Interim Review of Education and Training Provision in NSW Correctional Centres

Draft Report

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1. Background and Terms of Reference

The current interim review had, at the outset, a number of terms of reference: some of these required investigation of specific educational issues, others required examination of specific industrial issues, still others were not terms of reference at all but principles underpinning the overall framework for educational delivery in DCS. This was a result of the origins of the terms of reference – arising as they were out of an industrial dispute which had led to arbitration.

It was agreed after a number of meetings of the committee of review (the Committee) that the full range of issues in the terms of reference should not be examined at this stage and that this review should concentrate on educational issues only. Originally it had been intended that the review be one of the whole of the committee, presumably along the lines of a Senate Inquiry. However what became clear during the meetings of the Committee was that the combination of industrial and educational issues contained within the terms of reference made progress difficult as each of the parties sought to concentrate on different issues. Hence it was agreed that the chair should undertake the review and submit the report to the Committee for consideration. This report, written by the independent chair of the committee, reflects that decision.

It is important to state at the outset that this report does not arise out of a full-scale review of education and training in the Department of Corrective Services (DCS). If such a review was required it would need clear terms of reference, adequate resourcing and a time frame which allows for an in-depth investigation of actual provision, submissions from interested parties, a thorough investigation of the international literature and, possibly, visits to other correctional systems to examine best practice. Given the Senate Review, however, and the quite recent review in Victoria, it is not clear whether there is in fact a need for such a full scale review.

Read as a whole, the terms of reference contained in item 1, question the appropriateness of the current arrangements for education. Is what the DCS is delivering the kind of education that is appropriate for inmates (taking into account the developments in educational thinking and reforms outside the correctional system as well as the Senate Inquiry recommendations) and is it succeeding in its aims?

Specifically, the terms of reference can be seen to ask questions about:
- educational aims/philosophies (a to i), methods of delivery (g), success – the extent to which it improves inmates’ capacity to integrate into the community after release (e), and finally, the appropriateness of the relationships between the various parts of the IDS program (f, h).

2. Process of undertaking the interim review

The Review Committee met on five occasions and membership of the committee included:

Mr Marty Burgess (NSW TAFE Teachers Association)
Mr Kevin Finnerty (A/Principal AEVTI, DCS)
Ms Jenny Furber (Director, Access Education Services NSW TAFE)
Mr Peter de Graaff (Senior Education Officer, MMTC, CSTA)
Prof. Andrew Gonzi (Dean, UTS Faculty of Education and Independent Chair)
Ms Diane Hague (NSW Teachers Federation)
Ms Maree O'Halloran (Teacher, Long Bay CSTA)
Ms Deirdre Hunter (Manager Industrial Relations, DCS)
Ms Kay Lord, Executive (Director Human Resources Management, DCS)
Ms Catriona McComish (Assistant Commissioner: Inmate Management, DCS)
Mr Wayne Ruckley, (Director, Corrective Services Industries)

The Chair undertook visits to MRRC, Mulawa, Lithgow, Bathurst, Oberon and Kirkconnell correctional centres. In each of these institutions there were scheduled meeting with the Governor, Educational and other IDS staff – CSI Overseers, Program Managers, Senior Education Officers/Education Officers and with inmates. Discussions were held without any other member of the committee being present to ensure that full and frank discussions with key stakeholders, including inmates, could be facilitated.

The chair met as a group and individually the following members of TAFE involved with correctional programs:

Ms J Ferber, Director Access Educational Services Division
Ms. Pam Gill, Manager Aboriginal Programs Unit
Ms. Gloria Provost, Team Leader, Aboriginal Programs Unit
Ms Sue Reed, Aboriginal Coordinator, Western Sydney Institute of TAFE
Ms. Inez Gede, ICCLO, Hunter Institute
Mr. Peter Quais, Teacher Carpentry and Joinery, Cessnock College
Mr. Alan Miller, ICCLO, Western Sydney Institute
Mr. Ray Mountaun, Head Teacher Bricklaying, Bathurst College
Ms. Manon Sheridan, Teacher Welfare, Bathurst College
Mr. Martin Hollings, ICCLO, Sydney Institute
Ms. Nina Waker, Teacher Job Skills
Mr. John Rankin, Teacher Commercial Cookery, Blue Mountains College
Ms. Carol Crennan, Project Officer Access
Ms. Lynn Godrich, ICCLO, OTEN

The committee of review played an important role in determining appropriate directions for the review, thus acting more as a steering committee for the Independent Chair throughout the process of information gathering and analysis. All members of the committee of review provided a list of resources, including articles, statistics and course materials which were examined in the course of the review.

It is important to point out that the meetings of the Committee have clarified a number of the issues and has helped to develop the points of agreement between the parties that are outlined below. Thus the final report itself is only part of the outcomes of this review.

3. Description of current educational provision

The Adult Education & Vocational Training Institute (AEVTI) provides specialist adult education programs for the NSW correction context. AEVTI is a registered training provider with the NSW Vocational Education Training and Accreditation Board (NSW VETAB). At present AEVTI is responsible for the
delivery of accredited vocational education to offenders across the 26 NSW correctional centres. TAFE NSW gives advanced standing to students who have successfully completed AEVTI courses. AEVTI, TAFE NSW and CSI aim to equip inmates with skills which will enable them to participate effectively in the workforce on their release from custody.

Full time and contract teachers, education officers and TAFE NSW teachers deliver accredited programs in literacy, numeracy, vocational training, life skills and recreation. Corrective Services Industries (CSI) assist in facilitating vocational training opportunities in consultation with AEVTI. Specific educational programs are dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates, women and people from non-English speaking backgrounds. There does appear to be what could be described as a dual provision with both internal (AVETI) and external providers (TAFE) of education.

In June 1999, there were 7350 full time inmates in 26 New South Wales correctional centres. The correlation between low socio-economic status and imprisonment is well documented. One of the key challenges is to meet the enormous needs of a diverse population and to develop and deliver programs and therapeutic interventions to address some of the issues relating to offending behaviour.

To this end, the DCS has targeted resources in prioritised areas of need and the following strategies have been implemented:

- screening and assessment on reception to identify those at risk of self harm and suicide
- case management and the introduction of individual program pathways for inmates
- restructuring within prisons and community corrections to facilitate integration
- focus on programs targeted at criminogenic need

Inmate Development Services is therefore made up of the following branches:

- AEVTI
- Welfare Services
- Psychological Services
- Alcohol and Other Drug Services
- The HIV & Health Promotion Unit

DCS spending on education over the last few years is included in attachment 1

4. The positions/philosophies of DCS, Teacher Federation and TAFE

Each of the above stakeholders provided the chair of the committee with a statement of philosophy/recommendations as to future educational provision in the goals. Only those parts of the submissions which relate to educational issues have been considered. These positions are summarised below and are followed by comments of the independent chair of the committee.
4.1 Department of Corrective Services (DCS)

The DCS argues that the major aim of the whole of the Inmate Development Services (IDS) program is the development of social attitudes, behaviours and skills which lead to a successful return to the community, thereby reducing the likelihood of offending behaviour and consequently a reduction in recidivism. Recent research suggests that success in achieving this overall aim depends on integrated programs which include education but which place it within a wider range of services, through taking a case management approach. The type of educational provision most likely to help to achieve this overall aim must follow the overall departmental assessment of the individual's needs and must reflect standards/directions for education outside the corrective system. This means, in the context of the national training framework, that there should be a concentration on providing education that will equip inmates for employment through developing vocational and personal work related competencies. It also means that courses should be competency based, recognised by industry, accredited, modular and presented flexibly, taking into account the difficulties of the context.

There is a strong suggestion in the DCS submission that educational choices for inmates should be guided by the wider case management process and that educational options need to be limited to those which can establish their contribution to reintegrating the inmate to the community. This excludes personal development programs unless they are part of an integrated program approach.

The DCS is critical of the extent to which current educational arrangements have, to date, planned the educational provision for inmates. A suitable planning framework would include a range of factors which link inmate education to such things as correctional work options and post release employment options.

The DCS is also critical of absence of performance indicators for education and evaluation of outcomes against these indicators.

It recommends that in the future, there be an integrated holistic approach to education in the corrective setting, that education staff work within the case management approach and that AEVTI develop statewide policies to reflect this approach. It suggests that given the rapid changes to inmate population and employment opportunities outside goals that education must be able to adapt quickly and questions whether the current administrative arrangements can enable this.

4.2 The NSW Teachers Federation (the Federation)

The Federation's submission argues, following the Council of Europe and the UN, that all inmates have a right to education of the broadest kind – including creative, cultural, religious and social as well as literacy, basic and vocational education. These rights, it points out, are included in the DCS' own (1951) Regulations and the recently revised Corrective Services Act.

The submission points out that the inmate population has very low educational levels and that, following the views expressed by Nagle, it is vital to provide
inmates with literacy/numeracy and pre-vocational skills as well as skills to help cope with life outside gaol.

It suggests that in recent years AEVTI has worked with TAFE to develop plans for aboriginal inmates, have developed materials for inmates and have received awards for excellence in adult education. The creation of AEVTI, it is argued, has been a major force in improving quality of provision and standards of qualification and expertise of education staff. The submission argues that campuses of AEVTI should be clearly designated in correctional centres. It argues further that the importance of the educational provision and its relationship to the NSW Equity Charter is such that AEVTI should stand separate from the DCS organisational structure and the Principal of AEVTI should report directly to the Commissioner of Corrective Services. Other organisational matters are raised, which though they could be considered industrial issues are also likely to have an impact on educational provision. Specifically the Federation argues that SEO's should not report to Program Managers but to the gaol Governor.

The Federation proposes a set of standards for use by correctional organisations, (similar to those developed in the United States) which covers operation, funding, governance, staffing levels, staff development and evaluation amongst other things. It argues such standards would enable the DCS to encourage high quality educational provision for inmates. Finally it is argued that an AEVTI Board be legislatively constituted and be the chief forum for determining educational directions in the DCS and developing and implementing quality assurance/monitoring procedures.

4.3 NSW TAFE (TAFE)

In its submission TAFE follows the original terms of reference for this review and comments on each of the individual statements/questions contained in the first reference.

TAFE argues that all TAFE curriculum is accredited, that they can provide the same programs for inmates as are provided for the wider community and that these are provided by educators who have teaching qualifications. In addition TAFE supports these staff by use of liaison officers. TAFE also provides resource packages to assist staff delivering programs.

The submission points out that DCS and TAFE have worked together to develop and implement many initiatives though commonwealth funding grants and that while all their courses are customised to meet inmates needs they are all nationally recognised and within the National Training Framework principles.

The suggestion that AEVTI develop QETO status is rejected in this submission. It is argued that this would not be cost effective and that AEVTI can access this status through TAFE.

The TAFE submission argues that any personal development program needs to be integrated with the employment needs of the inmates. It points out that there is substantial scope for developing relationships between vocational skills development and other activities in the goal such as work in CSI and
improvements to gaol infrastructure. It also makes the point that the strong links of TAFE to the community can be utilised in any integrated pre and post release program to ease inmate's transition into the community, employment and further education.

TAFE points out it has special expertise to help inmates with special needs and/or disabilities.

5. Points of agreement and disagreement between the parties

As a result of discussions emerging out of the meeting of the committee, and after a reading of the various submissions it appears to the independent chair that there are a number of areas of agreement between the parties:

- that there is a need for close co-operation between educational provision in prisons as coordinated by AEVTI and the wider IDS program.

- that the aims of education programs in prisons are not clearly articulated and there is not agreement about these aims across the range of prison staff.

- there is need for better coordination of training of custodial and IDS staff. There was agreement that where custodial staff and IDS staff work together that outcomes for prisoners are enhanced. Joint staff development needs to be enhanced.

- there are inadequate performance indicators for educational outcomes and insufficient evaluation of outcomes.

- co-ordination of education between prisons is inadequate and that part of the reason for this is the lack of a developed electronic database on prisoners educational progress.

- pre and post release programs are inadequate and TAFE provision is essential for linking education in prisons to wider educational and employment opportunities outside prison.

On the other hand there are a number of areas where there is not agreement, though some of these areas seem to be characterised by differences of degree rather than absolute opposition.

- right of inmates to choose the type of education they access in prisons

- whether the implementation of case management should determine readiness for education

- the use of recidivism as the major performance indicator (or the only indicator) of successful inmate education.

- the extent of integration of education with IDS and particularly CSI.

- the need for flexibility in staffing- particularly the need for casual/permanent staff in educational delivery.
6. Views of the independent Chair

The following views are those of the independent chair and are based on a reading of the various submissions (including those additional to the official submissions), published reports, visits to correctional facilities, interviews conducted during visits, and examination of various documents and articles.

6.1 Praise for work of educators in difficult environment

Nothing in these comments should be taken to be critical of the work of individual educators in the prison system. These educators are dealing with the most disadvantaged section of the Australian population and one which often suffers from a range of drug related and psychological problems. Teachers have to deal with what is in some ways a heterogeneous population included in which there are dangerous and disturbed individuals and where the personal safety of teachers is an important consideration.

Moreover, the ways some of the correctional facilities are organised both operationally and physically is almost completely unrecognisable to learning. The education staff sometimes contend with a lack of understanding and sympathy and even hostility towards the role of education from non educational staff. All of the educators interviewed were deeply committed to providing opportunities for inmates aimed at improving their lives both within the correctional setting and outside and are to be admired for their dedication, idealism and capacity to deal with a very complex and difficult job.

6.2 History of educational provision

The history of education and training in correctional settings in Australia is documented in a number of reports, most recently the Senate Inquiry into Education and Training in correctional facilities. As the Senate report points out while educational provision could be fairly described as a disgrace for most of the last 140 years, since the 1970s much has been done to reform prison education. This is particularly the case in the last few years, and is a point supported by Semmens (1998), who has described the changes in the last decade in Australia as "a very active and positive period of reform."

Some of the major changes over the last decade have been the developments of a general education pathway leading to a qualification, developments of high quality resource packages specifically designed for inmates, a far closer alignment than previously between national education policies and prison programs, a greater concern for aboriginal inmates and a recognition of the need for high quality pre and post release programs. However, as all commentators have noted, much remains to be done. Most of the Senate proposals, for example, have not been implemented and many of the new ideas, like community reintegration, which are linked to education and other in-gaal programs have only just begun to be considered.

Even a brief reading of the changing paradigms of correctional programs over the last 50 years indicates the difficulties of achieving the aim of rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates into the wider community. While many approaches have been tried in various countries over this period, recidivism has remained high.
This has led on the one hand to the recent (re)emergence of a biomedical approach to criminality which links criminal behaviour to biochemical and possibly genetic disorders. The implications of this approach would suggest chemical and or surgical rather than educational/therapeutic solutions. Given the current lack of evidence to support this approach, however, other innovative approaches have begun to be considered. The most recent of these approaches in the United Kingdom, Canada and parts of the USA has been the integrated approach (Foster 1998). The essence of this approach is the linking of the various parts of prison life – work, cognitive behavioural programs, health education, exercise, domestic life, etc. and in particular, linking the programs provided within the custodial environment to programs and services post-release.

6.3 Integrated provision in DCS

Some of the recent literature suggests that there is a need for a multifaceted/integrated approach to reducing offending behaviour (Foster, 1998, NCVER literature review). So far this does not seem to have been based on empirical research but rather argued from the commonsense notion that the problems faced by inmates are multiple and complex and that most of the approaches tried in the past have not been very successful. The NCVER review of literature (1999) suggests that vocational programs might have some success in reducing recidivism but that there a need for a link between in-gaol vocational programs with employment and support networks after release.

However the empirical evidence for the success of vocational education, of itself, reducing recidivism is very slight and the most important recommendation of this literature review is that more research and evaluation needs to take place. Unfortunately there appear to be few good evaluations of educational provision – or indeed, other programs – in Australia either in the past or currently. This is not surprising given the difficulty of defining what might constitute success of this provision and the wider lack of consensus about the aims of imprisonment. But it does mean that, at this stage, decisions about the nature of educational provision need to be based on criteria which are not derived from evidence of success of rehabilitation.

The suggestion that there is a need for an integrated approach to inmate services is in line with broader developments in educational theory. The adoption of a social constructivist approach to learning is based on the notion, now well established through research, that learning through experience is a far better way to deep understanding than more passive approaches. The use of apprenticeship models for the development of cognitive skills is currently being tried in a range of educational settings. This thinking is based on two elements, first, that all meaning is 'constructed', i.e. individuals make personal sense of data, ideas, experiences and, secondly, that most learning occurs in a social setting and that emotional and other factors (e.g. cultural – organisational and sociological) are usually involved. Individuals, it seems, cannot develop their cognitive structures without active engagement with and application of ideas. Thus, in the broader educational settings there has recently been a much closer integration of education with practical experiences, workplaces and other out-of-institution settings than has been the case in the past. This is true of TAFE but also school and University curriculum.
This would clearly suggest that in a correctional setting education needs to be integrated with other activities to achieve its full potential. Given the multiple disadvantages of most inmates and their multiple emotional and psychological difficulties, the gaining of vocational and personal competencies will take a good deal of time and can only be achieved through a coherent and integrated program which includes work experience, support of various kinds, (both in gaol and post – release) and other programs which concentrate on the psychological.

This certainly is in line with the suggestion in the DCS submission to the interim review - that provision of education and training possibilities will not automatically lead to successful outcomes for inmates. The implication of this is that an integrated case management approach, in which education plays a major part, is needed if inmates are to learn the competencies needed to make a successful transition to life outside goal. This does not appear to be in dispute. However, the different representatives of the review committee dispute the question of how this is to be implemented and whether it restricts the rights of inmates to education and/or reduces the choice of the type of education they receive.

6.4 Conclusion

The conclusion reached by the chair of the committee is that there is a need to develop an integrated approach to the development of inmate services - an integrated case management program. Education is a vital ingredient of this approach. But it needs to be linked to other activities to reach its full potential in helping to reduce offending behaviour. Ideally all staff in correctional facilities should participate in this approach.

Questions as to the content, delivery, organisation and evaluation of the educational element of the overall program are considered below. In summary it is felt that the core of education provision in correctional facilities should be in the area of accredited vocational education. Wherever possible this should be in the form of work based activity (e.g. incorporating CSI, traineeships), and based on vocational areas linked to employment possibilities in the wider community. Literacy and numeracy education and ESL are vital elements of the educational programs but they should be undertaken largely within the context of vocational courses. All the educational evidence suggests that adult language, literacy and numeracy is best developed in the context of concrete activities such as work or work related studies. Similarly social education/life skills/communication competencies should be integrated into vocational courses.

It is desirable that there be other forms of education provided for all inmates.

There will be instances where vocational courses linked to known areas of employment will be inappropriate to particular groups of inmates. There is a need to develop policy to clarify the nature of these groups and the extent of the funding available for these groups. A problem identified during visits to correctional institutions was the number of special categories of inmates e.g., protected prisoners, within a facility. These groups, even individuals, should have the opportunity to participate in education - but the small numbers make
this very difficult financially. Often, in the case of very difficult or disturbed inmates, however, education even if of a recreational kind might be the only avenue through which they can be reached quite apart from the fact such education might help in increasing security. It can do so by utilising inmates’ time in a constructive way, enhancing communication skills, developing socially responsible behaviours and overcoming some of the negative effects of incarceration.

7. Strengths and Weaknesses of the current provision of Education

There are many strengths of the current provision of education and a substantial number of problems – the following examples illustrate these strengths and weaknesses. Criteria on which judgements have been made about strengths/weaknesses are:

1) **Overall program coherence**
   The extent to which there is a close link between the various activities designed to enable inmates to address their offending behaviour. This is based on the principle that coherence is important to any program seeking to change behaviour and that it is unlikely that single and/or uncoordinated activities will be succeed in achieving this.

2) **Co-operation/understanding between staff dealing with inmates**
   The extent to which all staff coming in contact with inmates understand and try to reinforce the aims of other staff – particularly the extent to which custodial and industry staff work with IDIS staff to help inmates address their offending behaviour.

3) **Transition arrangements**
   The extent of the link between activities carried out in gaol and post release programs/employment.

4) **Reflect the best adult education practice/theory**
   The extent to which programs use an experiential approach to learning informed by social – constructivist theory.

7.1 **Examples of good practice**

There are many examples of excellent practice in the delivery of inmate education. A small number which reflect the criteria outlined above have been selected.

It is recognised that there are many different types of prisoners and that what is possible for low security inmates may not be possible for other classifications. However the principles that underpin good practice in one setting should equally apply in other settings, though how these are carried out in practice are likely to differ.

7.1.1 Oberon program

The integrated case management approach for offenders at Oberon correctional facility where vocational education delivered largely by TAFE is combined with outdoor adventure programs and self help living, is an excellent example of combining different programs to encourage inmates to confront
their offending behaviour and develop skills toward independent, social and community living.

The Young Adults Program at Oberon is aimed at addressing the specific needs of young adults in an integrated manner. The Program focuses on five major functional areas. These are work, accredited vocational training, developmental/life skills, educational and recreational programs.

The core program components are provided within the program areas of employment/work skills, vocational training, educational, developmental, recreational and pre-release programs. All operate whenever possible within an established accredited framework.

The program is structured so as to take account of an offender’s total experience and interaction during the whole period of their incarceration. It includes group learning situations as well as one-on-one sessions with, for example, a welfare officer, and individual interaction with each member of staff during the day to day routine.

Individual case management, area management, pathways for inmates and the structured day requires a holistic approach to inmate management. For meaningful learning to occur, and for the process of changing attitudes to begin, integration of the various areas of the program is essential. This involves the use of mentors, prioritising the professional development of all staff involved in the program and cooperation between program managers, education staff, custodial staff, industry staff and the Governor.

Thus the Oberon program is characterised by the following features:

- coherent program planning, integration and developmental sequencing
- experiential education
- use of mentors
- excellent relationships between custodial and IDS staff
- support from the Governor
- professional development for staff
- provision of accredited vocational courses incorporating personal development, etc
- individual case management

7.1.2 The Nangy Kangar initiative at Cessnock: Aboriginal Art/Craft Program

This is an excellent example of an integrated case management approach. Its features are:

- close connection between AEVTI, TAFE and Alcohol & Other Drug (AOD), Psychology, Welfare and inmate classification.
- innovative inmate classification, breaches and wage fixing processes
- linking inmates in the community through projects needed in local community.
- integration of pre and post release schemes into the overall program
- cooperation between local and commonwealth authorities
The focus of the program is to effect a smooth transition of inmates into the community. This has required a change in classification procedures, reducing the time from many months to a relatively short period and changes to breach procedures. Prior to the implementation of the program very minor breaches of prison rules led to a transfer to another correctional centre. This process has been significantly modified and now inmates who start the program are kept in the facility to ensure continuity, unless there is a major concern.

Inmates are met on arrival by Aboriginal workers from the centre and the region, including the Aboriginal pre and post release officer, IDS staff and the TAFE liaison officer. They are presented with the case management plan which links all the various services in a variety of ways. Then they decide if they wish to participate in part of the plan or the whole program.

Inmates who are classified C1 (first level of minimum security) undertake building projects and theory classes in the gaol. Projects include such things as garden retaining walls through to a full building. In the undertaking of these projects these inmates complete the bulk of a TAFE carpentry and joinery course. Those with C2/3 classifications undertake building work outside the facility in areas of community need. The inmates are presented with a substantial toolbox upon completion of the program and at the conclusion of their sentence.

Another innovation has been the review of the inmate wage structure, resulting in a reduction of the gap between a working wage and the undertaking of the traineeship. This was negotiated by the Regional Commander and demonstrates the degree of cooperation between various classifications of staff.

Unlike most facilities where the TAFE vocational teachers come into the correctional facility on a part time basis, in this case the TAFE teacher spends five days in the facility. This has proved to be important because the inmates/students are able to follow through their studies in a far more intense way than is usual. Seven to eight modules are covered in one year which is better than the usual progress for students in TAFE colleges. Most inmates will leave the facility with only six months of the course to complete.

Alongside this vocational program which is the core of the education program there are some other educational courses, a mentor program and the range of other inmate services such as AOD programs.

This program took three years of negotiations to set up due to the range of people involved DEETYA, TAFE and the variety of classifications of staff in the DCS. However it has now been widely publicised and is now very well supported in the DCS.

7.1.3 The use of overseers within the CSI workshops in inmate education at MRRC

The essence of this innovation is the participation of custodial and industry staff in the education program through the presentation of a TAFE textile certificate in the CSI workshops.
The major features of this program are:

- the cooperation of custodial and industry overseers with education staff and TAFE
- linking of AEVTI, TAFE, CSI and Cortex staff in the delivery of the TAFE Certificate 1 in textiles
- the training of the custodial and industry staff in TAFE and their participation in TAFE staff development network

On the initiative of the Education Officer at MRRC, TAFE sent out a fashion teacher to examine the potential to run a TAFE course at the gaol. This teacher decided that there was the potential to run the certificate in textiles, given the large textiles workshop in the centre and worked with the CSI overseers to develop the course. The inmates who had been working in the workshop were given a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessment and the rest of the course was provided largely by the overseers. These overseers obtained trainer qualifications and have joined the TAFE teachers staff development network. TAFE has effectively licensed the DCS to run the course.

7.1.4 Traineeships at Kirkconnell

The linking of CSI with the AEVTI and custodial staff in the development of a traineeship is another example of co-operation which serves the interests of inmates. Inmates were involved in the planning of the traineeship as were custodial staff. The scheme operates with a peer tutoring system, an integrated literacy program and TAFE assessment on site each week. Many of the inmates have jobs waiting for them as local job agencies are also involved.

7.1.5 High Security Prisoners

Prisoners who are difficult to control and those who are in various forms of protection present a more difficult problem for IDS staff. Here, too, there are examples of dedication and success in the most difficult circumstances imaginable for educators. Individual members of education staff (for example at Lithgow) through the offering of recreational programs have established excellent relationships with inmates who are in some cases confined to their cells. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this has had a significant effect in reducing difficult behaviour in the prisons.

Notwithstanding this commitment of individuals and the areas of excellence, however, there appear to be many areas in which the organisation and delivery of prison education could be improved. Some of these areas may be outside the control of educational or IDS staff.

7.2 Problems/Issues which need to be addressed

7.2.1 Lack of consensus about role of education in prisons

One area of discussion during Committee meetings has been the philosophy of prison education. Submissions from the Federation have stressed the UN and Council of Europe recommendations which see inmate education (envisaged as the full range of vocational, literacy, religious, cultural, creative, higher, social and physical education and libraries) as a fundamental right.
Principles of this level of generality, however, are really never more than desirable aims and in the real world where there are always resource restrictions it is widely recognised that they can only be put into practice in a diluted form. It is possible, therefore, to agree with the general principle but not be too concerned about its full implementation. For this reason more productive questions than whether the right exists, is what does education in prisons seek to achieve and what form should it take. In any case, it is clear that the range of educational issues covered in the UN statement are the covered by a number of the other sections of IDS.

There appears to be agreement that, along with other services, it should seek to rehabilitate and to reduce offending behaviour. There appears to be a lack of consensus, however, about how education can contribute to this aim – what form it should take.

If it is accepted, as the DCS argues, that education needs to operate within a framework of coherent, mutually reinforcing integrated provision of services, there is a need to articulate and embed this emerging approach in the gaol/DCS culture. The development of clear purpose is a prelude to the development of performance indicators and outcome statements and a quality assurance system for inmate education. It is not fair criticism of educational staff that there has been no systematic evaluation of educational programs when their purposes have not been clear.

7.2.2 Development of a quality assurance framework for educational provision

Notwithstanding the point above, there is clearly a need to develop an overall quality assurance framework and quality control measures for educational provision of which evaluation is only one part. Included in this framework must also be methods for determining educational need and quality of educational delivery, as is quickly becoming the practice in post secondary education institutions in Australia and overseas.

It will be a difficult process to develop performance indicators for prison education. The population is not homogeneous despite the common thread of low educational attainment prior to incarceration. There are many variables which affect educational performance of inmates and it would be dangerous to rely on single measures (such as recidivism rates) for indicators of success. Nevertheless it is vital that indicators of performance be established. Education staff need to be able to demonstrate they are succeeding if in this period of fiscal restraint they expect funding to continue or grow.

It is worth making the point in passing that the distinction often made between vocational and recreational/personal development courses is not as clear as often believed. Research in the TAFE and community education sectors indicates that many recreational courses have vocational outcomes. Courses in art for example can potentially have as significant a vocational outcome as a course in bricklaying – often the only distinction is the reason for taking the course.
7.2.3 Link between education programs and CSI

The example, cited above, of the linking of TAFE courses at MRRC with the textile and laundry industries provides at least a partial model of what might happen in the future. As stated above the linking of custodial staff with TAFE teachers and the provision of an accredited course overcomes one of the problems which restrict the appeal of education - the amount of money earned by inmates. It also provides an excellent way to develop literacy, social and vocational skills in an integrated manner. In addition the use of qualified trainers working within a TAFE quality assurance framework begins to build in the goal as a whole a culture which values education.

Another problem however is the nature of the industries in the gaols and the current imperative to generate funds.

If education is to be more closely linked to CSI, something which is highly desirable in theory, there would need to be far more consideration given to the nature of the employment market outside the gaol in choosing the kind of industries in the gaols. Also the production targets would need to reflect educational as well as industry needs.

7.2.4 Effect of inmate movement on educational outcomes

While it is clear that for various reasons some inmates need to be moved from one facility to another fairly regularly, there is not always a good reason why their education programs are so disrupted. Where inmates are moved to a facility where a course of study is not offered there is at least the possibility of accessing TAFE’s distance provision. Also there were many instances cited in interviews of a prisoner’s files taking very long periods of time to arrive at the new facility and serious interruption to his studies as a result.

There is an urgent need to develop an electronic data base of demonstrated competencies which enables prisoners to continue their programs even after being moved.

Even in the specialised young adults program where inmates follow a well-planned path from Parklea to Oberon and back, there are serious problems with co-ordination which were not able to be satisfactorily explained.

7.2.5 Range of different groups in gaols

In a number of facilities there are what was termed ‘gaols within gaols’, e.g. areas for maximum security inmates, protected prisoners. This leads to serious resource questions which need to be recognised by the DCS.

7.2.6 Involvement of TAFE teachers in case management

In many instances TAFE teachers were not involved in the case management approach as they came into facilities on a sessional basis only. The practice at Cessnock in the Nany Kangar program demonstrates the advantages of involving TAFE and of having some TAFE teachers undertaking a full time teaching program in gaols. The advantages of using TAFE teachers in this way will enable there to be a better link with the outside community than currently exists. TAFE obviously has extensive local and statewide contacts with industry.
and this could lead to better transition/post release arrangements than currently exist.

7.2.7 **Literacy/NUMERacy/EFL courses.**

Currently many such courses are undertaken in traditional classroom/general education settings. Most educational research indicates that more learning takes places in applied and authentic settings. It is strongly recommended that consideration be given to integrating such courses with vocational courses where possible.

7.2.8 **Library/Computer access**

While there has been some progress in developing library resources in recent years, most of the libraries visited were inadequate by any standards. Equally, given the need for all members of society to have some knowledge of computers, there is a need to upgrade computer facilities.

7.2.9 **Custodial staff development**

Given what is perceived by some educational staff to be the lack of sympathy with and understanding of the aims of the educational provision by custodial staff, there appears to be a need for substantial staff development and a need to include in recruitment criteria a capacity to operate within the case management approach.

7.2.10 **Traineeships**

Where possible traineeships should be developed for inmates engaged in vocational educational programs.

**Recommendations**

1. If a full scale review of educational provision in the DCS is to take place, it needs clear terms of reference, adequate resources and a time frame which allows for an in-depth investigation of actual provision, submissions from interested parties, a thorough investigation of the international literature and possibly, visits to other correctional systems to examine best practice.

2. While it is valuable and important to have staff in side the correctional facilities who have educational expertise related to prison education and who are advocates for inmates, there is a need to have external educational providers who have a link into the community and community credibility. It is also vital to further develop the relationship between the various elements of inmate services. Hence:

2.1 AVETI should not stand separate from other inmates services but be amalgamated with other parts of IDS to enable a more integrated and coherent provision of inmate services. Some of the examples of good practice above could form the model of such an integrated provision across the DCS.

2.2. The core of the educational provision should be accredited vocational education and should be offered by TAFE. This provision needs to
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2.2 The core of the educational provision should be accredited vocational education and should be offered by TAFE. This provision needs to encompass literacy and numeracy education and, where appropriate, ESL provision. While it is possible that AVETI certificates may become known and accepted in the community in time, TAFE qualifications already have credibility and it would be to the inmates advantage to gain or partially gain such TAFE qualifications.

2.3 There needs to be a longer term MOU developed with TAFE to enable that provider to plan for the medium term.

2.4 Wherever possible, the TAFE provision should be in the form of on-the-job training (such as traineeships) and, hence, closely integrated with CSI. TAFE teachers should participate in the wider case management program.

2.5 The CSI needs to be more closely related to employment prospects in the wider community and needs to be seen as much as an educational service as a profit making industry.

2.6 There is a need for a small core of educational staff within the DCS to coordinate and monitor the internal and external provision of education. Such staff should develop a quality assurance system in association with TAFE which builds on TAFE's current system and which develops criteria for success which are suitable to the context of prison education. Such persons should ensure that regular monitoring of the quality of the provision takes place.

3. There is a case for the provision of recreational and other courses for inmates in certain circumstances. A policy needs to be developed to clarify what these circumstances might be and how this provision could be resourced.

4. Current custodial staff need to be provided with staff development to enable them to understand and contribute to the IDS programs. Criteria for recruitment of new staff and their promotion should include capacity to contribute to the IDS programs.

5. Resources need to be set aside for a significant upgrading of library and computer facilities within correctional facilities.

6. DCS needs to set up an information technology network (an intranet) which enables inmates educational progress/competencies achieved to be easily transferred from one facility to another.

7. The DCS should develop a statement about the purposes of education in correctional facilities and ensure that this is widely distributed and discussed within the DCS.