extremely limited offender rehabilitation program base in prisons”¹ has been identified as a key factor in the rising level of recidivism in the Victorian corrections system. Previous rehabilitation programs were seen by Corrections Victoria as inefficient and costly. Historically, there was an inability to differentiate between prisoners with differing levels of risk and need, and hence interventions for prisoners could not be targeted to their specific needs. Rehabilitation programs (aimed at prisoners with histories of violence or drug and alcohol abuse) did not explicitly aim to reduce re-offending, and program content did not reflect best practice principles in reducing recidivism.

6.4 A key component of the Reducing Re-offending Framework is the implementation of newly designed and consistently implemented programs aimed at reducing offending behaviour. Prisons will target these programs at those prisoners assessed with the highest risk of re-offending. International research suggests that targeted treatment programs can be effective in reducing repeat offending by at least 10 per cent (and up to 40 per cent in some circumstances)².

6.5 Figure 6A provides an overview of the 4 rehabilitation programs to be provided in Victorian prisons to reduce re-offending.

¹ Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner, *Strategic Plan July 2001 - June 2004*, p. 3.

² F Dunne, Clinical and Forensic Psychologist, “*A Framework for Reducing Re-offending: Differentiated Case Management in Victorian Corrections*”, September 2000, p. 3.

FIGURE 6A
OUTLINE OF REHABILITATION PROGRAMS TARGETING OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR

<i>Rehabilitation program</i>	<i>Duration and intensity</i>	<i>Primary aim of program</i>	<i>Examples of content</i>
Cognitive skills (a)	30 2-hour sessions. Intensity is flexible – 2 to 4 sessions over 7½ - 15 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides motivation to start addressing offending behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem solving skills Recognising the effects of offending behaviour Conflict resolution
Drug and alcohol	High intensity – 300 hours; Moderate intensity – 50 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce drug use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substance awareness Harm minimisation Relapse prevention
Sex offender	96 to 180-hour programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victim empathy Deviant arousal management
Violence	Under development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and reduce violent behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triggering events Coping techniques Impact of negative social behaviour

(a) Cognitive skills program is foundational to other programs, and aims to provide a motivational and preparatory base for them. This program is to be provided early in a prisoner’s sentence partly to ensure a consistent base of skills and knowledge for prisoners undertaking other programs.

Source: Information provided by Corrections Victoria, 2003.

6.6 Decisions about the treatment plan for each prisoner is based upon an individual assessment of the prisoner’s developmental needs, circumstances, motivation and learning style. The participation of prisoners in rehabilitation programs is voluntary³.

Development and implementation of new programs

6.7 The development and implementation of the 4 prisoner rehabilitation programs aims to provide prisoners with a suite of high quality and effective programs which will reduce their likelihood of re-offending.

6.8 The approach adopted by Corrections Victoria to identify and establish the new programs has included:

- Extensive review of international research to identify treatment programs which met evidenced-based, best practice standards. Where such programs do not already exist, Corrections Victoria has undertaken to develop the programs in line with best practice principles (e.g. violence program); and
- Pilot testing and expert review to evaluate program efficacy.

³ The Adult Parole Board encourage prisoners with a possible parole period to participate in rehabilitation programs.

6.9 The 4 programs for prisoner rehabilitation are at varying stages of development and implementation in the prison system. Figure 6B outlines the current status of each program and outstanding matters associated with program provision.

**FIGURE 6B
STATUS OF PRISONER REHABILITATION PROGRAMS, 31 AUGUST 2003**

<i>Program/provider</i>	<i>Current status of program</i>	<i>Outstanding matters</i>
Cognitive skills (in-house provider)	New program implemented in 5 of 6 prisons in May-July 2003. (a)	Program delivery has yet to commence at one male prison.
Drug and alcohol (external providers)	Program implemented but review being undertaken to assess the extent to which the program meets best practice in reducing recidivism.	Consultant's report due November 2003. Revised program to be implemented in prisons on 1 July 2004.
Sex offender (in-house provider)	Redeveloped program implemented in prisons. (b)	Service delivery standards to be finalised.
Violence (in-house provider)	Two-year interim program to commence in prisons in late 2003.	Program based on best practice principles to be developed and then implemented in 2005.

(a) Cognitive skills programs are delivered at maximum and medium security prisons for all prisoners assessed as having a moderate or high risk of re-offending.

(b) Moderate and high intensity sex offender programs aimed at reducing re-offending has been in place and continuously refined since 1996.

Source: Information provided by Corrections Victoria.

6.10 Our review of the development and implementation of these programs revealed the absence of a planned approach to ensure timely access by prisoners to appropriate and effective programs. For example, prisoner assessments commenced in September 2002, but this information is currently not being used to systematically refer prisoners to programs, and not all of the rehabilitation programs, as indicated in Figure 6B, are in place.

6.11 The absence of a planned implementation of programs is highlighted by the following practices:

- Project plans identifying key timelines and activities to facilitate monitoring were not prepared to guide the development and implementation of each of the rehabilitation programs. A chart outlining tasks, timelines and responsibilities was initially developed, however, its usefulness as a management tool was limited by its static nature;
- The commencement of programs in prisons has been delayed (cognitive skills and interim violence programs) due to extended negotiations with prisons' management regarding program content, consultations over service delivery standards and funding arrangements, and extended contract negotiations with program providers; and

- The re-design and development of each of the programs has largely been managed on an individual basis by different branches within Corrections Victoria⁴. This approach has precluded sufficient consideration of cross-program issues which may impede the delivery and co-ordination of rehabilitation programs. For example, overlap exists in the content of cognitive skills and drug and alcohol programs.

6.12 Given the complexities involved in developing appropriate programs, we consider insufficient planning and overly ambitious time frames may also have been a factor in the delays and issues associated with program development and implementation.

Barriers to accessing rehabilitation programs

Prisoner availability

6.13 The time available to prisoners to complete rehabilitative programs during their sentence may be limited by several factors, including the time taken for a prisoner to be initially located within the prison system and the transfer of prisoners between prisons.

6.14 A prisoner's access to rehabilitation programs⁵ is prioritised according to *sentence length* (dictates prisoner eligibility and the timing of specific programs) and a prisoner's *earliest release date* (dictates their realistic ability to successfully complete the designated programs). Program access is also influenced by other factors, including:

- appropriate and early *identification of prisoner need* (identified from Tier 1 assessment, referrals from prison officers/case workers and program staff, and self-referrals);
- efficient and accurate *referral processes* through Tier 1 assessment and prisoners' local management plans;
- likely *movement of the prisoner* through the system (which dictates their ability to meet minimum attendance requirements for programs);
- *availability and scheduling of programs* in individual facilities (based upon staffing and individual prison service configuration);
- *number of specified program places* available within the program structure;
- *medical condition* of prisoners; and
- *delays in identifying the pool of eligible prisoners* (those who had been assessed and had a moderate or high risk of re-offending).

6.15 Some prisons reported that for programs to have minimum participant numbers, prisoners existing in the system prior to the introduction of the revised assessment process (pre-September 2002) were assessed to participate in the early cognitive skills program.

⁴ Development/redevelopment of cognitive skills, violence and drug and alcohol programs have been managed by Strategic Services and Policy and Standards Unit of the former Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner (OCSC); and sex offender program by the former CORE, Public Correctional Enterprise.

⁵ Timeliness of access relates both to the provision of programs within a prisoner's sentence, as well as at the most appropriate point of time during their sentence.

6.16 We acknowledge the developmental period in which prisons are currently operating with respect to revised prisoner assessment processes and the implementation of new and re-designed rehabilitation programs for prisoners. However, the nature of issues identified indicates that prison staff require additional *operational* information to support the implementation of the new cognitive skills program.

Prisoner readiness to participate

6.17 Despite the assessed need for specific programs and the availability of particular programs at individual prisons, prisoner participation is voluntary⁶. To derive maximum benefit, research indicates that prisoners must be willing to engage in programs to change their offending behaviour.

6.18 Our review of prisoner Tier 1 assessments indicated that 2 in every 3 prisoners had actively contemplated or were prepared to engage in prison programs to address their re-offending behaviour. However, according to staff, this may be an overestimate since peer pressure can have a significant negative impact upon a prisoners' willingness to pursue specific programs.

6.19 Staff suggested some thought should be given to developing incentives to encourage prisoners to participate in programs.



Prisoner participation in the cognitive skills program is a pre-requisite for other rehabilitation programs. Prisoners are encouraged by correctional staff to attend, but participation is voluntary.

⁶ The Adult Parole Board encourage prisoners with a possible parole period to participate in rehabilitation programs.

Meeting the demand for rehabilitation programs

6.20 The number of programs available in prison is based upon both estimated demand and availability of resources. We were advised by Corrections Victoria that the system's capacity to meet prisoner demand for programs would be reviewed once programs were fully implemented, and when participation and demand data was collected and analysed.

6.21 Prison staff identified the risk of an increase in both prisoner and staff expectations as a result of Tier 1 assessment recommendations, and that a failure to meet these expectations, due to limited program places, could lead to frustration with the assessment process. For example, staff at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre reported concerns that with only 3 cognitive skills programs scheduled each year, needs identified by Tier 1 assessments may not be met.

Staff comments

6.22 Prison staff (program staff and case workers) identified the following barriers or disincentives to prisoners accessing and completing rehabilitation programs:

- Lower pay rates for prisoners participating in rehabilitation programs compared with those who undertake work in the various prison industries;
- The movement of prisoners between facilities (for medical, management or vacancy management reasons) may restrict program access and completion;
- A lack of program modularisation (enabling programs to run concurrently) or interfacing between programs, prevents prisoners with shorter sentence lengths or those undergoing significant movement between prisons from attending or completing programs. Portability of program modules would introduce greater flexibility in the conduct of rehabilitation programs which is likely to benefit prisoners and contribute to the success of the Reducing Re-offending initiative; and
- The absence of individual treatment strategies for special needs prisoners (including Kooris, youths, prisoners with a mental illness or intellectual disability) means that these prisoners are less likely to attend behavioural programs and change their offending behaviour.

6.23 Corrections Victoria advises that the above matters are currently being reviewed or actioned.

Conclusions

6.24 A key component of the Reducing Re-offending Framework is the implementation of newly designed and consistently implemented programs aimed at reducing prisoner offending behaviour. This will provide prisons with programs to target those prisoners with the highest risk of re-offending.

6.25 Our examination indicated that Corrections Victoria has adopted a well-researched approach to the development of its 4 new prisoner rehabilitation programs. The cognitive skills and sex offender programs have been implemented within prisons. New drug and alcohol and violence programs are still in the process of being developed. The full range of expected benefits will not be achieved until the full suite of programs is available and operationalised.

6.26 The development and implementation of rehabilitation programs was not planned to ensure timely access by prisoners to appropriate and effective programs.

6.27 A number of barriers are present in the correctional system which impact on the ability of prisoners to participate in rehabilitation programs. These barriers include the matching of prisoner demand for programs to program availability, prisoners' readiness to engage in programs and the movement of prisoners between correctional facilities.

Recommendations

6.28 We recommend that Corrections Victoria:

- continues to further develop its rehabilitation programs to ensure that prisoners' needs are addressed in a timely manner, consistent with the aims of the Reducing Re-offending Framework; and
- develops strategies to address barriers in the correctional system which affect prisoner participation in rehabilitation programs.

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Justice

Paras 6.10, 6.11 and 6.28

Development and implementation plans for all elements of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy were developed prior to commencement from 1 July 2001. Clearly, different elements of the Strategy required different levels of effort, for example, research activities, tendering processes, consultation and staff training. It would be impossible to implement all assessment processes and program activities, including rehabilitation programs, at the same time. Data from prisoner assessments is, however, a vital component in planning the most appropriate locations in which to deliver programs matched to prisoner needs. The content of Drug and Alcohol programs is currently under review.

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Justice – continued

Para. 6.25

The Department of Justice supports the finding that Corrections Victoria has adopted a well-researched approach to the development of its prisoner rehabilitation programs. This evidence-based approach has been a major strength of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy. Corrections Victoria is at the forefront of contributing to an international body of research in best practice approaches to the rehabilitation of prisoners. The Department of Justice is proud to report that the contributions of Corrections Victoria staff have been published internationally and that staff have been invited to participate in national and international conferences to talk about the important work being undertaken in Victoria.

Paras 6.19, 6.27 and 6.28

Corrections Victoria is committed to maximising opportunities for prisoners to participate in programs and activities that will reduce the likelihood of re-offending. Prison staff have a key role in actively engaging offenders to encourage their participation, and Motivational Interviewing training will further enhance a rehabilitative approach in staff-prisoner interactions.

Part 7

Performance measurement and reporting

INTRODUCTION

7.1 Corrections Victoria has established performance standards and targets to progressively monitor the success of its Reducing Re-offending Initiative. These specifically relate to the participation of prisoners in rehabilitation programs and a reduction in prisoner re-offending.

7.2 This Part of the report outlines the monitoring framework established by Corrections Victoria and reports on its performance in achieving targets associated with the reducing prisoner re-offending initiative.

MONITORING FRAMEWORK

7.3 Performance targets and monitoring frameworks have been established for the Reducing Re-offending Initiative at 3 levels:

- Corrections Long Term Management Strategy (CLTMS) – performance targets include reduced growth in prisoner numbers, increased prisoner participation in rehabilitation programs and the level of re-offending;
- service agreements between the Correctional Services Commissioner and prisons – include performance benchmarks (known as service delivery outcomes, or SDOs) reporting on the performance of significant components of prison operations; and
- service agreements between the Correctional Services Commissioner and program providers – program delivery standards and targets are specified.

CLTMS initiatives

7.4 Progress against targets contained in the CLTMS is monitored through:

- the CLTMS Steering Committee¹ which meets each quarter to discuss the status of the initiatives, progress against all key performance measures and issues likely to impact on the delivery of the strategy; and
- the Department of Justice which reports quarterly to the Department of Treasury and Finance and annually to the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet.

7.5 Figure 7A outlines the key targets and performance for Corrections Victoria's reducing re-offending initiative for 2001-02 and 2002-03. As prisoner rehabilitation programs have not yet been fully developed and implemented within prisons, program actuals for 2001-02 reflect only prisoners participating in sex offender programs, and 2002-03 figures relate to both sex offender and cognitive skills programs.

¹ Committee is chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Justice and has representatives from each of the central agencies, Treasury and Finance, and Premier and Cabinet.

7.6 While “program commencement and completion” targets for 2003-04 for individual programs have been established, they have not yet been consolidated into aggregated CLTMS targets. However, the percentage of prisoners completing programs is expected to reach 85 per cent by 2005-06.

**FIGURE 7A
CLTMS REDUCING RE-OFFENDING INITIATIVES: TARGETS AND PERFORMANCE**

Performance measure	2001-02		2002-03	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Prisoners commencing programs (a)	(no.) 230	72	385	(b) 142
Prisoners completing programs	(no.) 65	95	70	(c) n.a.
Reduction in the rate of prisoner re-offending	(%) 10	(d) n.a.	10	(d) n.a.
Prison bed diversion (e)	-	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

(a) CLTMS program performance measures do not include drug and alcohol program details as they are reported separately under the government’s Drug Initiative.

(b) This figure is an estimate based on preliminary data provided by Corrections Victoria.

(c) Information for 2002-03 not yet available.

(d) Re-offending is defined as prisoners returning to the correctional system within 2 years of release. The impact on the rate of prisoner re-offending will be measured 2 years after commencement of the CLTMS.

(e) No impact is expected on prison bed numbers until 2003-04: target reduction 33 beds, and 2004-05: target reduction 58 beds.

Source: Information provided by Corrections Victoria and CLTMS performance report, June 2003.

7.7 In recognition of delays in program implementation, the 2002-03 target for prisoners commencing programs was revised down from 650 to 385. However, the revised target was also not achieved due to delays in contract negotiations with providers who were to deliver the cognitive skills program and develop the violence program.

7.8 The ability of Corrections Victoria to achieve existing targets for reducing re-offending rates and bed diversion may also be compromised by the delays in implementing prisoner rehabilitation programs.

Service agreements with prisons

7.9 Service agreements have been established outlining the mutual obligations and expectations of both Corrections Victoria and prisons for the management and delivery of rehabilitation programs. Agreements specify minimum SDOs established by Corrections Victoria, against which the performance of each prison is assessed. For the 2 privately operated prisons, SDO targets are linked to penalties and bonuses.

7.10 The Department’s Corrections Inspectorate² independently monitors prison performance and verifies prisons’ annual performance information. Amendments to a prison’s performance data as a result of an audit can result in retrospective changes to prison payments for private providers.

² The Corrections Inspectorate was established on 1 July 2003 and reports directly to the Secretary of the Department of Justice on the performance of all prisons. This Inspectorate replaced the former Monitoring and Review Unit in the Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner.

7.11 Prisons' SDOs and performance targets have recently been revised with effect from 1 July 2003. The following 2 SDOs relate directly to prisoner participation in rehabilitation programs and are applicable to all prisons:

- prisoners engaged in purposeful work and/or approved rehabilitative programs for a minimum of 30 hours per week - target dependent on prison's population in relation to its design capacity³; and
- prisoners completing rehabilitation programs as a proportion of prisoners identified with program requirements - target 85 per cent⁴.

7.12 The revision of SDOs reflect an increasing emphasis on prisons to support prisoner participation in rehabilitation programs. As the revised SDOs only came into effect on 1 July 2003, results against targets are not yet available.

Service agreements with program providers

7.13 Research indicates that the most "effective" rehabilitation programs in reducing re-offending have high levels of integrity, which means that they are delivered and maintained according to their original design

7.14 Cognitive skills, sex offender and existing violence programs are being delivered internally by prison staff. The current drug and alcohol programs are being delivered by external service providers, engaged directly by each prison.

7.15 Standards and specifications are developed by Corrections Victoria to guide prisons and service providers in their delivery of rehabilitation programs, i.e. to ensure programs are conducted according to their stated aims, methodology and that prisoners are suitably selected and providers are appropriately qualified.

7.16 Providers of cognitive skills and sex offender programs report on a monthly and biannual basis to Corrections Victoria⁵ on performance against targets and qualitative information about program delivery. For example, reasons for not achieving established program targets and actions required to remedy the issues will be provided.

7.17 At 30 June 2003, providers had been contracted to provide cognitive skills programs to 128 prisoners and sex offender programs to 60 prisoners. Due to delays in the implementation of the cognitive skills program, only 56 prisoners commenced the program and at the date of audit, 34 prisoners had completed the program. The remaining 22 prisoners will complete the program in future months. A 97 per cent completion rate has been achieved by prisoners attending the sex offender program.

³ This SDO has been revised. Prior to July 2003, the SDO required a minimum 30 hours of industry work only per week per prison. Target: "Prisoners able to work to the maximum of industry design capacity": 80 per cent – 100 per cent; "Prisoners able to work above the maximum of industry design capacity": 40 per cent – 50 per cent.

⁴ This SDO is newly developed.

⁵ Violence and revised Drug and Alcohol programs are yet to be implemented and, therefore, reporting has not begun.

Conclusions

7.18 Corrections Victoria has established a performance measurement and reporting framework incorporating performance standards and targets related to reducing re-offending and the participation of prisoners in rehabilitation programs. This framework will be used to progressively monitor the success of the Reducing Re-offending initiative as well as prison management and delivery of rehabilitation programs.

7.19 Prisons have now commenced reporting their performance against targets for the new programs. The information currently being reported by prisons relates only to those programs that have been fully implemented. As a result, the performance data is of limited value in supporting the management of the Reducing Re-offending initiative.

7.20 The delay in the development and implementation of prisoner rehabilitation programs may also hinder Corrections Victoria's efforts to reduce both the rate of prisoner re-offending and the number of prison beds, as required by the Reducing Re-offending Initiative.

Recommendation

7.21 We recommend that Corrections Victoria continues to further develop its performance measurement and reporting framework to ensure that its management of the Reducing Re-offending initiative is supported by both timely and high quality information.

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Justice

Implementation of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy has been subject to an unprecedented level of scrutiny. The establishment of a high level Steering Committee comprising representatives of the Departments of Justice, Treasury and Finance, and Premier and Cabinet has provided a rigorous accountability framework for all elements of the Strategy. In addition, Quarterly Reports to the Department of Treasury and Finance, and monthly reports to the Secretary, Department of Justice, provide high level monitoring of the progress of individual initiatives, as well as the overall strategy. Within corrections, regular reporting to the (then) CORE Board and to the Steering Committees established to oversight individual initiatives has ensured that progress has been monitored on a regular basis.

Paras 7.7 to 7.8 and 7.20

Audit suggests that the achievement of targets for reducing re-offending rates and bed diversion may be compromised by the delays in developing and/or implementing prisoner rehabilitation programs. Corrections Victoria recognised this as a risk inherent in the strategy, and is confident that the implementation of a more rigorous project management methodology, together with risk identification and mitigation strategies, will minimise both the likelihood and the impact of any such delays.

However, it should be noted, the Reducing Re-offending Framework is only one element of the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy. As at 30 June 2003 the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy is ahead of prison bed saving targets.

While the numbers of prisoners commencing programs was initially lower than targeted due to time taken for start-up and program revision, the estimated impact of these programs in the longer-term remains unchanged given higher than anticipated completion rates and increased program effectiveness resulting from revised program content.

Para. 7.21

The Department of Justice accepts this recommendation and notes that Corrections Victoria is continuing to implement its performance measurement and reporting framework.

Appendix A

Conduct of the audit

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

The objective of the audit was to review the adequacy of the processes in place, or under development, to ensure prisoner needs are identified and addressed. In particular, the audit examined:

- the development and implementation of the Department of Justice’s suite of prisoner risk and needs assessment tools;
- the appropriateness of the training and ongoing support provided to staff undertaking these assessments;
- whether appropriate processes are in place (or are being developed) to ensure that each prisoner’s assessment is incorporated into his/her management plan; and
- whether processes are in place (or are being developed) to ensure that prisoners have timely access to the programs identified in their risk and needs assessment.

Due to the increasing number of prisoners who re-offend after their release from prison, and the expected growth in the total number of prisoners held in custody, the assessment, management and rehabilitation of prisoners represents a key challenge for Corrections Victoria.

AUDIT SCOPE

The audit focused on the processes employed by Corrections Victoria, a business unit of the Department of Justice, to develop and implement revised assessment processes to ensure prisoner needs are identified and appropriately addressed.

The extent to which the new Tier 1 assessment process was used in the development of management plans for prisoners was examined through an audit of 158 prisoner files¹. These audits were undertaken at 4 of Victoria’s 13 prisons, namely:

- Ararat Prison – a publicly operated medium security prison for men which includes a treatment facility for sex offenders (30 prisoner files);
- Barwon Prison – a publicly operated maximum security prison for men (38 prisoner files);
- Dame Phyllis Frost Centre - a publicly operated prison for women with reception, specialist and maximum security accommodation (42 prisoner files); and
- Fulham Correctional Centre – a privately operated minimum/medium security prison for mainstream male prisoners which includes drug and alcohol treatment programs (48 prisoner files).

¹ A random sample of 158 prisoner files was drawn proportionally from across 4 prisons giving an overall margin of (sampling) error of 6.1 per cent with a 95 per cent level of confidence.

The prisons and prisoner files selected for audit were chosen to ensure a coverage of:

- both publicly and privately operated prisons;
- adult prisons in both rural and metropolitan Victoria;
- male and female prisoners who have been sentenced by the Courts and received a Tier 1 assessment during the period September 2002 to April 2003 (the Tier 1 assessment process was first introduced in September 2002); and
- the full range of treatment and rehabilitative programs that have been established under the new Offender Management System.

The audit did not examine:

- the quality of the prisoner risk assessment tools being developed;
- the effectiveness of the treatment and rehabilitation services being provided to prisoners; and
- the adequacy of support services provided to prisoners after their release from prison.

AUDIT METHODOLOGY

The audit's methodology comprised:

- Fieldwork at 4 prisons, which included:
 - Interviews with staff at each prison, including the general manager, programs staff, prison officers including case workers, unit supervisors, and operation managers. Interviews were conducted with relevant staff on an individual basis or in small groups, and focused on staff's understanding of the purpose, significance and processes for Tier 1 assessments and meeting prisoner needs;
 - Interviews with up to 3 prisoners in each prison. Prisoners were selected based on their exposure to Tier 1 assessment and enrolment in an offence-related (e.g. cognitive skills) or offence-specific (e.g. violence, drug and alcohol, sex offending) program. In addition, interviews were conducted with prisoners acting as peer supervisors or peer educators to determine their perceptions about the Tier 1 assessment process; and
 - Audits of individual prisoner files (these files are called Individual Management Plans);
- Detailed examination of Corrections Victoria's documentation supporting the engagement of service providers, management of contractors and projects, and the development and implementation of revised assessment and offender management processes; and

- Discussions with key stakeholders involved in the assessment and management of prisoners, including:
 - assessment officers involved in undertaking prisoner assessments;
 - the contractor who is currently developing a Victorian-specific risk/need assessment tool on behalf of Corrections Victoria; and
 - the Adult Parole Board and the Australian Community Support Organisation.

PERIOD COVERED BY THE AUDIT

This audit focused on recent developments in Victorian correctional policy and practice with regards to the assessment of prisoners, prisoner management and the development of rehabilitative treatment programs supporting the Reducing Re-offending Framework.

Fieldwork took place at Corrections Victoria and the 4 prison locations during the period May to August 2003.

COMPLIANCE WITH AUDITING STANDARDS

The audit was performed in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards applicable to performance auditing, and included such tests and other procedures considered necessary in the circumstances.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO THE AUDIT TEAM

Specialist assistance

Specialist assistance was provided to my Office by Campbell Research and Consulting Pty Ltd which undertook the audit of prisoner files, and conducted interviews with prison staff and prisoners.

Assistance provided by Corrections Victoria

I wish to express my appreciation for the significant support and assistance that was provided to my officers by the management and staff of Corrections Victoria.

Appendix B

Glossary



Adult Parole Board

An independent statutory body established under the *Corrections Act* 1986, with jurisdiction over the release of prisoners on parole.

Prisoner classification

The process of determining where a prisoner is placed within the prison system. Information from a prisoner's Tier 1 assessment and issues relating to security, prisoner characteristics, and risk of re-offending and needs assist the classification process.

Community Correctional Services

The unit in Corrections Victoria that manages the provision of non-custodial sentencing alternatives for offenders supervised in the community, e.g. home detention, parole and community service orders. This includes helping offenders released from prison on parole to make successful transitions back into the community. Community Correctional Services also provides advice to Courts and to the Adult Parole Board in relation to the sentencing or release of offenders.

Corrections Long Term Management Strategy (CLTMS)

The strategy was developed in 2001 with a focus upon introducing an extensive program of prisoner rehabilitation and diversion. The strategy's aim is to arrest the costly cycle of re-offending and, where possible, to keep non-serious offenders out of prison.

Criminal Justice Enhancement Project (CJEP)

The project is the development and integration of information technology systems (Victoria Police, the Courts, Community Correctional Services and Victoria's prison system) across the Justice Portfolio. The project is due for completion in 2004.

Individual Management Plan (IMP)

A prisoner's Individual Management Plan is a paper-based file and includes information relating to the prisoner's reception at the prison, the Tier 1 assessment report, minutes from review and assessment committee meetings, the Local Management Plan, progress notes, and information on a prisoner's participation in rehabilitation programs and training courses.

Initial Offender Management Plan

The plan is the outcome of the prisoner classification process and outlines a prisoner's placement issues, risk factors and proposed sentence pathway.

Level of Service Inventory-Revised Screening Version (LSI-R:SV)

The LSI-R:SV is an actuarial risk and need assessment instrument that was developed in Canada to measure a prisoner's risk of re-offending and level of need.

Local Management Plan

Individual Management Plans for each prisoner are developed at the prison location. The plans include information from the prisoner's Tier 1 assessment, short and long-term goals based on a prisoner's identified risk of re-offending and needs, services and programs to address prisoner needs, and a time frame for completion.

Offender management supervisors

Prison staff who will play an integral role in supporting and mentoring custodial staff in their offender management functions.

Offender management system

Offender management processes undertaken by custodial and prison staff to support assessment processes, planning and monitoring of prisoner management, and the targeting of treatment resources to eligible prisoners.

Prisoner Information Management System (PIMS)

Corrections Victoria's operational database utilised in the day-to-day management of prisoners. It holds details on all prisoners who have been, and are currently, in custody.

Protection prisoners

Prisoners, who due to the nature of their crime, identity or other issues must be segregated from the mainstream prison population.

Reception prison

A prison where prisoners are initially received into custody, i.e. the Melbourne Assessment Centre (male prisoners) and Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (female prisoners).

Recidivism or repeat offending

Sentenced prisoners, not subject to further supervision or contact with corrective services, who return to corrections within 2 years of discharge from prison.

Reducing Re-offending Framework

A service system approach to reducing re-offending. The framework incorporates the Offender management system and focuses on assessing and addressing prisoners' offending behaviour via the targeting of intensive interventions to those prisoners with moderate to high risk and need.

Remand prison

A prison where prisoners awaiting sentencing or a court appearance are located.

Review and Assessment (R&A) Committee

Multi-disciplinary team comprising those prison staff who have regular contact with the prisoner. Meetings occur at various stages in a prisoner's sentence (i.e. induction, quarterly) to assist the orientation of the prisoner at their location and oversee prisoner progress with their Local Management Plan.

Tier 1 assessment

Prisoner assessments conducted on newly sentenced prisoners (according to specific eligibility criteria based on sentence length) by assessment officers. This process incorporates information from various sources and the completion of the LSI-R:SV risk/need tool to assist the determination of whether prisoners have a low, moderate or high risk/need. A report is produced which identifies prisoner's needs and risk of re-offending, readiness to engage in programs and rehabilitation programs/services recommended to address a prisoner's identified needs.

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(a) This report is included in Part 3.2, Human Services section of the *Report on Ministerial Portfolios*, June 2001.

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