Prisoner Programmes and Activities
in N.S.W. Prisons

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SUMMARY

Adult education prisoner programmes in New South Wales gaols attempt to meet:

* needs of prisoner management, as involvement of offenders in constructive programmes supports security by helping to reduce prisoner idleness, boredom and apathy. Programmes are part of the gaol management's social control – as good prisoner programmes support good security;

* prisoner needs to compensate for past deprived education backgrounds and provide opportunities for the development of new knowledge, skills and attitudes in work and education;

* gaol economic needs, because "skilled up" inmates have a greater potential to improve work output than unskilled workers, and go into socially useful occupations.

Delivering adult prisoner programmes represents a challenge due to barriers to prisoner participation, which include: the inmate's limited citizenship; the physical conditions in prisons; inmate peer attitudes; small staff; and financial resources. None-the-less, Programmes Officers address these constraints by creative and constructive programming in liaison with Superintendents and Custodial Staff.

The Department of Corrective Services allocated in 1988/89 about 2.16% of its budget on Prisoner Education, Life Skills, Vocational Training, Recreation and Library Programmes.

Prisoner Programmes can result in reduced short term, costs to Government by providing programmes to prisoners which makes them more productive members of the prison population. Prisoner programmes can bring reduced long term, costs to Government, as an improvement in the life circumstances of inmates results in lesser long term dependence of offenders on Government support programmes.
1.0 PRISONER PROGRAMME PHILOSOPHY

1.1 Why Adult Education Programmes?

1.1.1 Prisoner Need:
Inmate literacy/numeracy deficiencies are extensive. Despite compulsory childhood education, social factors such as childhood illness, disadvantaged families, itinerant parents, inappropriate education means that basic reading, writing and numeracy capacities are not developed. The personal and social cost of not being adequately literate and numerate are enormous. For an inmate, it can mean frustration in everyday reading and writing, low confidence, dependence on others and increased isolation. For the prison institution, it reduces inmate employment potential, created barriers between inmates and Departmental Officers.

Coupled with low literacy/numeracy skills many prisoners enter gaol with a history of failure experiences at school; they are early school leavers and lack the knowledge, skills and attitudes inherent in "formal" school education curriculum. Prisoners would, however, have education from: the family, church, work place, mass media and where other institutions have helped shape their development. The lack of "formal" education has created a need for compensatory education, which makes up for past deficiencies. This role is assumed by the Department because prisoners are in our "care and custody" and is necessary for the efficient and effective functioning of offenders in gaols and on release.

1.1.2 Prisoner Management:
As prisoners can be locked in their cells, for long periods each day, they require positive activities to use their time to alleviate boredom and/or pursuit of undesirable activities. Education facilities constructive use of prisoner time through correspondence study, completing assignments of in-gaol education programmes and inmate tutor programmes.

1.1.3 Community Expectations:
Education programmes develops inmates knowledge, skills and attitudes and helps their re-entry into society. This meets community expectations that inmates will live a law abiding community life on release.

1.2 Why Adult Life Skills Programmes?

1.2.1 Prisoner Need:
Offenders have poor life skills. The fact they are in prison provides evidence that they cannot cope in society. Life skills have not been developed in many prisoners because they come from disadvantaged families; are early school leavers and have inadequate schooling.
Life skills programmes help inmates take responsibility for their behaviour by examining family relationships, household management, job seeking and consumer law.

Statistically, 73% of prisoners were either unemployed or on a pension at time of arrest (Travis & Porritt, 1987) which highlights the need for life skills programmes to cope with being unemployed or on a pension, such as use of time, isolation and economic immobility.

Also, 19.5% of prisoners (Travis & Porritt, 1987) lived alone at the time of arrest and 61.9% were single. This reinforces the need for survival skill programmes such as cooking, money management and home maintenance. (Refer to Appendix 1).

1.2.2 Prisoner Management:

Institutionalisation reinforces prisoners' isolation. Life Skills Programmes can improve communication skills for Unit Management and as a worker in Prison Industries.

1.2.3 Community Expectations:

Through Life Skills Programmes, inmates can gain positive social skills which can assist their return to the community.

1.3 WHY VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES?

1.3.1 Prisoner Need:

The majority of offenders are unskilled at the time of arrest. Through Vocational Training they have the opportunity to gain skills by vocational instruction and work experience.

1.3.2 Prisoner Management:

Vocational Training reduces inmate idleness by providing worthwhile programme opportunities. This assists Superintendents and security because inmates are using their time in constructive ways, it alleviates boredom and pursuit of undesirable activities.

1.3.3 Economic:

Vocational Training and Education linked to work can help maximise the self-sufficiency of institutions. This is because "skilled up" inmates have greater potential to improve work output than unskilled workers. Vocational Training assists prison housekeeping functions e.g.: Wing maintenance, catering administration, through courses in painting, horticulture, car detailing.

Hence, Vocational Training which qualifies an inmate to undertake an advanced prison job, has the potential of improving production and thus the economic return (i.e., operating surplus) of Prison Industries.
1.3.4 Community Expectations:

One of the severe consequences of inmate under-achievement and failure is lack of marketable job skills that subsequently impedes their successful reintegration into the community. Prisoners who have gained both marketable employment skills and positive work habits have a greater chance of living law abiding lives in the community as they have the opportunity to gain income through socially acceptable means.

1.4 WHY RECREATION PROGRAMMES?

1.4.1 Prisoner Need:

Because prisoners live in cells which are physically confining they require activities that facilitates regular exercise. This compares with "jet lag" relaxation exercises for air travellers.

During incarceration, inmates should get the opportunity to learn how to use leisure in constructive ways. Hence, having opportunities to replace undesirable past leisure habits with new skills and interests. Recreation and sport, are linked with work.

Work, for some prisoners remains characterised by boredom, alienation and futility, for others it could be challenging. The work-non-work relationship is basic to the nature of the "work ethic" in industrial society. Recreation and sport develops and maintains inmate physical health. A physically, healthy workforce is more likely to exercise technical competence, the use of initiative and stimulate production (Parker, 1983).

The need for recreation and sport is particularly highlighted in low skilled/status work prevalent in many prison industries, e.g.: automation and assembly line work.

As the majority of offenders lack marketable employment skills recreation and sports programmes can provide Fitness Leaders Courses and Arts/Crafts Programmes which qualify offenders to gain employment on release. The rise of the leisure professions in Australian Society e.g., Fitness Centres, Arts/Crafts, Fairs, Cottage Craft Industries is illustrative of the employment potential.

Many prisoners enter gaol in poor physical health due to, e.g.: drug and/or alcohol abuse, a Health and Fitness Testing Programme can establish a health level of prisoners and plan appropriate diagnosis.

Statistically, 97.4% of prisoners, in gaol, have some medical problem (Travis & Porritt, 1987). And 63.5% are on medical treatment/medication, 11.9% expect a surgical problem, and 11% have a history of psychiatric problem (Travis & Porritt, 1987). Given this data, recreation can both improve physical health through exercise and mental health, focusing on new interest and activities, e.g. Arts, Crafts.
1.4.2 **Prisoner Management:**

The ideal of full employment and occupation of prisoners is not a present reality. The idleness and boredom and apathy of inmates with nothing to do can partly be alleviated through involvement of offenders in constructive leisuretime activities. These activities support security as they can be part of the gaol management's social control.

Many prisoners have poor social skills, low self-esteem and a negative approach to socially acceptable behaviour. Sport and recreation activities provide forums for the development of co-operation and interpersonal communication between offenders and officers and/or between offenders and instructors.

Prisoners have a right to be in the open air for part of the day. The opportunity for outdoor physical exercise is a positive expression of that right.

There are special groups of prisoners, who cannot work in prison, e.g.: intellectually handicapped. Recreation and sports provide constructive ways these inmates can use their time.

Containment, by definition, places limits on offenders physical activities. Nonetheless, the Department has an obligation to prisoners that they leave gaol "no worse for the experience". Participation in sport and recreation activities enables the maintenance of sport and recreation skills acquired prior to imprisonment.

Prisons, by the nature of confinement, create inmate boredom, anger, resentment and frustrations. Recreation can help inmates release their pent-up energy and alleviate these destabilising forces on "good order and control" in prisons by sports competitions and art and craft classes.

Recreation provides positive use of in-cell time through oil/craft painting, toy making, copperwork, moulding, match work, card making, guitar, clarinet.

1.4.3 **Community Expectations:**

Providing community sport and recreation activities to prisoners assist meeting the community expectations that offenders will reintegrate back into law abiding community life.

Indeed, inmate participation in community sports competitions can enhance the public perception of corrections. This wider understanding of prisons and offenders can be achieved through: sports teams entering gaol for competitions; gaol teams competing in the community competitions; exhibitions of offender recreation craftwork or donations of offender craftwork to community groups or charities.

Full employment is not a feasible social objective in Australian society. Reality is many prisoners will be unemployed by joining "dole queues". Prisoners released into the community with "free..."
time" seems alarmingly open to abuse, leading to drunkenness, illicit sexuality, crime, violence, vandalism, physical and psychological demoralisation. Recreation and sport in gaols provide opportunities for offenders to develop new leisure-time activities.

1.4.4 Economic:

Recreation improves inmates health, and healthy inmates result in fewer medical visits with lower overtime costs in transporting prisoners to hospitals and outside health care. As inmates are healthier, it makes them better workers in Prison Industries.

1.5 WHY PRISON LIBRARY SERVICE?

1.5.1 Prisoner Needs:

Inmates have a right to read. A quality Gaol Library Service can help in a positive and constructive way, by providing materials which develop inmate knowledge, attitudes and skills.

Library services can promote positive and constructive self-examination by providing materials on self-awareness, career opportunities, health, education, physical fitness, relaxation tapes and personal development.

Prisoners enrolled in programmes and correspondence courses require textbooks and reference materials which includes books, complete course requirements, such as essays, assignments, tests and examinations, gaol libraries can supply these.

Many inmates are in prison because they do not have basic survival skills. Reading is one of the best ways to improve these skills. Reading books and studying newspapers can keep inmates minds up-to-date with what is going on in the "free-world".

Inmates should have adequate access to legal assistance. Prison Library Services can assist inmates with provision of a collection of legal materials.

That 77.9% of inmates, (Travis & Porritt, 1987) had difficulty in filling in the reading forms, indicates a need for prisoner pictorial material and audio-cassettes. This format can be provided through the Library to inmates.

1.5.2 Prisoner Management:

Prisons, by separating offenders into cells, with often long in-cell time, creates isolation, boredom and apathy. A temporary mental escape can be provided by a Library Service, by supplying newspapers, books, posters, cassette tapes and magazines.

Prison Libraries, by giving inmates a constructive way to use their time, aids Superintendents and security. This is because inmate idleness creates security problems and apathy. A ready access to the Library gives inmates ways to use their time constructively.

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1.5.3 **Community Expectations:**

Library Services can help inmates by providing re-entry material and referral services. For example, A.I.D.S. information, Background to Careers, Community Language Materials, location of Crisis Centres, Migrant Referral Handbooks. Prison Libraries gives the local community Public Libraries a chance to form operational networks, to work together and evolve as support groups for each other.

1.6 **WHY DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAMMES?**

1.6.1 **Prison Need:**

A Personal Description Form Project (Travers & Porritt, 1987), identified by self-report to an Officer greater than 75% of inmates who acknowledged having "had trouble with drugs or alcohol". The majority of these inmates can be shown to have a lifestyle controlled by drug abusing and related criminal activities. These behaviours can be considered as being long term and resistant to services provided by the community, as sentencing is a last resort.

Moreover, the reduction in drug and alcohol use in gaols helps stop prisoner debts in gaol due to drug purchases, prisoner bashings and payoffs.

The Drug and Alcohol Programmes can meet prisoner need, through counselling, and strategies in handling drug and alcohol addiction; through these programmes, prisoners can be easier to manage.

The Drug and Alcohol Programme addresses the reduction/rehabilitation of prisoners.

1.6.2 **Prisoner Management:**

The Drug and Alcohol Programme provides constructive ways prisoners can spend their time making prisoners potentially easier to manage.

For instance, the Drug and Alcohol Programmes are providing programmes for one-to-one counselling, Drug and Alcohol discussion groups, NA, AA groups, GROW groups, personal development and activities to increase inmates self-esteem and personal power. Programmes are also organised to involve inmates in various projects e.g., the recent Run-a-thon at Cooma. Arts, Crafts, Relaxation, Fitness and Life Management Skills are included in the institutional programmes.

1.6.3 **Political/Community Expectations:**

The initiation of the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse was in response to the community concern about the situation of drug abusers, the resulting cost to the community in economical terms and in human suffering. As a significant number of drug abusing people involved in related criminal activities become inmates. The NCADA emphasis on reducing the supply of and demand for drugs in the community is continued and heightened for drug abusing inmates.
1.7 WHY WORK?

Prison Industries provide opportunities that teaches inmates job, social and safety training. Programmes focus on developing positive work habits that prepare the inmate to compete for jobs and become productive citizens.

The interface of Education, Recreation, Vocational Training, Life Skills, Drug and Alcohol Programmes with work should be considered in the prisoner's programme. Indeed, work needs to be considered in terms of the total prisoner programme. Reasons are that prisoner employment is a part, but not the whole of a prisoner's life. Education, Recreation, Life Skills, Library, Vocational Training and Drug and Alcohol Programmes are necessary for prisoners to work efficiently and effectively. This is because: Education can provide Literacy/Numeracy Programmes to help prisoners read operating manuals and signs and follow written instructions in the work place; Recreation can assist prisoner's mental and physical health so they are more productive workers; prisoners, like everyone else need a change from work, which recreation provides; Life Skills can assist in the social aspect of work - Communications, Working in Groups; Library can provide support for Vocational Training/Careers; Drug and Alcohol Courses can assist in management of prisoners - where inmates are on hard drugs, they cannot work efficiently; Vocational Training extends prisoner's skills to they can achieve bonus payments through more skilled jobs and Industries can gain a skilled work-force.

Broad based prisoner programmes, are essential to an efficient and effective work-force. Prisoner work can earn: monetary incentives, recreation time, education courses, life skills courses, life skills programmes, library, drug and alcohol courses.

2.0 PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES

2.1 Priorities:

Department of Corrective Services prisoner programme priorities are, in order: basic education/basic living skills; vocational training; arts, crafts, hobbies, recreational and education advanced.

2.2 Broad Programme Areas:

2.2.1 Basic Education - a range of educational programmes are provided appropriate to the needs of adults, within the gaols. These include basic literacy/numeracy classes; instruction in English-as-a-Second-Language; correspondence courses; individual tutoring programmes; external attendance courses.

2.2.2 Vocational Training - in co-operation with the N.S.W. Department of Technical and Further Education theoretical and practical classes are conducted in gaols in a range of trade areas including bricklaying, fitting and machining, welding, carpentry, laundry, automotive engineering, painting and decorating.

NOTE: The above discussion was drawn from a New South Wales inmate profile, refer to Appendix I.
2.2.3 **Life Skills** - these include a range of programmes to provide inmates with social survival skills to enable prisoners to make the transition from prison to the community. The lifestyles acceptable to the community are usually absent in the lifestyle of many prisoners. Hence, life skill programmes in the area of health education; life management skills enabling the inmate to manage his/her affairs; and communication skills are necessary.

2.2.4 **Recreation and Leisure** - these programmes develop inmate skills in hobby/craft areas; gives inmates opportunities to develop their own physical fitness; and develops team and individual sports in gaols. Provides skills in constructive use of leisure time.

2.2.5 **Library** - this programme aims to provide a range of recreational reading materials in gaols; supply text books for prisoners undertaking general education, vocational training and life skills courses; give, in institutional libraries, a range of general reference materials and of reference materials to programmes offered.

2.2.6 **Specialist Programmes** - the Division carries the responsibility for co-ordination, financial management of the Drug and Alcohol Programme, which includes: the Drug and Alcohol Worker Project and Specialist Units for Drug Dependent Prisoners.

2.3 **Programme Types:**

2.3.1 **Spontaneous Programmes** - these are "immediate response" to inmate need and have been devised to suit the tense, transient nature of some gaols such as Remand Centre, Long Bay Correctional Centre. The immediate response model helps block inmate problems by giving them something to do at that moment.

2.3.2 **Standardised Programmes** - These are programmes which have been identified as essential and are delivered throughout the N.S.W. prison system. Examples include: basic education; A.I.D.S. workshops;

2.3.3 **Programmes linked to other Services** - a number of Government Agencies, including the Department of TAFE and the Australia Council provide services linked to in-gaol programmes. Areas include: vocational training where the Department of TAFE provides trade training teachers and the Department facilities; the Australia Council supplies writer-in-residence for prisoner drama programmes; Tranby Aboriginal Culture Courses.

2.3.4 **Programmes restricted to other Services** - are those which the Department of Corrective Services cannot provide such as: First Aid Courses supplied by St. John's Ambulance/Red Cross; trade courses solely provided by the Department of TAFE in the community for inmates on external attendance; Fitness Leaders Courses by ACHPER.

2.4 **Methods of Delivery:**

The methods by which the programmes are delivered vary according to the security ratings of the prisoners involved and according to the
availability of appropriate teaching resources. Thus the methods employed are as follows:

2.4.1 Correspondence studies, particularly for inmates of maximum security institutions and often supported by visiting tutors.

2.4.2 In-gaol classes conducted by part-time teachers employed by the Department of Corrective Services, particularly in basic literacy, numeracy and English-as-a-Second Language.

2.4.3 In-gaol classes conducted by specialist teachers provided by the Department of Technical and Further Education, particularly for trade training programmes in maximum security institutions and via the Outreach Programme for short interest courses.

2.4.4 External attendance programmes are available for inmates who have achieved the lowest security rating and who are approved to attend specific courses of study at Universities, Colleges of Advanced Education and Technical Colleges.

2.4.5 In-gaol classes, workshops and discussion groups conducted by volunteers. These are usually of short duration and for very specific purposes.

2.4.6 Individualised programmes and team events, conducted by permanent staff (either Education Officers or Activities Officers).

2.5 INMATE PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMMES:

An average of 30.22% inmates (1267) inmates of the N.S.W. gaol population (4192) participate in education classes (September, 1988). Gaols with the highest inmate participation rates are: womens prisons, specialist prisons and afforestation camps. Inmates attend classes for 82.36% of the total possible attendance hours. Gaols with the highest inmate class attendances are minimum security gaols and specialist programmes (Young Offenders Programmes). Inmate performance in life skills classes, such as communications and personal development, is generally better than education (Literacy/Numeracy). Overall, inmates who participate in education (including life skills) perform satisfactorily, as they achieve target three or better. The average teaching cost per inmate participating in classes is $753.74. Gaols with the highest teacher per inmate costs are specialist programme gaols (Sex Offenders Programme and Intellectually Handicapped Programme and Special Care Unit). Lowest teacher costs per inmate are in minimum security gaols.

3.0 PRISONER PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

3.1 IMMEDIATE RESULTS:

Prisoner Programmes can give immediate observable changes in inmate behaviour e.g.; an inmate "being able to write a sentence", making a pottery vase, achieving a heart rate level in a fitness class, being able to read part of a manual at operate machines in Prison Industries.
To monitor inmate progress, Programmes Division has initiated assessment procedures, in the form of "targets" which measure gains in inmate learning. These target achievements are recorded on Monthly Inmate Progress Forms, ranging on a rating scale from "Not on Target" one, to "On Target" five.

Prisoner Programmes can be deemed successful if they help change inmate behaviour in a positive and constructive way. Lawrence (1985) examined the role of educational programmes in helping inmates cope with adverse living conditions in gaol. The study showed that the inmates generally described their living conditions as uncomfortable, noisy and crowded. A major finding of the study has been that educational programmes can help reduce the stress of living in overcrowded gaol conditions. Inmates participating in education programmes reported more positive feelings and more stable emotional states.

The significance of Prisoner Programmes in reducing illness, complaints, disruptions and violent behaviour in prisons cannot be overlooked (Lawrence, 1985). This is because good Prisoner Programmes support good security, order and prisoner control.

3.2 LONG TERM RESULTS:

An ultimate goal for Prisoner Programmes are the long term effects that they minimise the motivation for prisoners to re-offend upon release to the community. Hence, they will: be "fit" citizens; acquire information, skills and motivation needed to enter a job; learn to meet the demands of living a law abiding life in society; and contribute to the betterment of society.

Panaretos & Gorta (N.S.W. Department of Corrective Services, 1987) completed a study of 80 parolees who either began or completed education programmes in gaol. Nearly one-third of the sample had stated that the programmes had helped directly in obtaining employment. Even more positive, is the fact that nearly 75% thought the programme had the potential to help them obtain work, even if they had not obtained any by the time of the research. The unemployment rate of those who had undertaken Education Programmes in gaol was less than that of the group who had not done education in gaol.

The education courses were seen as having a positive effect. The courses helped gain confidence and pride in their work. Attendance at courses outside prison helped them get back into society by allowing them contact with the outside world again.

Although evidence may be found wherein an individual inmate describes the influence a given programme had on him or her, and although one can find the teacher or Programmes Officer who is known to have had significant influence on inmates, it is difficult to obtain evidence of the long-term effects of Prisoner Programmes.

Indeed, efforts to try to justify Prisoner Programmes in terms of measurable rehabilitative outcomes or of significant relationships between education provided in prison and reduction of rates of recidivism are singularly unrewarding. The difficulties faced by this research are: longitudinal studies suffer from the wide variety of variables and influence on behaviour; the influence of a given
officer or prisoner programme is inevitably mitigated by the efforts of other programmes or other contexts; an "excellent" prisoner programme can be defeated by the stuifling side effects of incarceration, while the inmates who truly succeed on release are probably products of many fine programmes. Correction Officers, family support, but to mention a few.

4.0 PRISONER PROGRAMME DELIVERY PRINCIPLES

Adult learning principles which are the basis of programme delivery include:

4.1 Prisoner programmes design and methods should be learner centred;

4.2 Prisoners should take increasing responsibility for their own learning which encourages inmates to move towards higher levels of self-management. (See Appendix 2);

4.3 Prisoner programmes should be regularly evaluated to ensure that efficiency and effectiveness are maintained;

4.4 Prisoner programmes should provide for constant feedback on prisoner performance by establishing targets.

These principles compare favourably with the learner centered policy set out in the Australian Association of Adult Education "Adults Learning in Australia: A Policy statement" (1988), The prisoners limited citizenship restricts the full implementation of these principles.

5.0 BARRIERS TO PRISONER PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMMES

5.1 INTRODUCTION:

The offenders and the environment in which the offender lives and works, sets up barriers to their participation in prisoner programmes.

5.2 Situational - the inmate's limited citizenship within institutions restricts access to programmes. The realities of lack of freedom and the physical environment of prisoners are obstacles to participation in prisoner programmes. These factors are intensified by geographical isolation of some institutions from service and resource providers.

5.3 Institutional - prisons erect barriers that discourage inmate participation in prisoner programmes. These include: in some gaols, inadequate physical accommodation; gaol routines centered around work can restrict inmate access to other programmes; negative attitudes to prisoner programmes by some Departmental Officers; restrictions placed on prisoner property of materials necessary for programmes; some institutional policies and practices that impose inconvenience, confusion or frustration on prisoner's participation in programmes, e.g., inmate property.

5.4 Peer Pressure - inmate peer attitudes not only give rise to many barriers, but also operate to maintain and reinforce them. The inmate's social environment, exerts strong pressures on the offender to conform to prevailing values and norms. For example, it can take a good deal of courage for an inmate to enroll in a literacy/numeracy class if the peer group ridicule him, and his wife thinks he is wasting his time.
5.5 **Staffing** - the barriers take their toll on Programmes Officer's morale, enthusiasm, and result in workplace frustration and "burn-out". Programmes Officers are affected by: inadequate staffing levels; endemic conflicts at the institutions between punishment and prisoner development; lack of perceived support from some Departmental Officers; unrealistic levels of support staff; excessive workloads, given their programme development and institutional committee responsibilities.

The need for adequate staffing was researched by Dickens (1986) who indicated that personal contact is the essential link that will draw more prisoners into active participation in education and recreational activities. Making personal contact with prisoners is essential to groups which underutilise services within prisons. More effective use must be made of selected prisoners and of appropriate Custodial Officers. Bathurst Gaol for example, has high levels of participation in education, which must relate to the Unit Management of the gaol.

5.6 **Inmate Attitudes** - these barriers relate to inmate values, attitudes and experiences. As inmates are largely drawn from economically and socially disadvantaged groups, they assess the worth of education strictly in terms of the tangible advantages which can be gained from having it. Hence, they see little value in obtaining knowledge for its own sake.

Low prisoner self-esteem with past failures, creates feelings that any effort to learn will result in humiliation. There is considerable evidence that suggests such fears are widespread among prisoners who have had a history of negative formal education experiences e.g.: truancy, early school leavers. The "fear of failure" is an obstacle to continuing education for prisoners.

Negative attitudes can be changed by better information, through counselling and especially, by Programmes Officers and Superintendents who exert such powerful influences on inmates.

5.7 **Informational** - the failure to communicate information on programme opportunities to inmates. This involves, as well, the failure of many inmates to seek out or use the information that is available. Indeed, inmates from low socio-economic groups, may have less information or opportunities, due to their low status at the time of arrest. Hence, lack of information is likely to remain a barrier to participation in prisoner programmes for disadvantaged adults.

Merely providing more or better information is unlikely to have any effect on inmates who make no effort to seek the kind of information that is disseminated. The disadvantaged inmates can be reached effectively, in part through personalised means of communication. Doing so, requires Custodial Officers to widen their role into that of case management/multi-disciplinary teams/positive interpersonal communications.

5.8 **Finance** - to mount Education, Recreation, Library, Vocational Training and Life Skills Programmes, Programmes Division received 2.16% of the 1988/89 budget of the Department of Corrective Services.

5.9 **Outside Agencies** - using outside agencies to provide services has drawbacks. These problems were raised by Harding and Gorta (1984) where reasons given for discontinuing vocational courses (those studies which were being studied by correspondence) concerned, slow feedback from the College of TAFE.
5.10 **Accommodation** - there is a lack of appropriate accommodation for some Prisoner Programmes. Factors interfering with learning in prisons include: noise, overcrowding, poor ventilation, low lighting levels. These environmental factors lead to: tension, stress, fatigue and poor health.

6.0 **WHAT AN ADULT OFFENDER SHOULD LOOK LIKE WHEN RELEASED FROM GAOL**

When the community decides to punish criminal behaviour by placing offenders in prison, it has an obligation to assume responsibility for what happens to the offender while in prison and what the offender looks like when he/she emerges at the end of the sentence.

What do we want the adult offender to look like when released? In terms of Prisoner Programmes, we would like the offender to leave gaol:

* confident that he/she has a **choice** of not returning to gaol;
* aware of realistic life options;
* with a marketable employment skill;
* with self-esteem to be able to manage his/her environment;
* with literacy/numeracy skills appropriate to the situation which they are returning;
* being able to use a library as someone in the community would use it;
* with appropriate personal communication skills;
* being able to use recreation/leisure time constructively;
* being able to use recreation facilities as someone in the community would use them;
* being able to control drug use and have alternative ways of coping with the life situation that underpinned the drug offence; and
* being able to keep a job from skills obtained in gaols.

This view of a prisoner on release reflects programme area outcomes in: Work, Education, Life Skills, Library, Vocational Training, Drug and Alcohol and Chaplaincy Services. Moreover, what the offender looks like will be a result of participation in a range of programmes reflecting the **interdependence** between programme areas. (Refer to Appendix 2 for an Appropriate Prisoner Programme Diagram).

A prisoner looking like that described above is a goal to work towards. This prisoner, with these skills, attitudes and knowledge would improve his/her life circumstances, whether employed or unemployed. In the long term, it could reduce dependence on Government Support Programmes and decrease costs to the Government.

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7.0 DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The most significant need is for the integration of prisoners programmes into the mainstream operations of the N.S.W. Department of Corrective Services. This, however, is a continuous process which requires a strong direction from politicians, correctional administrators, custodial officers and education staff.

Second, the effectiveness of these programmes is affected by the extent to which practical support can be gained from community agencies. Hence, further operational networks need to be established with outside agencies, as these can legitimately provide both human and financial resources, feed ideas into the prison system, so that programmes within prisons reflect equivalent education opportunities outside the prison walls.

Third, increased research effort needs to be expended to evaluate programme appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness so that reliable judgements can be made on the programmes available. Particularly, research capacity needs to be expanded in the post release area to ensure programmes are meeting the real needs of prisoners on their return to the outside world.

Fourth, the ways of meeting these future directions is for a strong affirmation by the Community, Government and the N.S.W. Department of Corrective Services that prisoner programmes are at the centre of the prisons function and it is realistically the only hope for prisons, prisoners and community.

Finally, prisoner programmes can result in reduced short term costs to Government by providing programmes to prisoners which makes them more productive members of the prison population; prisoner programmes can bring reduced long term, costs to Government, as an improvement in the life circumstances of inmates results in lesser long term dependence of offenders on Government support programmes, e.g.: Welfare and Social Security.
APPENDIX 1

AN OFFENDER PROFILE
AN OFFENDER PROFILE:

There is a wide variation in offender ability, attitudes and skill level which presents a challenge in being responsive to an offenders particular programme needs.

Evidence for this offender profile is provided by: Travis & Porritt (1987), Panaretos & Gorta (1987), Harding & Gorta (1984), Laycock & Griffiths (1980), Lovejoy (1981), Spencer (1980), Research and Statistics Division, N.S.W. Department of Corrective Services, Prisoner Assessments, Programmes Officers, Programmes Division:

1.1 The Department of Corrective Services supervises, approximately 4,000 persons in the Department's institutions and over 12,000 in the community. Of the 4,000 in institutions, approximately: 96% are male and 4% female; 76% are English speaking born, and 24% Non-English Speaking Background (NESB); of the 24% of NESB, 10% are Aboriginal.

1.2 56.9% of prisoners are between 18 - 29 old; 38.3% are 30-49 years old; 4.3% are between 50 and 54 years old; .3% of the population are 16 - 17 years old.

1.3 11% of the N.S.W. prison population left school before 13 years of age; 27.9% left before 14 years; 50.6% before 15 years; 80% left before 16 years (Travis & Porritt, 1987);

1.4 The educational attainment of prisoners in N.S.W. prior to imprisonment presents a clear picture of low academic achievements. Harding & Gorta (1984) indicated that 60% of the prison population had not obtained any formal educational qualifications at time of arrest;

1.5 Functional illiteracy runs at a level at least three times higher in the prison population than in the general community;

1.6 77.9% of prisoners had difficulty in filling forms and in reading and writing forms in gaol, according to a study by Travis & Porritt (1987);

1.7 73% of prisoners in N.S.W. were either unemployed, or on a pension at the time of arrest (Travis & Porritt, 1987). Nationally, 40.8% of the prison population were unemployed at time of arrest (Walker & Biles, 1986);

1.8 Nationally, 1.8% of the prison population had attained technical or trade qualifications (Walker & Biles, 1986). Harding & Gorta (1984) found that 13% of the N.S.W. prison population had gained some form of specific tertiary or vocational qualifications at the time of arrest;

1.9 The occupational history of prisoners in N.S.W. indicates, that of the prisoners with a job at time of arrest, two-thirds stated their usual occupation as being in the unskilled/semi-skilled areas which included jobs as labourer and process worker (Harding & Gorta, 1984);

1.10 88.2% of prisoners were either single, living in a defacto, relationship, separated or divorced at time of arrest (Travis & Porritt, 1987);
1.11 9.5% of prisoners lived alone at the time of arrest (Travis & Porritt, 1987);

1.12 97.4% of prisoners, in gaol have some medical problem (Travis & Porritt, 1987);

1.13 75% of inmates acknowledge having had trouble with drugs and alcohol (Travis & Porritt, 1987);

1.14 It is estimated that 60% of first offenders do not return to gaol; of the 40% who do, 80% return in their late 40's.

From this data, the typical offender in N.S.W. prisons is: male, born in Australia; not married (single or defacto); functionally illiterate; an early school leaver; has no educational qualifications; long history of unemployment; lacks marketable employment skills; when employed, changes jobs frequently; lives alone, without family relationships; has no dependent children; long history of medical treatment; history of drug and/or alcohol abuse; has little, if any financial resources (Travis & Porritt, 1987).
APPENDIX 2

DIAGRAM APPROPRIATE PRISONER PROGRAMME
REFERENCES


Travis, G. & Porritt, D. (1987) Selective Data from 120 Personal Description Forms. Research and Statistics Division, Department of Corrective Services, N.S.W.


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