Managing Offenders on
Community Corrections Orders

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The Hon. Robert Smith MLC   The Hon. Jenny Lindell MP
President   Speaker
Legislative Council   Legislative Assembly
Parliament House   Parliament House
Melbourne   Melbourne

Dear Presiding Officers

Under the provisions of section 16AB of the *Audit Act 1994*, I transmit my performance report on *Managing Offenders on Community Corrections Orders.*

Yours faithfully

D D R PEARSON
Auditor-General

25 November 2009

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Audit summary

Introduction

Managing offenders in the community provides a range of financial and social benefits. It is a cost-effective alternative to imprisonment. It also enables offenders to maintain connection with their community, by retaining employment, social networks and accommodation. Offenders can also undertake programs designed to address their behaviour and reduce the likelihood of them re-offending.

Community Correctional Services (CCS), within Corrections Victoria, is responsible for managing offenders on community orders. Its primary purpose is to enhance community safety primarily through a range of offender management processes and services, including risk and need assessments, program referrals and supervision to ensure offenders are complying with the conditions of their orders.

Overall conclusion

CCS has established a robust, evidence-based framework for offender management and for implementing a strong quality assurance process to monitor the application of the framework.

However, what is missing is a meaningful way to measure the effectiveness of the program. The current outcome measures are not directly relevant.

Findings

CCS's offender management practices, operationalised in comprehensive guidance for community corrections staff, are underpinned by evidence-based principles that align with international better practice, legislation and correctional standards.

To gain assurance about the effectiveness of their offender management practices, and to continually improve practices, CCS has also developed a comprehensive quality assurance framework. This framework includes an annual statewide audit of offender and file management, monthly reporting to senior management and regular review of offender case files.

However, CCS's performance reporting does not adequately reflect the effectiveness of their offender management practices. Their reliance on order completion rates to assure the community about their performance is problematic. It tends to reflect the application of policy, rather than the effectiveness of offender management to address offending behaviour and reduce recidivism.

Similarly, the current performance monitoring arrangements mean that CCS cannot be assured that offenders are getting timely access to assessment and treatment services, as some third parties do not have target time frames for providing services and they do not currently report this information to CCS. There is a pressing need for CCS to develop more meaningful performance measures to assess the timeliness and effectiveness of offender management practices.

Recommendations

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	Corrections Victoria should:	
1.	Develop new output performance measures for external reporting that reflect the impact of Community Correctional Services on offender compliance and rehabilitation and provide a meaningful assessment of the effectiveness of offender management practices.	17
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Audit Act 1994 section 16— submissions and comments

Introduction

In accordance with section 16(3) of the *Audit Act 1994* a copy of this report was provided to the Department of Justice with a request for comments or submissions.

The comments and submissions provided are not subject to audit nor the evidentiary standards required to reach an audit conclusion. Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of those comments rests solely with the agency head.

Submissions and comments received

RESPONSE provided by the Secretary, Department of Justice

The Department of Justice welcomes the report and the acknowledgement of the robust offender management framework that governs Community Correctional Services (CCS) operational practice and the organisational commitment to implementing a strong quality assurance model.

CCS supervises adult offenders sentenced by the courts to serve community-based dispositions, and those conditionally released from prison by the Adult Parole Board. CCS plays a vital role in community safety, by rehabilitating offenders and diverting low-risk offenders from jail, thereby enabling Victoria to maintain one of the lowest per capita imprisonment rates in Australia. CCS facilitates a range of targeted criminal justice interventions to ensure delivery of effective programs to reduce recidivism, which operates as part of an offender management framework that manages offenders in accordance with the risk of reoffending that they represent and addresses individual offender needs.

Government, Judicial and public confidence in CCS are critical components in ensuring that orders under the supervision of CCS remain a viable sentencing option in this state. On that basis, Corrections Victoria and the Department of Justice have accepted all four recommendations of this report and will develop improved performance measures that provide a clearer picture of the effectiveness of CCS in addressing offending behaviour and reducing recidivism into the future.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

Victoria's prison population has increased significantly over the last four years. Between 1 July 2004 and 30 June 2008, it grew by 580 (16 per cent) to a total of 4 177 prisoners. This compares with increases of 7.9 per cent in New South Wales, 3 per cent in Queensland, and 9.8 per cent nationally over the same period. The Victorian increase has placed pressure on the capacity of the prison system because occupancy rates now average around 92 per cent.

Corrections Victoria operates Victoria's adult corrections system and manages demand for prison services in several ways. Strategies include increasing prison capacity through construction and expansion of prisons and by managing offenders in the community rather than in prison.

Managing offenders in the community yields financial and social benefits. It is a cost-effective alternative to imprisonment, as the daily cost is around $16, compared with $221 to manage prisoners. It also enables offenders to maintain connection with their community, by retaining employment, social networks, accommodation, and undertaking programs to address their offending behaviour.

1.2 Managing community corrections

Community Correctional Services (CCS), within Corrections Victoria, manages offenders on community orders, including those paroled from prison. CCS's primary purpose is to enhance community safety by enforcing court and Adult Parole Board orders. It does this by:

- monitoring compliance with conditions that courts have attached to orders
- enabling offenders to make reparation to the community, often through community work
- facilitating offenders' access to programs and services that address offence-specific risk and needs, with the aim of reducing the risk of re-offending
- assisting offenders to adopt positive lifestyles in the community.

CCS is also responsible for providing pre-sentence advice to the Magistrates' and County Courts on the suitability of offenders to receive a community order as part of their sentencing.

1.3   Community orders

The courts have the discretion to allow offenders to serve their sentence in the community. Courts can apply a range of conditions to community orders, such as regular reporting to a CCS centre, or taking part in programs to address offender behaviour. Figure 1A outlines the key supervised and unsupervised community orders. In this report we refer to community orders to encompass all court orders undertaken in the community. This excludes parole but includes Community-Based Orders and Intensive Correction Orders, amongst others.

Figure 1A
**Community orders—supervised and unsupervised**

Supervised orders	
Intensive Correction Order	Community-based imprisonment of up to one year with strict supervision and conditions. Technically custodial, but carried out in the community. Courts can only make these where they consider imprisoning the offender. Core conditions include community work, and additional conditions such as treatment for offence-specific needs may be attached.
Community-Based Order	Non-custodial sentence of up to two years imposed when a person has been convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment or a fine. Core conditions apply to all orders. Courts must attach at least one additional condition, the most common being community work.
Unsupervised orders	
Community-Based Order—Community Work Only	A court can impose a Community-Based Order—Community Work Only order with a maximum of 500 community work hours for up to two years. If the sentence is for less than 250 hours, a pre-sentence assessment is not necessary. For more than 250 hours, an assessment is mandatory.
Community-Based Order—Fine Default/ Community Work Permit	Offenders who do not pay fines can convert them into community work orders. There are no other program conditions. For fines resulting from court proceedings, offenders who convert them into community work are subject to a Community-Based Order—Fine Default. For fines from infringement notices, offenders who convert their fines are subject to a Community Work Permit order. Community work hours must number between eight and 500.

Note: A range of other supervised orders exist, such as Combined Custody and Treatment Orders, Home Detention and Drug Treatment Orders. Combined, they made up just over one per cent of all orders in 2008–09. CCS also manages Adult Parole Board orders and Commonwealth and interstate orders, which have also been omitted here.
Source: Corrections Victoria.

In 2007–08, the average daily number of offenders undertaking supervised and unsupervised community orders was around 6 500. Around 65 per cent of these offenders were on supervised orders. As Figure 1B shows, 90 per cent of these offenders undertook Community-Based Orders. The remaining 10 per cent undertook Intensive Correction Orders.

Figure 1B
Average daily number of offenders by order type 2007–08
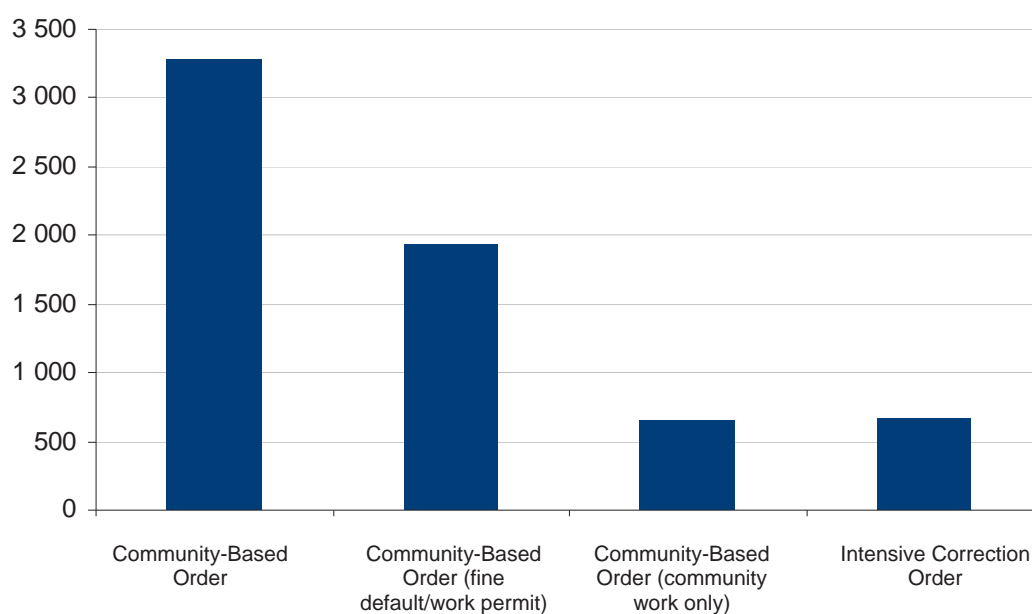
Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office, from Corrections Victoria data.

1.3.1 Offences committed

The courts impose community orders for various offences. As Figure 1C shows, the most common offence type for which an order was made in 2007–08 was 'acts intended to cause injury', followed by 'theft and related offences', and 'traffic and vehicle regulatory offences'. Twenty-eight per cent of these orders were property related, while around 26 per cent were violence-related offences.

Figure 1C
Most serious offence by offenders on supervised
community orders at 30 June 2008

Most serious offence	% of orders
Acts intended to cause injury	26.0
Theft and related offences	17.9
Traffic and vehicle regulatory offences	11.6
Unlawful entry with intent/burglary, break and enter	7.9
Dangerous or negligent acts endangering persons	6.8
Illicit drug offences	6.7
Fraud, deception and related offences	4.0
Public order offences	3.9
Sexual assault and related offences	3.0
Offences against justice procedures	2.6
Property damage and environmental pollution	2.5
Abduction, harassment and other offences against the person	1.6
Prohibited and regulated weapons and explosives offences	1.2
Robbery, extortion and related offences	1.1
Miscellaneous offences	0.1
Homicide and related offences	0.05
Unknown	3.1

Note: This includes supervised community orders, i.e. Intensive Correction Orders and
Community-Based Orders.
Source: Corrections Victoria.

1.4   Audit objectives and scope

The audit assessed how effectively Community Correctional Services manages
offenders on community orders. Specifically, the audit examined whether:
- performance monitoring and management information systems adequately inform
  Community Correctional Services whether they are achieving their aims
- offender management practices are consistent with better practice
- Community Correctional Services manage offenders in accordance with its
  policies, procedures and practices and apply them consistently
- Community Correctional Services' quality assurance mechanisms adequately
  safeguard its offender management.

Corrections Victoria and three community corrections offices were the focus of this audit. The review of offender management practices concentrated on court-imposed orders—supervised Community-Based Orders and Intensive Correction Orders. These represent the orders for higher-risk offenders. The audit did not examine parole orders imposed by the Adult Parole Board.

The audit was performed in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards applicable to performance audits. The total cost of this report was $175 000, which includes staff time, overheads and printing costs.

2 Offender management

At a glance

Background

Effective offender management addresses offender needs as well as the factors that led to the offending behaviour. Ultimately, this reduces the risk of re-offending. It also affects how well court orders are enforced and followed, and is central to maintaining the community's confidence in the criminal justice system.

Key findings

- Community Correctional Services' (CCS) offender management framework uses evidence-based principles. These align with international best practice, as well as legislation, correctional standards and detailed offender management guidance.
- CCS has a thorough and robust quality assurance framework for offender management. However, with some assessment and treatment providers, the arrangements in place to provide case managers with assurance over the timeliness of offender management after referral are not adequate.
- While management information systems provide reliable data, some information reported does not adequately reflect effectiveness of offender management.
- Some locations do not prepare actions plans, as required, in response to performance issues in monthly reports.

Recommendations

Corrections Victoria should:

- Develop new output performance measures for external reporting that reflect the impact of Community Correctional Services on offender compliance and rehabilitation and provide a meaningful assessment of the effectiveness of offender management practices.
- Develop performance measures to assess the timeliness of offender access to programs and services.
- Clarify the accountabilities and responsibilities of Community Correctional Services and assessment and treatment providers, in particular regarding timeliness for reporting on offender management processes, to provide assurance over offender management after referral to treatment services.
- Enforce the requirement that Community Correctional Services locations prepare action plans in their monthly regional reports to address areas where the location does not meet targets and service delivery outcomes.

2.1   Introduction

Managing offenders on community corrections orders is a challenging human services activity, influenced by offenders' complex social and economic situations. They include drug and alcohol problems, limited education, high unemployment, significant health issues, such as mental illness, and poor family and social links.

Effectively managing these offenders and ultimately reducing their risk of re-offending is critical and can strongly influence the extent to which offenders follow the court's orders. Community Correctional Services' (CCS) performance is central to maintaining the community's confidence in the criminal justice system.

2.2   Offender management

Offender management also includes CCS's services for offenders serving their sentence in the community. This covers risk and need assessments, program referrals and supervision so that offenders comply with the conditions of their orders.

CCS's offender management framework uses evidence-based principles. These align with international best practice, as well as legislation, correctional standards and detailed offender management guidance.

Offender Management Framework

The Offender Management Framework (OMF) guides offender management, with the aim of reducing the risk of re-offending. Practice principles, for example, detail the need for quality assurance and evaluation; adequate, appropriate and responsive programs; and evidence and theory-based offender management processes. The OMF informs Victoria's Correctional Management Standards.

Correctional Management Standards

The Correctional Management Standards set minimum requirements for community corrections in Victoria. They describe expected outcomes and outputs for activities, including offender assessment and advice; offender management; community work; and order administration. The standards also inform the Director's Instructions, which guide community corrections staff in managing offenders.

Director's Instructions

Director's Instructions outline the mandatory offender management tasks and practices for corrections staff to meet legal obligations, as well as court and Adult Parole Board expectations. They address 17 areas of offender management, including court assessments; risk identification and management; management of court orders; non-compliance and breach; and records management.

2.3   Management information

Management information systems measure performance and should reflect the impact, effectiveness and appropriateness of actions taken, as well as whether aims are being met. Supporting data should be reliable, accurate and relevant, so that management can use it to respond as appropriate.

We expected that CCS management used a range of data to inform it of how well offenders were being managed, and to identify areas for action where it was not meeting standards. We found that CCS used a range of reliable and accurate management information, reported internally and externally. However, not all of this information was useful and relevant for internal management or external reporting.

2.3.1   Internal reporting

Monthly regional reports

CCS management gets most of its performance information from its monthly regional reports that regional general managers prepare using performance-monitoring data. These reports detail performance against service delivery outcomes (SDOs) and targets from the annual budget papers. Figure 2A shows the types of information that the regional reports include.

Figure 2A
Regional report data

Service delivery outcomes	Other information
• successful completions of CCS orders	• internal management reviews
• induction within seven days	• Office of Correctional Services reviews
• completion of case reviews	• offender demographics
• completion of APB reports	• data audit and standards
• completion of pre-sentence reports	• budget
• registration of orders within five days	• staffing
• completion of case plans	• offender deaths
	• occupational health and safety,
	• regional initiatives

Source: Corrections Victoria.

Our examination of the monthly regional reports showed that all SDOs were reported on. Some regions did not prepare action plans as required to address areas where they did not meet targets and SDO standards. These regions should prepare action plans to strengthen accountability.

Regional roundtables

In addition to the monthly reports, each region holds an annual half-day regional roundtable forum. Regional CCS and prison staff attend to share experiences and discuss areas for improvement. The forums also encourage consistency and inform head office about a region's performance and progress. Regional roundtables are accompanied by a detailed report, covering:

- prison data (by exception)
- CCS data (by exception)
- head office update
- people management
- progress towards strategic plans
- regional initiatives
- thematic reviews
- financial management
- regional feedback on head office.

Internal management reviews

CCS conducts internal management reviews (IMRs) on individual files following reportable incidents. The main purpose of these reviews is to capture information, but they also provide assurance over the quality of CCS's intervention and their case and file management, and provide educational feedback to regional managers.

The IMRs are also part of CCS's quality assurance framework. Findings and actions are recorded in an IMR database and results are reviewed by senior corrections management for trends and issues arising. They also use the information to guide policy, inform training and supervision needs and identify potential system improvements. The Office of Correctional Services Review (OCSR) also monitors the results of IMRs for issues and uses this information to inform their forward work program of reviews.

2.3.2 External reporting

In addition to its internal reports, CCS also reports on offender management in the Department of Justice's annual report and in the annual budget papers. The main quality performance measures that CCS uses are:

- successfully completed community supervision orders
- appropriate referrals for offenders with a treatment or personal development program condition within set time frames.

CCS also measures the average daily number of offenders under community-based supervision as a quantity measure, and in 2009–10, CCS began to measure of the number of community work hours performed.

Community supervision orders successfully completed

CCS reports on the effectiveness of supervised offender management by measuring the percentage of offenders who successfully complete community orders. This includes orders that have expired or where CCS has approved an application to cancel the order.

Based on this definition, in 2008–09, CCS's supervised order completion rate was 68.2 per cent, against a target of 68 per cent. The completion rate for Intensive Correction Orders and Community-Based Orders was 77.9 per cent and 63.5 per cent, respectively. The most recent data, recorded in 2007–08, shows the national average completion rate for supervised orders was 74 per cent.

Using this data to assess the effectiveness of supervised offender management is problematic, partly because it cannot reflect offender complexities and risk, or how community correctional services staff apply policies if offenders breach their orders. For example, a low completion rate may indicate that corrections officers are managing offenders well, with good detection and action relating to breached orders. Conversely, a high completion rate could indicate that corrections officers are not managing offenders well, with low rates of breach detection and a lack of appropriate action.

Additionally, the performance measure does not reflect the effectiveness of offender management or whether the offending behaviour has been addressed. Rather, it reflects whether the offender complied with the order's conditions, which raises doubt around the value of using and externally reporting this figure as a single measure of effectiveness. The Productivity Commission also discussed limitations with this performance measure in its recent *Report on Government Services 2009*.

While CCS recognises the performance measure's limitations and lack of precision, they advised that it provides them with some indication that offender management practices and programs have influenced the offender and therefore the successful completion of the order. CCS also uses the measure as an internal management tool to indicate regional performance in offender management. Disaggregated data that highlights performance by region, order type and offender type can alert CCS to potential offender management issues, particularly where performance differs significantly from the target.

Offenders who have been appropriately referred to a program

It is often a requirement of a community order that the offender attend a treatment program or service. Programs aim to address factors that led to the offending behaviour, with the aim of reducing re-offending. Timely access to appropriate services is therefore an important part of successfully completing community orders.

CCS monitors the timeliness of referrals that it makes to Corrections Victoria program areas, such as Clinical Services and the Sex Offender Program, and external providers including the Department of Human Services' Community Offenders Advice and Treatment Services (COATS). However, for some services, following the referral CCS does not receive any further information on the time frames for assessments or programs beginning, and there are no time frame targets. Consequently, CCS cannot be assured that offenders are getting timely treatment to address their risks and needs. More detailed reporting from assessment and treatment providers would improve the way that CCS measures the effectiveness of offender management.

Under an arrangement which has just come into effect between Clinical Services and CCS, Clinical Services clinicians are required to provide the case manager with a referral outcome within two weeks of receiving the referral. This will help CCS manage offenders and we encourage the use of a similar arrangement between CCS and the Sex Offender Program.

CCS has in place a brokerage arrangement with COATS to undertake independent alcohol and drug assessments and purchase treatment services from community alcohol and drug treatment services. A protocol developed between CCS and COATS requires that COATS provide, for an individual offender, an assessment report formulation to CCS, which includes a summary of the assessment and treatment plan developed. However there are no time frames specified for providing this report to CCS after assessment. The protocol is currently being reviewed and will introduce a target for assessing offenders within five days of referral. A target time frame for reporting to CCS on an assessment outcome would strengthen accountability.

2.3.3 Quality assuring offender management practices

The performance measures CCS uses to provide external assurance do not adequately reflect its effectiveness in managing offenders. Given the inherent limitations of using completion rates to assess the effectiveness of offender management, we expected that CCS would have in place a range of quality assurance mechanisms to inform itself about how effectively it was managing offenders.

We found that CCS has a thorough and robust quality assurance framework that provides assurance that it is managing offenders effectively, albeit with some opportunities for improvement. The quality assurance framework covers all levels of its offender management. Annual statewide audits of offender and file management are the basis of the framework, with additional oversight and reporting mechanisms at the regional and local level, including the internal management reviews discussed above.

Statewide offender and file management audits

CCS staff conduct annual audits of offender and file management to measure offender management practices against the Victorian Correctional Management Standards. The offender and file management audit assesses whether:

- service quality meets stakeholder requirements
- offender management processes comply with policy, including legislation, regulations, standards and Director's Instructions
- existing offender management procedures and practices are effective
- there are opportunities for improvement.

CCS uses an appropriate audit methodology and scope for the offender and file management audits, including:

- using teams of experienced regional staff to conduct the audits
- making sure each team audits a region other than their own
- using a sample of 20 per cent of all files at each community corrections location covering offender types, risk category and breach status. In 2008, 864 files were audited, of which about 94 per cent were for high and medium-risk offenders
- using a weighted audit tool based on the Victorian Correctional Management Standards
- using a CCS benchmark based on past performance to assess files. In 2008, this benchmark was 80 per cent.

The audit process has been strengthened through location-specific and statewide reports that detail findings and assessment against the benchmark, as well as recommendations for improvement. CCS also requires each location to develop an action plan that addresses areas that did not meet the standard. While some of the action plan time frames could be more specific, they addressed audit issues and were followed up with the necessary action. Once all actions are completed, head office receives a final update of the action report.

Regional audit action plans were introduced on the recommendation of the 2008 offender and file management audit. This has enabled CCS to address regional issues and to make sure regional general managers were accountable for making appropriate changes. In addition, the 2008 offender and file management audit findings were used to inform the development of new Director's Instructions.

Most of the issues that the CCS offender and file management audit identified were file-management related, including incomplete declarations and assessment tools, and missing file notes and forms. There were also issues relating to offender management practices, including some offenders not being reassessed or reviewed throughout their order, untimely breaching and not following up absences. Figure 2B shows the main findings from the 2008 CCS statewide offender and file management audit, including how the organisation performed against its benchmark. CCS increased the benchmark in 2008 from 75 per cent to 80 per cent in 2008 as a stretch goal.

Figure 2B
Community Correctional Services statewide annual audit results 2008

Victorian standard	Areas for improvement	Achievement against benchmark (80%)
Assessment and advice	Complete risk assessment tool, including mandatory sections	89.2 %
	Make sure key documents are signed by offender	
Offender induction	Complete documentation	90.2%
Offender management and supervision	Complete risk assessment tool	75.7%[a]
	Address issues around completion of key offender management processes	
Offender programs	Complete key documents	75.5%[a]
	Keep sufficient evidence on file of ongoing contact with treatment agencies	
Compliance/breach preparation	Investigate absences in a timely and thorough manner	80.4%
Transitional care	None	96.5%
Offender at Risk of Suicide and Self Harm	Address issues around reassessment of risk of suicide or self harm throughout order	73.1%[a]
Identification and Management of High Profile Offenders	Review these cases at High Profile/Major Offender Review meetings	75.6%[a]
Offender file and records management	Complete documentation for case management	85.1%
E*Justice	Enter all contracts on E*Justice	Non-weighted standard
Registers checked—sex offender and high profile	Enter all sex offenders on the CCS sex offender register	Non-weighted standard
Overall file management	Actions required related to specific locations:	Non-weighted standard
	Staff to undergo breach preparation training	
	Management team to make sure compliance plans are used appropriately	
	Return offenders in breach in a timely manner	
	Issue of summons and warrants in a timely manner	
	Establish a system to track files in breach.	

Note: (a) Benchmark achievements indicated are those that fell below benchmark standard.
Source: Victorian Auditor-General's Office from Corrections Victoria data.

The offender and file management audits show CCS whether it is complying with its practice requirements. Given both the audit tool and CCS's processes use the Victorian Correctional Management Standards as a model, CCS uses better practice principles to monitor its processes.

We undertook a targeted, risk-based examination of offender management practices at a selection of community corrections offices. This approach focused on the higher-risk areas identified in CCS's annual offender and file management audit and was aimed at verifying that these issues were being addressed.

Our findings were consistent with the CCS offender and file management audit. While there were some issues, they did not warrant specific recommendations. However CCS needs to remain vigilant in its offender management and quality assurance practices. Our file review found:

- decisions on offender management were not sufficiently documented, such as those relating to the frequency of offender supervision
- offender management processes were not always completed in a satisfactory and timely way and sometimes processes were not followed, such as risk assessments, investigation and acquittal of absences, ongoing contact with treatment providers, and home visits.

Other quality assurance activities

CCS conducts other quality assurance activities that help identify issues and continuously improve offender management practices.

Case reviews

All supervised orders are subject to case reviews. There are several types of case review meetings held to monitor offender compliance and quality of case management depending on the offender's risk of re-offending, offence type, public profile, and related issues. CCS does its main case review, for all orders, at local offices. The aim of this review is to:

- monitor the offender's compliance with the conditions of the order
- assess appropriateness of interventions
- identify issues that may affect offender compliance
- respond to changes in risk and need
- serve as a quality assurance process.

CCS must complete its review within six weeks of the court order. After this, review frequency is based on the risk of re-offending—every three months for high risk and every six months for moderate or low risk. CCS monitors staff case reviews through regional monthly reports.

Other formal reviews address issues around offenders who are high risk, high profile, major offenders, sex offenders and offenders on extended supervision orders. Senior staff will attend these reviews when a higher level of monitoring is required.

Practice committees

Practice committees unite practitioners with a particular expertise who can discuss practice issues. They are also a way of getting staff feedback about practices. Each region has a representative, to whom all staff can forward queries and feedback. The committees generally meet quarterly. While there are no specific outputs for these committees, their purpose is to help identify non-compliance with the Director's Instructions, as well as areas for improvement.

There are four committees, addressing different areas of community corrections:
- Offender Management
- Community Work
- Court Services Unit
- Adult Parole Board.

External reviews

The OCSR does an external review of CCS's operations and services. The Department of Justice created it to oversee the corrections system in Victoria. It has reviewed offender management, including a 2006 review of CCS's Management of High Risk Offenders Serving Intensive Correction Orders (followed-up in 2009) and a review, in 2009, which examined the quality of advice that CCS provided to the courts.

The second report was relevant to this audit because it examined the pre-sentence advice CCS gave to the courts. While the OCSR found some issues with the advice that CCS provides courts, it considered it to be of high quality. CCS developed an action plan in response to the review's recommendations. Most of these actions have been carried out.

2.4   Conclusion

While managing offenders is a complex human services activity, CCS has demonstrated that it is managing offenders on community corrections orders effectively. Its processes are adequate and its thorough quality assurance activities at local, regional and statewide levels give assurance that its methods are sound and it has the ability to continually improve its practices.

However the current outcome measures need to be more targeted to measure the impact of CCS's interventions. CCS would benefit from more useful performance measures that better demonstrate the effectiveness of its offender management practices. Regard needs to be given to measures such as recidivism and offender engagement.

Recommendations

Corrections Victoria should:

1. Develop new output performance measures for external reporting that reflect the impact of Community Correctional Services on offender compliance and rehabilitation and provide a meaningful assessment of the effectiveness of offender management practices.

2. Develop performance measures to assess the timeliness of offender access to programs and services.

3. Clarify the accountabilities and responsibilities of Community Correctional Services and assessment and treatment providers, in particular regarding timeliness for reporting on offender management processes, to provide assurance over offender management after referral to treatment services.

4. Enforce the requirement that Community Correctional Services locations prepare action plans in their monthly regional reports to address areas where the location does not meet targets and service delivery outcomes.

Auditor-General's reports

Reports tabled during 2009–10

Report title	Date tabled
Local Government: Results of the 2008–09 Audits (2009–10:1)	November 2009
Public Hospitals: Results of the 2008–09 Audits (2009–10:2)	November 2009
Towards a 'smart grid'—*the roll-out of Advanced Metering Infrastructure* (2009–10:3)	November 2009
Responding to Mental Health Crises in the Community (2009–10:4)	November 2009
Management of the Community Support Fund (2009–10:5)	November 2009
Auditor-General's Report on the Annual Financial Report of the State of Victoria, 2008–2009 (2009–10:6)	November 2009
Water: Results of the 2008–09 Audits (2009–10:7)	November 2009
Maintaining the Integrity and Confidentiality of Personal Data (2009–10:8)	November 2009
Vehicle Fleet Management (2009–10:9)	November 2009

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