Women Prisoners and Offenders

THE AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Report of the Women Prisoners and Offenders Advisory Committee

June 1991

OFFICE OF CORRECTIONS
30 May 1991

Mr Peter Harmsworth  
Director-General  
Office of Corrections  
20 Albert Road  
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Mr Harmsworth,

I am pleased to present the report of the Women Prisoners and Offenders Advisory Committee. It outlines recommendations on the future direction of planning, development and implementation of programs and services for women prisoners and offenders.

This report is in response to the Terms of Reference by which the Women Prisoners and Offenders Advisory Committee was established in July 1990.

The Advisory Committee has throughout its operation sought the views of community representatives and agencies, correctional staff, women prisoners and offenders and other individuals interested in the future directions of the Office of Corrections.

The Advisory Committee wishes to highlight that many of the policies can be implemented with little or no resource implication. In many cases redirection of current resources is all that may be necessary. The Advisory Committee also recognises that in a small number of instances significant cost implications may be involved in fully implementing the policy. In such cases, the Advisory Committee would expect that yourself and the Minister for Corrections would actively seek additional funding. The implementation of these policies are intended to result in significant reforms to the correctional system in Victoria, and ensure that the Office of Corrections continues to lead the way in correctional reform throughout Australia.

Your attention is drawn to the fact that all policies, programs and services identified for adoption by the Office of Corrections have been endorsed by members of the Advisory Committee.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed]

Sue Wyne-Hughes  
Chairperson
The members of the Women Prisoners and Offenders Advisory Committee endorse the contents and recommendations of this report:

Helen Barnacle  
Counsellor  
Taskforce Community Involvement Centre  
(Drug Program);  
Victorian Women's Prison Council

Carmel Benjamin A.M.  
Director  
Victorian Court Information and Welfare Network;  
Victorian Women's Prison Council;  
Official Visitor

Peter Broom  
Assistant Director of Prisons  
(Strategic Services)  
Office of Corrections

Robert Eldridge  
Director  
Policy and Planning  
Office of Corrections

Ros Hunt  
Director  
Women's Policy Co-ordination Unit  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Roslyn Johnson  
Assistant Director  
Women's Policy Co-ordination Unit  
Department of the Premier and Cabinet

Nancy Peck  
Co-ordinator  
Healthsharing Women's Information Service

Denbigh Richards  
Director  
Community Based Corrections  
Office of Corrections

Jenny Roberts  
Women's Policy Co-ordinator  
Policy and Planning Unit  
Office of Corrections

Kathy Schraa  
Chairperson of the Women's Advisory Committee to the State Training Board;  
Member of the State Training Board

Jan Wilson M.P.  
Member of Parliament -  
North Dandenong;  
Victorian Women's Prison Council

Sue Wynne-Hughes (Chairperson)  
Executive Director  
Office of Corrections
## WOMEN PRISONERS AND OFFENDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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<td>Sue Wynne-Hughes</td>
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<td>Official Visitor</td>
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<td>Peter Breadmore</td>
<td>Assistant Director of Prisons (Strategic Services)</td>
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<td>Kathy Sdrinis</td>
<td>Chairperson of the Women’s Advisory Committee to the State Training Board; Member of the State Training Board</td>
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<td>Cheryl Vardon</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
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<td>South West - Barwon Region</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ministry for Education</td>
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<td>(member of the Advisory Committee until December 1990)</td>
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<td>Jan Wilson M.P.</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The members of the Women Prisoners and Offenders Advisory Committee gratefully acknowledge the significant contributions of the following individuals and agencies. We appreciate the assistance and advice that they have provided to the Advisory Committee throughout the initial project, consultation process and the policy development phase:

- all women prisoners and offenders who contributed throughout the initial review and consultation process;

- all correctional and other staff who contributed in the initial review, consultation process and in the development of policies. In particular, Governors and Senior Project Officers who have regularly attended meetings of the Advisory Committee and have provided invaluable advice and assistance;

- all community agencies and individuals who were consulted during the initial review and consultation process;

- those individuals and agencies who provided verbal and written comments to the issues raised in the discussion paper - 'Women Prisoners and Offenders';

- Malcolm Feiner, Resource Manager, Office of Corrections - who assisted in the provision of literature throughout the review and policy development stages; and

- all Office of Corrections secretarial staff who have provided excellent support throughout the previous twelve months.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

In January 1990 the Director-General of the Office of Corrections, Mr Peter Harmsworth, determined that a review of the Office’s management of women prisoners and offenders was required. In February/March 1990, Ms Jenny Roberts was seconded to the Policy and Planning Unit of the Office to undertake a six week initial review.

The review process included extensive consultation with correctional and other relevant staff, women prisoners and offenders and community agencies and individuals. The findings of the review were formulated into a discussion paper entitled ‘Women Prisoners and Offenders’.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WOMEN PRISONERS AND OFFENDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In response to the issues raised in the document, the Director-General formed an Advisory Committee in July 1990 which consisted of government and community representatives, and senior correctional staff.

The terms of reference of the Advisory Committee were to make recommendations to the Director-General and the Minister for Corrections on women prisoners and offenders in relation to:

- appropriate objectives and policies for women;
- priority programs, services and systems to be implemented over the next five years; and
- an appropriate implementation strategy to achieve the successful introduction of policies and strategies.

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE’S WORK

Following the establishment of the Advisory Committee, the discussion paper ‘Women Prisoners and Offenders’ was circulated for comment to correctional staff, women prisoners and offenders, community agencies and individuals who were consulted during the review and to individuals who expressed an interest in commenting.

During August and September 1990 the Advisory Committee oversawed this consultation process and received numerous comments in relation to the discussion paper.

In October 1990, the Advisory Committee, having received all comments and submissions on the discussion paper, formulated an action plan for policy development. The action plan identified in excess of 40 policies, the development of which would require the Office to review fundamental issues relating to its management of women prisoners and offenders.

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Some of the major issues raised throughout the consultation process were:

- the need to ensure that imprisonment was being used as a sanction of last resort for women offenders;
the need to ensure appropriate child care arrangements existed for women offenders whilst they were supervised on court and Parole Board orders;

- the review of existing data collection systems to ensure relevant data on women prisoners and offenders was collected;

- the practice of locating women prisoners in units in men’s prison facilities;

- the lack of a totally integrated prison system for women prisoners, and in particular the need to introduce unit management into all women’s prisons;

- the necessity of women prisoners maintaining and strengthening relationships with their children;

- the need to ensure that health services to women prisoners meet the particular health needs of this population; and

- the provision of release preparation programs for women prisoners throughout all women’s prisons.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The policies developed during October 1990 and May 1991 have been broadly grouped into the following areas: Diversion, Community Based Corrections, Prisons, and Administration. The Advisory Committee strongly recommends that all policies be implemented over the next 5 years. The Advisory Committee wishes to highlight that many of the policies can be implemented with little or no resource implication. In many cases redirection of current resources is all that may be necessary. The Advisory Committee also recognises that in a small number of instances significant cost implications may be involved in fully implementing the policy. In such cases, the Committee would expect that the Office and the Minister for Corrections would actively seek additional funding. The Advisory Committee, in addition to recommending the implementation of all policies over 5 years, has also recommended a methodology for implementation. It is recommended that the implementation of all policies should occur in two separate stages. The first stage would target policies considered by the Committee to be of such high priority that their implementation should occur within the next two years. The second stage incorporates all remaining policies and targets them for implementation over the remaining 3 years of the plan.

The major recommendations of the Advisory Committee have been grouped into the following major areas: Implementation Committees and Committee Tasks; Timelines and Priorities; and Operational Divisions’ Responsibilities. These recommendations provide the Office with a blueprint for change and must therefore be seen in the context of a 5 year plan. The implementation of the plan will require significant management commitment, time, resources and planning. The first stage of this process identifies those policies which will commence this process and which will set the tone for the implementation of all remaining policies. Some of the major recommendations include:

- the recognition that the Office of Corrections must work closely with the courts, other criminal justice agencies, relevant government agencies and community groups to ensure that women offenders receive access to diversionary dispositions and to programs and services in the community which address their personal development and offence-related needs;

- the provision of management flexibility for women who are supervised within the community and who may be responsible for the care of children, aged and/or disabled family members;

- the establishment of a totally integrated prison system for women prisoners; and

- the provision of appropriate programs and services for women prisoners, particularly in the areas of health, education, work, vocational training, and access to children.
WHAT IT WILL MEAN FOR WOMEN PRISONERS AND OFFENDERS

As detailed in the aforementioned discussion, the outcome for women prisoners and offenders in terms of their future management will be significant. The process of implementing fundamental change throughout the correctional system by reviewing the management systems, prison facilities and programs and services which are provided to women prisoners and offenders has commenced. The recommendations of this report are designed to ensure that the impetus for this change is continued and that the Office of Corrections continues to build on the major developments which have occurred to date.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION : THE REVIEW PROCESS
THE NEED FOR CHANGE

As an organisation which has a significant role in the criminal justice system, the Office of Corrections has been required to respond to a number of internal and external pressures which have resulted in the need for change. Consequently, in early 1990, the Director-General of the Office of Corrections identified the need to review the management of women prisoners and offenders. The internal and external factors which facilitated this review included:

- the formulation and adoption of the 'Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia';
- the formulation of the Office's statement of mission and guiding principles, and the subsequent publication of 'The Way Ahead: Corporate Directions 1990-1995';
- an acknowledgment amongst corrections staff that women as a prisoner and offender group have different needs to those of men and therefore require programs and services which meet these needs;
- the existence of legislative provisions, and Commonwealth and State Government policies and strategies which stipulate that: women should receive equal access to programs and services; they require the assistance of affirmative action policies to redress inequalities; and as a disadvantaged group, women require particular government attention in respect to the programs and services provided by government agencies; and
- the increasing numbers of women prisoners and offenders who were entering the corrections system.

THE INITIAL REVIEW AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

In February 1990, Ms Jenny Roberts was seconded to the Policy and Planning Unit to co-ordinate a review of the Office's management of women prisoners and offenders. The project commenced on the 12th February, and the agreed objectives of the project were:

- to identify issues affecting the performance of women's programs and to propose options which would build on the major developments undertaken in recent years in relation to women prisoners and offenders;
- to identify issues and options which were implementable over the next five years; and
- to develop an implementation schedule for major options identified.

The study approach adopted involved: visiting the four women's prisons; conducting semi-structured interviews with prison uniformed and non-uniformed staff, community based corrections staff, women prisoners and a range of community agencies and individuals; and reviewing relevant literature.

The review which occurred over a six week period in February and March 1990, resulted in the formulation of a discussion paper entitled 'Women Prisoners and Offenders'. This review served to highlight those major issues which would provide a basis from which the Office could further explore the issues raised and examine future directions for the management of women prisoners and offenders.

FORMATION OF THE WOMEN PRISONERS AND OFFENDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Following the completion of the review, the Director-General determined that an Advisory Committee should be established to oversee the formulation of future policies, programs and services which would be implemented by the Office over the next five years. The Women Prisoners and Offenders Advisory Committee was subsequently established in July 1990.
The terms of reference of the Advisory Committee were to make recommendations to the Director-General and the Minister for Corrections on women prisoners and offenders in relation to:

- appropriate objectives and policies for women;
- priority programs, services and systems to be implemented over the next five years;
- an appropriate implementation strategy to achieve the successful introduction of policies and strategies.

The Director-General sought to have the membership of the Advisory Committee reflect, and provide informative input on the future issues facing women prisoners and offenders. The involvement of the community in this process of organisational change reflected the Office's commitment to involve the wider community in the development and maintenance of correctional programs.

During August and September 1990 the 'Women Prisoners and Offenders - Draft Paper for Discussion' was circulated to correctional staff, to women prisoners and offenders and to community agencies and individuals for comment (refer to Appendix A for a detailed list of agencies and individuals consulted).

The discussion paper and the responses received to it were examined by the Women Prisoners and Offenders Advisory Committee in October 1990. As the issues raised throughout the review and consultation process challenged the fundamental manner in which the Office of Corrections managed women prisoners and offenders, the Advisory Committee determined that a policy framework was required prior to the implementation of any change. Consequently, the issues raised formed the basis for the development of an action plan for policy development.

OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE

From October 1990 to May 1991, the Office of Corrections committed its resources to the development of policies identified in the action plan, and by mid-May the Advisory Committee had examined all policy issues. The Advisory Committee has throughout this process examined a number of major policy issues which will serve as catalysts to fundamental organisational change with regard to the future management of women prisoners and offenders. The Advisory Committee will have finished its work upon the presentation to the Director-General and the Minister for Corrections of 'The Agenda for Change'.
CHAPTER 2

WOMEN PRISONERS AND OFFENDERS:
TRENDS AND STATISTICS
OVERVIEW

On 30 June 1990, there were 965 women under some form of corrections supervision or custody. Of these women, 125 were prisoners and 840 were serving parole or a community based order. Twenty four women were on remand and this comprised nearly 20% of all women prisoners. Of the women being supervised in the community, 60 were on parole or pre-release and 780 were serving a community corrections order.

Overall, on 30 June 1989 7.7 women were imprisoned per 100,000 adult" Victorian women. This compares with 10.7 per 100,000 women for adult Australian women.

TRENDS IN THE VICTORIAN WOMEN PRISONER POPULATION

Population Trends

The number of women prisoners and the proportion of women prisoners as a percentage of the total population has increased dramatically between 30 June 1984 and 30 June 1990. The number of women prisoners rose by 89% over the six year period whereas the number of men prisoners increased by a relatively lower proportion, 18%.

The increase in the number of women prisoners occurred between 30 June 1984 and 30 June 1988 and has remained at a high level since then. The number of men prisoners, on the otherhand, show the opposite trend; a relatively small increase in men prisoners between 30 June 1984 and 30 June 1987 and a rapid increase since.

It is not known what has caused this large increase in the number of women prisoners. The increase, however does not appear to be due to a simple increase in the number of females in the general population and hence an increase in the number of women who may potentially offend.

Socio-demographic Characteristics

Education

Women prisoners are much more likely to have attained a higher education level than men prisoners. On 30 June 1990, 18.4% of women prisoners had technical or trade qualifications or had completed secondary education or higher compared with less than 4% of men (Table Three, Appendix B).

Employment Status

Women prisoners are much more likely to be unemployed or not form part of the labour force (eg. home duties or pensioner/beneficiary) than men prisoners. There has been a major increase in the number of women prisoners who were unemployed at the time of reception, from 62.5% in June 1989 to 80% in 30 June 1990 (Table Four, Appendix B).

Age

One important index of the age of a prison population is the proportion of young adult prisoners. Between 30 June 1985 and 30 June 1987, a relatively high proportion of women prisoners (33% - 41%) were under 25 years of age (Table Five, Appendix B). This corresponds to the time of the major increase in the women prisoner population. Since 1987, the proportion of young women offenders has fallen to 27.2% in 1990, which is slightly lower than the proportion of young men prisoners (29.6%).

1 An adult is a person who is seventeen years of age or over.
Marital Status

Women prisoners are more likely to be married and less likely to have never married than men prisoners. Of some interest is that the proportion of women who have never married increased as the number of women prisoners increased and has not returned to the 30 June 1984 level after the number of women prisoners stabilised (Table Six, Appendix B).

Parental Status

A survey conducted in September 1989 at H.M. Prison Fairlea, revealed that of the 78 women prisoners located in Fairlea at this time, 74% of women prisoners were mothers. The average number of children per mother was calculated at 2.5.

The survey further revealed that 46% of these children were placed with relatives or friends upon their mother's imprisonment. A further 22% of these children were under some form of supervision with Community Services of Victoria. Only 21% of children were considered to be independent, although a percentage of these children still remained living with a relative.

There is no comparable data available for an analysis of the men prison population.

Sentencing Characteristics

Unsentenced Prisoners

A much higher percentage of women prisoners are remand prisoners or unconvicted prisoners awaiting sentence than men prisoners. On 30 June 1990, 19.2% of women prisoners were unsentenced compared with 15.4% of men prisoners (Table Seven, Appendix B).

Prior Terms of Imprisonment

Women prisoners are more likely to have no prior term of imprisonment than men prisoners. As at 30 June 1990, 34.4% of women had no prior term of imprisonment compared with 28.1% of men.

Most Serious Offence

The pattern of most serious offences differs markedly between women and men. Women are less likely to be in prison for offences against the person and traffic offences, and are more likely to be in prison for theft offences and justice procedure offences. Justice procedure offences include breaches of parole and community based orders.

On inspection of the trend in the pattern of most serious offences of women prisoners there has been a significant decline in the proportion of women with homicide and drug offences and a large increase in the number of justice procedure and theft offences.

Sentence Length

Women prisoners generally have a lower minimum sentence imposed than men prisoners. This probably reflects the overall less serious offending patterns of women prisoners (Table Ten, Appendix B).

On 30 June 1990, just over 80% of women prisoners were serving minimum sentences of less than five years compared with 62.2% of men prisoners.

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2 A prior term of imprisonment may also include episodes on remand as well as episodes under imprisonment.
Victorian women prisoners compared to Australian women prisoners

A comparison of women prisoners throughout Australia based on the Australian Prisoner Census 1988 reveals the following:

- Victorian women are imprisoned at a rate of 7.7 per 100,000 persons seventeen years of age and over, compared to 10.7 per 100,000 persons aged seventeen years and over for Australia;
- women prisoners in Victoria were more likely to be unemployed;
- Victorian women prisoners were more likely to have served previous terms of imprisonment;
- Victorian women prisoners were receiving longer aggregate prison sentences;³
- women prisoners in Victoria were less likely to be on remand; and
- women prisoners in Victoria were more likely to have a most serious offence of drug offending and less likely to have a most serious offence against the person.

TRENDS IN THE VICTORIAN WOMEN OFFENDER POPULATION

Population Trends

The number of women offenders serving parole and community corrections orders has declined since June 1987. On 30 June 1987 there were 1,257 women offenders and by 30 June 1990 this had declined to 840 offenders.

This is partly attributable to the changes in the types and lengths of orders available to the courts which occurred in June 1986. At this time the maximum for community corrections orders was decreased from five years to two years. This has meant that offenders now complete their orders more quickly and the overall offender population has reduced. Nevertheless, women offenders as a percentage of all community corrections offenders not serving a post prison order (eg. parole) has declined between June 1987 and June 1990 from 23% to 19%.

Socio-demographic Characteristics

Unfortunately, owing to the changes in the types of programs available in community corrections described above, detailed trend analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of offenders is largely unavailable. This section therefore has concentrated upon comparing men and women offenders on some key socio-demographic and program characteristics as at 30 June 1990. Detailed tables are included in Appendix "B".

In summary, a greater proportion of women offenders are: 25 years of age or over (34% of women were under 25 years of age, compared with 43% of men); and are more likely to be unemployed (55% of women were unemployed, compared with 45% of men). On the otherhand there was little difference in the education level attained by women and men offenders.

Program Characteristics

The pattern of offending of women and men offenders shows a very similar pattern to that of women and men prisoners, with women prisoners being more strongly represented in offences against the person.

Over the past six years, a comparison of information on men and women offenders in respect of order type and condition type reveals that:

- prior to June 1986, men offenders were more likely to be serving probation and attendance centre orders for these offences, whereas women offenders were more likely to be serving probation and community service orders. In general, women offenders were serving longer sentences on attendance centre orders, fewer hours on community service orders and the same period of time on probation orders;
- as of March 1990, men and women offenders were entering onto Community Based Orders with almost identical risk/need scores. The majority of women and men offenders are initially assessed as being low risk/need (56% for both groups of offenders); and
- in excess of 20% of both women and men parolees and pre-releasees breach their respective Parole Board Orders.

Victorian women offenders compared to Australian women offenders

A comparison of data obtained from the National Census of Community-Based Corrections 1989 reveals that there is little variation between the age, order types and most serious offences of Victorian women offenders compared with women offenders in other States.

A BRIEF COMMENTARY

It is not possible here to undertake a detailed analysis of the trends described in the foregoing pages and in Appendix "B". It is nevertheless possible to identify what appear to be the most salient trends in the data on women prisoners and offenders:

- that a significant proportion of women who come into contact with the Office of Corrections have parenting responsibilities, are unemployed and have committed property offences;
- that a high proportion of women prisoners are held on remand;
- that in comparison to men prisoners, women prisoners are more highly educated; and
- that the proportion of women offenders is falling while the women prisoner population remains static.

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4 All offenders who are released by the Courts onto Community Based Orders are assessed by a Court Advice Worker. An aspect of this assessment is to determine the risk offenders pose both in terms of their likelihood of further offending and their ability to comply with the conditions of the order. Furthermore, the needs of offenders are assessed in terms of the intervention required if their offending related behaviour is to be addressed. The level of risk and need is recorded in a score (0-9 low; 10-15 medium; 15+) high).

5 Australian Community-Based Corrections 1989, Results of the National Census of Community Based Corrections. Debaeccker and Chapman. Australian Institute of Criminology.
CHAPTER 3

KEY ISSUES
INTRODUCTION

The consultation process highlighted a number of major issues relating to the Office's management of women prisoners and offenders. The following discussion summarises those issues raised by correctional and other staff, women prisoners and offenders and community agencies and individuals.

ISSUES ARISING FROM THE REVIEW AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

Diversion of Women Offenders

The two central issues highlighted by the review process were: ensuring that women offenders' receive equity of access to all diversionary and correctional programs; and ensuring that such diversionary programs meet the needs of this offender group.

Women As Carers

The major issue arising from the consultation process was that women offenders caring role should be supported and recognised by the Office of Corrections in enforcing women offenders' compliance with their community based or Parole Board orders.

Data Collection Systems

The major issue which was raised throughout an examination of data collection systems, was that the Office of Corrections should collect information on women prisoners and offenders which reflected issues and needs more relevant to this prisoner and offender group. For example, the recording of information on women prisoners and offenders and the child care arrangements which they make for their child or children when imprisoned or when undertaking the requirements of their court or Parole Board orders.

Location of Women Prisoners in Men's Prison Facilities

The recent location of women prisoners in men's prison facilities has been a response by the Office, to the increasing numbers of women entering the prison system and the subsequent demands placed on existing prison facilities. The major issues which were raised during the consultation were:

- ensuring that women prisoners received appropriate and equitable access to programs and services when they were located in men's prison facilities; and
- women prisoners being accommodated within units in male maximum security prison facilities.

Totally Integrated Prison System for Women Prisoners

The significant issues which evolved from an examination of establishing a totally integrated prison system for women were:

- the need to implement unit management practices into Fairlea, to ensure that women prisoners were managed in an effective and consistent manner, given that all three other prison facilities operate under unit management principles; and
- the need to establish specific roles and functions within each women's prison facility to ensure that the needs of the correctional system and those of the women prisoner population are adequately met. This included the:
  - need to target appropriate facilities in which to accommodate some women prisoners who were entering prison for the first time;
need to establish an accommodation option for women who upon entering the prison system require a period of adjustment prior to their placement in the mainstream prison environment; and

lack of options in accommodating prisoner mothers and their children.

Prisoner Mothers and Their Children

The separation of a parent prisoner from her child or children is an issue which has attracted much community debate and attention. The Advisory Committee recognises that the paramount consideration in addressing this issue, must be the consideration of what is in the best interests of the child. Consequently, issues which the Advisory Committee discussed have their basis in this approach. The programs, services and facilities offered within the prison system to parent prisoners and their children should therefore serve to promote the maintenance and strengthening of the relationships between parent prisoners and their children.

Health Service Provision

Issues pertaining to the provision of health services for women within the State's prison system were:

- the level and range of health services provided to women prisoners; and

- the utilisation of women medical practitioners and specialists to provide a range of health services to women prisoners.

Release Preparation

The development and implementation of release preparation programs for women throughout the State’s prison system was a significant issue for all agencies and individuals consulted. The central issues to the provision of such programs to women prisoners were:

- although release preparation programs have operated within women's prisons in the past, they have not been delivered on a co-ordinated and regular basis to women;

- release preparation programs have not fully utilised appropriate community agencies and services in the delivery of such programs; and

- in general, release preparation programs have been modelled on programs which have operated for men and have therefore not reflected the needs of women prisoners, in particular the need for women to maintain ties with their children.
CHAPTER 4

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR WOMEN PRISONERS AND OFFENDERS IN CORRECTIONS:

PRINCIPLES
INTRODUCTION

The following chapter has been structured in such a way as not to sequentially reflect those policies which are considered to be of most importance, but rather to outline the policy direction in accordance with the most typical journey for an offender through the correctional system - Court, Community Based Corrections and Prisons - and to conclude with the administrative responsibilities of the Office.

In order to meet the policy and management challenges in the 1990's, the Office of Corrections has developed a comprehensive criminal justice strategy for women prisoners and offenders that integrates both community based and prison based programs. This strategy is underpinned by sound philosophical and legislative bases and supported by the necessary administrative structures so that the courts and the community will have confidence in the corrections system.

In this way it is possible to have a corrections system which provides credible alternatives to imprisonment, appropriate programs for women offenders who remain supervised in the community, and effective and humane containment and supervision of women prisoners.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR WOMEN PRISONERS & OFFENDERS IN CORRECTIONS : UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

In 1990, the Office of Corrections after considerable consultation, re-evaluated its mission statement, and 'The Way Ahead - Corporate Directions 1990 - 1995', provides a clear and concise statement of the organisation’s statement of mission, it’s guiding principles, program objectives and priorities. The mission of the Office of Corrections is:

"The role of the Office of Corrections in the criminal justice system is to securely, safely and humanely contain and supervise offenders deprived of their liberty, while providing opportunities for their personal development and facilitating reparation to the community".

The Office of Corrections has developed eight guiding principles which are outlined in Appendix C, which provide the basis for the development and operation of correctional programs. It is within this framework of the mission statement and the guiding principles that specific objectives and strategies for women prisoners and offenders have been developed.

Women prisoners and offenders must receive equitable access to all diversionary and correctional dispositions and programs

In order to ensure that the punishment fits the crime, and that imprisonment is used only as a sanction of last resort, the courts must have a full range of sentencing options available to them. Diversionary sentencing options must be responsive to, and reflect the needs of women offenders, if they are to achieve their intention. Credible community based options and a professional court advice service are critical in achieving this outcome for women offenders. In acknowledging the importance of this principle for women offenders, the Office of Corrections is committed to:

- ensuring that in the design and implementation of correctional programs, the offence related needs of women offenders are targeted as an integral feature of these programs;
- ensuring that the Court Advice Service will continue to promote those community based options which are available to women offenders, and will ensure that issues such as women caring for their children, aged and/or disabled family members, will not serve to disadvantage them in their access to community based dispositions;
- promoting the programs and services which are available to women prisoners and offenders to the judiciary and the community;
continuing to monitor the effectiveness of the Office's programs and services and actively working with other criminal justice agencies to ensure that imprisonment is used as a sanction of last resort. In particular the Office will be developing strategies to reduce the number of prisoners, including women prisoners, held in custody on remand; to minimise the imprisonment of women offenders who default on payment of fines; and the implementation of a proposed new community based order as a direct sentencing alternative to imprisonment; and

- providing the courts, the Adult Parole Board and other criminal justice agencies with management information on women offenders including the number of women offenders under community corrections orders; the conditions which are generally attached to these orders; the number of women offenders being breached on both community based and Parole Board orders; and the reasons for women breaching.

Women prisoners must be held under the least restrictive conditions which meet their needs and accommodated in modern prison facilities

Although there have been significant developments over recent years to improve existing prison facilities for women, the Office of Corrections has re-assessed its current policy of locating some women prisoners in units within men's prison facilities. Whilst the Office of Corrections has adopted the policy position that women prisoners will not be accommodated in units within men's prison facilities, the current and foreseeable budgetary constraints and the current and projected women prisoner numbers preclude the immediate implementation of this policy. Consequently the Office will ensure that where women prisoners are located in units in men's prison facilities that they receive appropriate and equitable access to programs and services, such as health, education and training, visiting and recreation. Their access will be determined on the need of, and/or level of interest shown by women prisoners to access the respective program or service and will not be a reflection of their representation amongst the total prisoner population within the respective prison. Furthermore, the Office of Corrections will provide opportunities for women prisoners to integrate with men prisoners in recreation programs and activities, employment and visiting programs.

The accommodation provided for women prisoners should consist of units that promote independent living skills and maximise women prisoners' opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and to make decisions about their day-to-day activities. Furthermore, women prisoners will be provided with an environment which facilitates the maintainance of their relationships with their families, in particular their children. Women prisoners will therefore be given opportunities to maintain relationships with their children through contact and non-contact visiting programs and may have their children reside with them where it is demonstrated that it is in the best interests of the child to do so.

Programs and services developed and implemented for women prisoners and offenders must ensure that women's needs are addressed and that they serve to emphasise their continuing role in the community

In the development and implementation of correctional programs for women prisoners and offenders there must be an emphasis on women taking responsibility for their own self development. Therefore, as a correctional system, the Office of Corrections has a responsibility to offer those programs which will assist women prisoners and offenders to do this, and which encourage their participation. Of major importance in achieving this objective is the need to ensure that programs are offered which will allow women to become economically independent and which provide women with opportunities to effect real change in their lives. For instance, educational and vocational training opportunities should be provided which will equip women to enter the paid workforce.

Furthermore, the Office of Corrections must involve appropriate community agencies and individuals in the provision of programs and services for women prisoners and offenders in order to provide women with opportunities to establish linkages with relevant community agencies and to prepare women prisoners for their release.
The Office of Corrections is committed to ensuring that:

- women prisoners will be accommodated in separate prison facilities from men's prisons. Until such an objective can be achieved women prisoners receive appropriate and equitable access to a range of programs and services;

- the total accommodation capacity of the women's prison system, will reflect the current and projected accommodation needs of the women prisoner population;

- legislatively based alternatives to prison, including well planned and administered community based corrections programs, will operate for women offenders, and reflect the offending related needs of this offender group;

- innovative community based and prison programs will be offered which specifically cater for the needs of women prisoners and offenders;

- the Office will liaise with the courts and other criminal justice agencies to promote the correctional programs established for women; and

- the Office will actively work with other relevant government and community agencies to provide management information on the characteristics of the women prisoner and offender populations and to encourage these agencies to provide programs and services which meet the needs of this prisoner and offender population.

**Women prisoners and offenders must be managed in an environment which is free from discrimination**

In order for this principle to be successful, women prisoners and offenders must be provided with an environment which promotes and encourages women to build their self-awareness and self-esteem; enables them to address their personal development and offence related needs; ensures that women prisoners and offenders receive the support of correctional staff; and ensures that they receive equity of access to prison and community based programs.

Critical to this approach however is the need for correctional staff to receive the necessary training and assistance for them to effectively manage women prisoners and offenders.

**CONCLUSION**

The relatively small number of women in prison and community based corrections provides the Office of Corrections with a unique opportunity to show that a well planned and well-executed criminal justice strategy can ensure that the intention of the courts and Adult Parole Board is fulfilled. The Office of Corrections role in ensuring that this intention is fulfilled, lies in the provision of quality programs for women prisoners and offenders which encourage women to improve their economic status and independence, which are free from discrimination and which ensure equality of opportunity.

The following policies provide the framework from which the Office of Corrections will implement fundamental change throughout the organisation over the next five years in respect to its management of women prisoners and offenders.
CHAPTER 5

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR WOMEN PRISONERS AND OFFENDERS IN CORRECTIONS:

POLICIES
NEW DIRECTIONS IN DIVERSION

It is a major principle of the Office of Corrections that a wide range of correctional dispositions should be developed based on the concept of a graduated restriction of liberty. Imprisonment and community corrections orders are points on the continuum of correctional sanctions, arranged according to the degree of restriction of the offender’s liberty that is required. Imprisonment is at the most restrictive end of the continuum, while a Community Based Order is towards the least restrictive end. In order to satisfy this principle, Courts need to have a full range of sentencing options available to them. For the Office of Corrections, the process of implementing this Principle has two elements. The first is that of filling-out this “deprivation of liberty” continuum in a way that meets sentencing needs. The second element involves using imprisonment as a punishment only when necessary as a sanction of last resort. Therefore a key strategy for the Office of Corrections over the next decade is to develop mechanisms which ensure that women offenders are effectively diverted from imprisonment.

MAXIMISING DIVERSION

Over the next decade, corrections systems throughout Australia will be faced with a number of critical challenges. Correctional administrators will have to manage a steadily increasing demand for custodial and non-custodial correctional programs, meet community expectations that correctional sentences should provide safety for the community and rehabilitative programs for offenders, develop a more skilled and flexible workforce, and continue to upgrade their prison facilities. At the same time, it seems likely that corrections budgets will be subject to relatively strict controls.

It is important to acknowledge in an examination of diversion that the Office of Corrections has limited capacity to effect changes throughout the entire criminal justice system, other than upon those sentences/dispositions that the Office is authorised to supervise – imprisonment and community based and Parole Board orders. Arguably, the Office must therefore restrict its attempts to limit the numbers of women in prison through its operations of these three correctional programs.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will seek to maximise the diversion of women offenders from prison: through the provision of a wide range of correctional dispositions which are based on the concept of a graduated restriction of liberty; by establishing mechanisms which will effectively manage the current and projected accommodation requirements of women; by ensuring that prison and community based programs target for women seek to address the offending related needs of women; and through the provision of relevant information on the characteristics of the women prisoner and offender populations to the courts, other criminal justice agencies and the community.

- Wide Range of Correctional Dispositions
  The Office of Corrections will ensure that in the development and establishment of correctional dispositions, that the offending related needs of women offenders are addressed in order to maximise the opportunities for women to be diverted from prison.

- The provision of information to, and Office of Corrections relationship with, the Courts, other Criminal Justice Agencies and the Public
  The Office of Corrections will publicly promote the programs and services which it makes available to women offenders in order to maximise the courts use of community based dispositions.
  The Office of Corrections will provide relevant and timely information to the courts on the characteristics of the women offender population in order to assist courts in the imposition of appropriate and relevant dispositions for women.
The Office of Corrections will promote the initiatives developed by the Office and community agencies, which are specifically targeted to meeting the needs of women prisoners and offenders in order to raise community awareness of the needs of these prisoner and offender groups and to promote community involvement in providing assistance and support to women.

Offending Related Needs of Women Prisoners and Offenders

Prison programs based on the offending related needs of women prisoners will be developed and implemented in all women's prisons in order to promote opportunities for women prisoners to address their offence related needs and to reduce the likelihood of their continued involvement in offending upon their release.

The Office of Corrections will actively work with relevant Government and community based agencies in order to ensure that their respective services and programs meet the offending related needs of the women prisoner and offender populations and to reduce the likelihood of their continued involvement with the criminal justice system.

Managing the Current and Projected Accommodation Requirements of Women

The Office of Corrections will monitor court and other criminal justice agency activity, offender trends, Government policy and other relevant factors to ensure that the Office can effectively plan for the accommodation requirements of the women prisoner population.

An increase in the accommodation provided to women prisoners will occur where there is available evidence to suggest that the women prisoner population can no longer be accommodated in existing prisons given the current or projected accommodation requirements of the women prisoner population and where non-custodial programs are not suitable.

ACCESS TO, AND RELEVANCE OF NEW CORRECTIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Dispositions developed in the past by, or in conjunction with the Office of Corrections, have not taken account of the particular needs of women. Rather they have focused upon the general offender and prisoner populations - men.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will ensure that women offenders receive equity of access to all new correctional programs and that women offenders' needs are taken into account in the development of these programs.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that the needs of women offenders are given equal consideration to those of men offenders at the developmental stage of any new correctional diversionary program.

The Office of Corrections will seek to ensure that women offenders have equity of access to all new correctional diversionary programs from the point of implementation, and equal likelihood of diversion to a less intrusive disposition.

ADVICE AND ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the Office's advice service is to develop and provide efficient, reliable and credible advice services to the courts and the Adult Parole Board. Between May 1990 and May 1991 the Office of Corrections has undertaken approximately 4900 court assessments for the Magistrates, County and Supreme Courts and 1900 assessments for the Adult Parole Board. The Office of Corrections has therefore an important and significant role in assessing the suitability of women
offenders to be supervised within the community. In May 1991 there were approximately 940 women supervised on community based dispositions and 110 women in custody, either undergoing a sentence or being held on remand.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will provide professional and accurate advice to the Courts and the Adult Parole Board in the assessment of women offenders' suitability to undertake the correctional program for which they are being assessed.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that when being assessed for Parole or a Community Based Order, and in the advice provided subsequent to that assessment, women suffer no discrimination by virtue of their personal and social circumstances.
NEW DIRECTIONS IN COMMUNITY BASED CORRECTIONS

The Community Based Corrections division is responsible for ensuring that credible community based programs operate to maximise the diversion of women offenders from imprisonment, and for providing opportunities for women offenders to address their offending related needs. In order to do this:

- in the operation and management of community based programs, community based corrections officers must recognise that women offenders have different needs to those of men and must therefore be managed in a manner which recognises these differences; and
- the management of women offenders must promote women offenders participation on programs which serve to enhance their linkages within their respective community and which encourage women offenders to participate in programs which address their personal development and/or offending related needs.

WOMEN AS CARERS

Given that women in our society are generally responsible for the care of children, aged and/or disabled family members, it is probable that a significant percentage of women under community corrections supervision will be responsible for the care of a child or children, aged and/or disabled family members. The Office of Corrections recognises that these women may experience some difficulties in adequately providing for the care related needs of either their children or family members when they are required to undertake the requirements of their correctional orders. The management of women offenders should therefore reflect this approach and ensure that women are not disadvantaged as a consequence.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will ensure that a woman’s carer status is no impediment in the assessment of her suitability to undertake community based correctional dispositions.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that women offenders will not be denied an opportunity to participate on correctional programs as a consequence of their responsibilities as a carer.

- Women offenders will not be denied the opportunity to undertake a court or Parole Board Order or fulfil the conditions of their order because of their carer status.
- Women offenders responsible for the care of children, aged and/or disabled family members will be afforded a broad range of options in deciding where and how they undertake any program component of their order.
- Arrangements to complete program requirements will be flexible so as to minimise any disruption to a woman offender's choice of child care arrangements.
- Access to financial assistance from the Office of Corrections for child care will be determined on a needs basis, giving consideration to the child care facilities already available to women offenders within the family and the community.
Women offenders will be provided with opportunities to negotiate their child care arrangements with corrections staff in order to ensure that women offenders are able to comply with the reporting conditions of their orders. The options available to women offenders in relation to child care arrangements, are listed below in their order of priority:

- maintenance of existing child care arrangements;
- child care arrangements which existed before the order commenced, with some subsidy if an extension of a paid 'arrangement' is required;
- placement with a child care agency with whom the Community Corrections Centre has an established arrangement. This may be with a creche, family day care, etc. dependent on what is available in the locality. If necessary a subsidy may be offered;
- assistance to women offenders to organise alternate child care. If the bona fides of the care provider have been established, a subsidy may be offered. If there are no approved child care resources available within the local community, it may be necessary to make other arrangements (eg. child care with a Community Correction Volunteer in an isolated community);
- child care at the same location as the correctional program, with the offender responsible for providing child care;
- child care at the same location as the correctional program, with the offender partially responsible for child care;
- correctional programs arranged at the home of the offender, so that child care continues to be the responsibility of the offender; and
- correctional programs at locations external to the offender's home, with the offender solely responsible for child care during the program. This option could be utilised for short periods only.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1989-90, just over 14 per cent of women and men offenders had a personal development condition attached to their community based order. Personal development conditions are designed to meet the needs of offenders that relate directly or indirectly to their offending.

Women offenders undergoing personal development programs have, depending on their needs participated in programs in their local community which have: enhanced their parenting employment, basic literacy and numeracy skills; addressed their substance-abuse problems through their participation in drug or alcohol treatment programs; developed their personal skills through assertiveness training; and linked them with other people and services in their respective community.

Furthermore, given the significantly high percentage of women who at the point of assessment had only partly completed their secondary education (81 per cent) and who were unemployed (more than 50 per cent), it is imperative that women offenders are provided with a range of opportunities to acquire and/or further their educational and employment skills.

Policy

*Personal development programs for women offenders will address the personal development and offence related needs of each offender both in the content of the program and the context in which it is provided.*
Programs will be based on a recognition that the developmental needs of women offenders frequently differ from those of men particularly in the areas of self-assertion, employment skills, and capacity for independence.

Programs must be conducted in a context in which women are able to feel secure and free to participate fully. In some cases this will require a program for women only or women leadership.

COMMUNITY WORK

The community work program provides a range of unpaid work projects for offenders. The program is designed to ensure offenders fulfil the requirements of their Order, while engaging in socially valuable work which utilises an offender's existing skills or assists an offender to develop new ones. Over 80 per cent of women and men offenders have a community-work condition on their community based order. Furthermore, given that as of June 1990, in excess of 50 per cent of women offenders being supervised on community based orders were unemployed at the point of their assessment, it is imperative that the community work program provides opportunities for women to develop employment or work related skills.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will ensure that in the operation of the community work program, women offenders will be provided with opportunities to enhance and/or develop their employment skills. Community work will be arranged to suit their carer responsibilities and will provide a work environment which is free from harassment and which promotes the development of their self-esteem and confidence.

Community work placements will be designed to meet the needs of women offenders provided that this is done in a way which maintains community confidence in the program.

Women offenders will be offered as broad a range of work options as men and will be given the opportunity to express their preferences. Wherever possible these options will include choice in the gender of the supervisor and co-workers.

Arrangements to complete program requirements will be flexible so as to minimise disruption to women offenders normal activity in the community (eg. employment, child-care responsibility, self-education, participation in community organisations and activities or other care giving responsibilities).

Alternative placements should be provided on those occasions when the original community work placement is unavailable (eg. due to inclement weather or temporary closure).

Community work will provide opportunities for women offenders to develop work habits and/or employment related skills.

CASE MANAGEMENT/SUPERVISION

The purpose of supervision is to monitor, evaluate and respond to the individual needs and risks of offenders, and ensure their compliance with court and Parole Board orders. This is performed in such a way as to meet the expectations of the courts, the Adult Parole Board and the community. Offenders are supervised at the lowest level of intervention for which they qualify and which is necessary to ensure their compliance with their community based or Parole Board order. Approximately 80 per cent of women and men offenders subject to community based orders have a supervision condition placed on their order.
Policy

Women offenders will be managed in a manner appropriate to their individual needs, risk of offending and social circumstances in order to facilitate their personal development and compliance with their order.

- At the reception and orientation phase of their order, women will be advised of their right request a woman case manager and such a request will be granted wherever possible.
- Case managers will receive training which will assist them to recognise that the socio-psychological and biological circumstances of women offenders are different from those of men, and that the services required to facilitate their personal development will therefore often be different. In particular, attention will be paid to women's need for safety, security, self-sufficiency and empowerment.
- The Office of Corrections will ensure that relevant information is collected, aggregated and analysed in respect to women offenders. Such information will serve to assist case managers and project officers to identify the program needs and management issues relating to women offenders.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The supervision of women offenders should emphasise their continuing part in the community, not their exclusion from it. Thus every effort must be made to involve the wider community to assist correctional staff in developing and maintaining programs. Ways in which this is achieved include the use of volunteers, Community Corrections Committees and/or forums and other relevant government and community representatives and agencies.

Policy

Volunteers

Where women offenders are under the supervision of a volunteer on a supervised case management or intensive program, the volunteer will be a woman except where otherwise requested by women offenders.

Policy

Community Consultation

Community Corrections Committees and community corrections forums will regularly include presentation and consideration of, and community input on issues relevant to the management of women offenders.

Regional managers convening Community Corrections Committees and providing community forums, will endeavour to ensure that women are appropriately represented among the contributors.

Policy

Involvement of Government and Non-Government Agencies

Where services which might assist women to break their offending pattern are not available in the local community, the Office of Corrections will advocate and render all possible assistance to have the services established.
The Office of Corrections, when negotiating with recommending non-government agencies for the acquisition of community corrections grants, will seek to ensure that an equitable proportion of grants are made to agencies providing services to women prisoners and offenders.

COMPLAINT MECHANISMS

There are legislative provisions contained in the Corrections Act 1986 which provide the framework for women offenders to lodge complaints with the Director-General and/or their respective Regional Manager. Furthermore, the State's Ombudsman also provides an additional avenue for women offenders to utilise an independent body to lodge complaints against the Office of Corrections. It is acknowledged by the Office of Corrections that women offenders may find these complaint mechanisms too remote or intimidating and that complaint mechanisms and the process itself, should serve to support women offenders if they choose to lodge complaints against the Office or where they choose to record or raise their particular grievance/s.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will ensure that women offenders are able to access appropriate mechanisms to raise and/or resolve grievances and/or disputes leave they may have with the Office of Corrections.

- Women offenders will be advised that if they so request, a woman staff member or volunteer will be made available to assist them in making a request or complaint.

- Women offenders will be informed of this opportunity as part of their reception and orientation process into community corrections centres.

BREACHING

The Office of Corrections has a responsibility to both the courts and the Adult Parole Board to inform the relevant authority when offenders have, without reasonable excuse, failed to comply with the conditions of either their court or Parole Board order. The Office of Corrections has quite a narrow field of discretion in relation to determining when and/or if an offender should be returned to either the courts or the Parole Board where there has been a breach of the order. The Office of Correction's role in returning an offender to either authority is purely an advisory one and serves to provide relevant details of the breach to the court or the Parole Board. It is within this very narrow field of discretion that the Office of Corrections recognises that its breaching discretion policy must acknowledge the different characteristics of women offenders and how these differences might impact upon a woman's capacity to comply with the conditions of her order.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will ensure that women offenders will not be disadvantaged in decisions made to breach them or in the recommendations made to either the Courts or the Parole Board in relation to a woman's future suitability to be supervised by Community Based Corrections.

- Women offenders with the primary responsibility for the care of children, aged and/or disabled family members will be permitted absences resulting from the genuine exercise of those responsibilities.

- Women offenders will not be penalised for time taken to negotiate or renegotiate appropriate care for children, aged and/or disabled family members.

- Women offenders whose absence from a program or location is caused by an inability to cope within that program or location will, at least in the initial instance, be assisted to negotiate change without being penalised.
COMMUNICATION

There is a percentage of women offenders who as a consequence of having poor literacy skills or as a result of their lack of confidence, may be unable to communicate effectively with their supervising officer and/or volunteer. As of June 1990, women offenders who had partially completed their secondary education represented 80 per cent of the women offender population. Although there has not been data collected on the percentage of women offenders who are lacking in confidence, anecdotal information would indicate that this figure would be relatively high. Therefore the importance of clear, simple communication which is comprehensible to all women offenders cannot be overemphasised, especially where failure to comprehend can potentially affect a woman's liberty and/or impact upon her management.

Policy

Women offenders will be provided with opportunities which will enable them to effectively communicate with correctional officers and volunteers through the provision of information which is written in a clear and readable form and through their access to staff, volunteers and qualified interpreters who have the necessary skills to assist women offenders to communicate orally or in a written form.

- Information provided to women offenders will be in plain English (or a translation from plain English into the offender's community language) and be comprehensible to the great majority of offenders.

- Where a woman offender is unable to communicate clearly in, and/or comprehend plain English, an interpreter will be regularly used to facilitate communication.

- Women offenders wishing to make a written request or complaint and who lack literacy skills, will be assisted to express themselves in writing by an officer, volunteer or interpreter as appropriate.

SPECIAL NEED WOMEN OFFENDER GROUPS

As of June 1990, 14 per cent of women offenders supervised on community based dispositions had been born in non-English speaking countries. An additional proportion of women offenders, though born in Australia, have a non-English speaking background. A significant proportion of women offenders therefore enter the correctional system with cultural backgrounds, needs and expectations which differ from that of Anglo-Australians combined in some cases with problems in communicating in English.

Aboriginal people and communities within Victoria, are faced with higher rates of unemployment, lower standards of education and poorer overall health than the general Victorian population. Lacking the skills or education to secure employment, most Aboriginal people are trapped in a life typified by poverty, frustration, resentment and anger. Aboriginal women are also often involved in situations of domestic violence or head single parent households. These issues are further complicated by the relatively early age at which many Aboriginal women begin child-bearing and the continuing high mortality rate for Aboriginal children. As of the 30th June 1990, 3 per cent of women offenders were Aboriginal.

The supervision of disabled women offenders presents particular challenges to corrections staff. In response to the presenting issues of intellectually disabled women offenders, for instance, the Office of Corrections has over recent years, established an intensive supervision program in some community corrections centres. The program utilises volunteers to supervise this offender group and the program provides an intensive level of support and assistance which this offender group frequently require.
Policy

The Office of Corrections will ensure that a range of services are developed for women offenders with special needs, which are specifically directed toward their individual and social needs. Where possible, local community groups will be encouraged to participate in the delivery of programs and services to this group of women offenders, in particular women offenders from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal women offenders and disabled women offenders.

- The Office of Corrections will ensure that women offenders from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal women offenders and disabled women offenders will not be disadvantaged in gaining information or communicating effectively.

- The Office of Corrections will encourage opportunities for women from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal women offenders to access culturally relevant education, health, welfare and legal services.

- The Office of Corrections will encourage greater use of non-English speaking and Aboriginal community resources in the provision of programs for women offenders from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal women offenders.

- The Office of Corrections will ensure that information on appropriate government services and programs will be distributed to women offenders from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal women offenders and disabled women offenders, to meet the particular needs of these offender groups.

- The Office of Corrections will provide information to women offenders from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal women offenders and disabled women offenders on child care and related matters which serve to meet the particular needs of these offender groups.

- The Office of Corrections will provide information to women offenders from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal women offenders on domestic violence support services which are culturally relevant to these particular offender groups.

- The Office of Corrections will recognise the extended nature of non-English speaking and Aboriginal family structures and the implications of this for offender case management.

- The Office of Corrections will ensure that all staff and volunteers directly involved with women offenders from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal women offenders and disabled women offenders, receive appropriate training to enhance their ability to interact positively with these offender groups.

Women Offenders From Non-English Speaking Backgrounds

Multi-lingual information for women offenders will be made available, and when necessary qualified interpreter services will be utilised to ensure comprehension.

Aboriginal Women Offenders

The Office of Corrections will encourage Aboriginal community groups to provide health education programs which focus on issues relevant to Aboriginal offenders (eg. AIDS, drugs and alcohol).

The Office of Corrections will involve Community Justice Panels and other Aboriginal community organisations in the development of post-custodial support programs for Aboriginal women offenders.
9 Disabled Women Offenders

The Office of Corrections will ensure that all community corrections centres, wherever possible, are accessible to women offenders with physical disabilities.

The Office of Corrections will actively work with Disability Services to maximise opportunities for intellectually disabled women offenders to develop their independence, facilitate their integration into their respective community, ensure their equality, and promote their involvement in decisions affecting their lives.
NEW DIRECTIONS IN PRISONS

The imprisonment of women in this State, has up until the last decade been a phenomenon largely ignored by the community. This situation arose as a consequence of the relatively small numbers of women being received into custody and the perception that women were either "damned whores or god's police". This perception however, has significantly altered throughout the last decade as the correctional system has witnessed the numbers of women in prison rise from 29 in 1980 to 125 in 1990. The increase in women prisoner numbers has also brought with it heated debate from various women's groups and other community agencies and individuals, who argue that women should not be imprisoned, in particular for non-violent offences, but more appropriately supervised within the community. It is not the intention of the following discussion to enter into this philosophical debate, but to rather highlight a number of issues which are of significance to the Office of Corrections as it strives to ensure the effective management of women prisoners. A number of themes have evolved from this examination:

- a totally integrated prison system should be devised and implemented for women prisoners;
- the role and functions of each prison facility used to accommodate women should operate to meet the particular needs of this prisoner group;
- community agencies and individuals who work within 'women' based community agencies and programs should be utilised within the prison system to provide and compliment the provision of programs and services to women prisoners;
- women prisoners require access to programs and services which are appropriate to the needs of women, irrespective of where they may be located within the prison system;
- prison based programs should provide women prisoners with the opportunity to access programs and services which assist women to address their offence-related needs; and
- the services, facilities, activities and programs provided to women prisoners should be based on the concept of individual management and designed to meet the individual needs of women prisoners.

LOCATION OF WOMEN PRISONERS IN PRISON FACILITIES

The Office of Corrections recognises that in order for women prisoners to gain control over their lives and to successfully re-integrate into the community upon their release they require:

- a prison environment which offers fair and real opportunities for them in the provision of education, work and vocational training;
- access to facilities, programs and services which address their needs;
- an environment which promotes their participation in decisions which effect their lives;
- an environment which ensures that women prisoners are not discriminated against; and
- an environment which ensures that women are supported by correctional and program staff in their attempts to effect changes in their lives.

The Office of Corrections also recognises that the prison system reflects and engenders the social values and attitudes which exist within the community towards women, and that to effect real change in relation to women, the system must focus its resources and attentions on eliminating the potential for women to be discriminated against.
Policy

Women prisoners will be accommodated in separate prisons from men, in order to ensure that women prisoners receive necessary access to appropriate facilities, programs and services and to minimise the potential for women prisoners to be discriminated against. The Office of Corrections will work towards implementing this policy statement over the next five years.

Whilst women prisoners remain located in units in men’s prison facilities the Office of Corrections will ensure that they receive appropriate and equitable access to programs and services, such as health, education and training, visiting and recreation. Their access will be determined on the needs of, and/or level of interest shown by women prisoners to access the respective program or service and will not be a reflection of their representation amongst the total prisoner population within the respective prison. Furthermore, the Office of Corrections will provide opportunities for women prisoners to integrate with men prisoners in recreation programs and activities, employment and visiting programs.

PRISON FACILITIES AND REGIMES

The Office of Corrections over the next five years, will be working towards the situation where women prisoners are no longer accommodated in units in men’s prison facilities. However, until this position is achieved for women, the Office is committed to ensuring that the prison system promotes opportunities for women to effect real change in their lives. In recent history, the opening of Tarremah and Barwon prisons, and the re-development of Fairlea and K Division, have provided women prisoners with a range of accommodation and management alternatives not previously available to them. Significantly, women prisoners will be the first to be totally managed under unit management practices, as Fairlea is the only women’s prison currently not operating under this management structure. As a consequence, women prisoners will pass through their sentences having experienced regimes which are responsive to their needs and which will enable them to set goals and acquire skills relevant to their life after release.

Consequently, the Advisory Committee has reviewed the roles and functions of the prison facilities currently accommodating women, to develop a strategy for ensuring that the Office provides women prisoners with facilities, programs and services appropriate to the needs of women prisoners.

Policy

In order to assist women prisoners to take a structured approach to their sentences, a graduated range of prison regimes will be provided.

The Office of Corrections will work towards a position where remand prisoners, except in unusual circumstances, will be accommodated in the metropolitan area, and will be, wherever possible, kept separate from sentenced prisoners.

Proposed Roles and Functions of the Current Women’s Prisons

The roles and functions of the five current women’s prisons and units is to be developed within the framework described in the following:

H.M Prison Fairlea

Role/Purpose:

Fairlea will be the reception and orientation prison for women prisoners. It will provide a reception program and separate remand unit for women. Furthermore it will offer distinctive programs for particular types of women prisoners, such as mothers and children and women prisoners who are experiencing their first period of imprisonment.
Functions:

Reception & Orientation

The main reception and orientation functions for the women prison system will operate within Fairlea and will be designed to meet the needs of women prisoners; will enable women prisoners together with staff to formulate goals and plans which can be addressed during their sentence; will ensure the identification of prisoners who are entering prison for the first time at the point of their reception; and will ensure that individual management plans identify the particular features of this prisoner population and their subsequent program needs.

Remand

A separate remand unit will be established for women in recognition that such women are presumed innocent, and as such should be treated without restrictions other than those necessary for the good order and management of the prison.

Mothers and Children

A program for parent prisoners and their child or children will be developed which recognises the importance of the parent and the child maintaining a quality relationship whilst the parent is in custody. This will be achieved through the provision of a facility in which mothers and their children can be accommodated, or in the visiting facilities provided and/or the access arrangements available to parent prisoners and their child or children.

Women in Prison for the First Time

A distinctive program for women prisoners who are entering prison for the first time will be established. The establishment of this program acknowledges that this prisoner group may require a particular level of intervention or programming and accommodation which reduces the impact of imprisonment upon them and encourages them to address their offending related needs whilst in custody.

H.M Prison Barwon : Banksia

Role/Purpose:

Banksia will provide accommodation for two main groups of women prisoners. First, Banksia will accommodate the majority of women classified as maximum and medium security and some minimum security prisoners. Second, it will accommodate women released from Acacia who require a more intensive level of support and management prior to their placement at any other prison facility.

Function:

Personal Development Programs

Correctional programs will be developed and implemented to address the needs of offenders in light of the particular circumstances of their offences. Programs offered within the unit will include education, vocational training and work.

H.M. Prison Tarrengower

Role/Purpose:

Tarrengower will be the minimum security and main release prison for women prisoners. The main focus of programs will therefore be on meeting the needs of women prisoners who are preparing themselves for release into the community and on re-establishing relationships with family, in particular with their children.
Functions:

Release Preparation Program

A comprehensive release preparation program/community integration program will be established to ensure that women prisoners are assisted in their attempts to prepare for their re-integration into the community prior to their release.

Mothers and Children

A program for parent prisoners and their child or children will continue to operate which recognises the importance of the parent and the child maintaining a quality relationship whilst the parent is in custody. This will be achieved through the provision of a facility in which mothers and their children can be accommodated, or in the existing facilities provided and/or the access arrangements available to parent prisoners and their child or children.

Personal Development Programs

Correctional programs will be developed and implemented to address the needs and problems of offenders in light of the particular circumstances of their offences. Such programs would include, education, vocational training and work.

H.M. Metropolitan Reception Prison - "K" Division/Unit 3

Role/Purpose:

"K" Division will provide women prisoners with discrete health based programs which will address a range of physical and emotional health needs either upon the woman's reception or during her sentence.

Functions:

Drug Awareness Program

A drug awareness program will continue to operate which will ensure that women receive an appropriate level of health and psychological support including group work and counselling to assist them resolve issues related to their substance abuse.

Health Support Program

A program will be established for women prisoners who upon entering the prison system are assessed as requiring emotional, physical, or psychological support prior to entering other women's prisons or units.

HIV Positive Prisoners

A program will be developed and implemented to ensure that the health needs of HIV positive prisoners are addressed, and that this group of prisoners receive appropriate support whilst in custody.

Intellectually Disabled Prisoners

A program will be developed and implemented to ensure that women who are intellectually disabled and are not suitable for placement in any of the other women's prisons or units, will be accommodated in this unit which will provide for the particular needs of this group.
H.M. Prison Barwon: Acacia

Role/Purpose:

Acacia will provide short-term accommodation for women prisoners who are identified as having management/high security/high protection needs and consequently require a more intensive level of management than which would normally be required to ensure that their safety and the safety of others is maintained.

Function:

Personal Development Programs

Correctional programs will continue to operate to address the needs and problems of offenders in the context of the particular circumstances of their offences and the management, protection or security concerns/needs which women located in this unit present. Such programs would therefore reflect the short-term nature of their placement within the unit whilst still offering the women opportunities to participate in educational and work programs.

The roles and functions of the five women's prisons and units are outlined in the following diagram:
UNIT MANAGEMENT

Unit management is a method of managing groups of 10 to 70 prisoners. A permanent staff team, which has delegated decision-making powers, manages each group using a mixture of custodial, interpersonal, program and individual management-planning skills. Unit management is designed not only to assist prisoners keep whatever skills they have, but also to provide them with the skills necessary to live a lawful and productive life. Most importantly, unit management extends to prisoners a prison environment that closely resembles normal life - one which provides a series of natural consequences for actions - whether they be good or bad. This objective is achieved by ensuring that prisoners experience a full range of consequences (sanctions and rewards), and by encouraging prisoners to:

- exercise greater self-determination;
- develop self-discipline;
- accept responsibility and accountability;
- predict and accept behavioural consequences;
- make appropriate decisions and choices;
- deal constructively with conflict; and
- develop respect for themselves, others and the law.

Most significantly, with the planned introduction of unit management into H.M. Prison Fairlea in 1991-1992, all women's prisons and units will operate under unit management guidelines.

Policy

*The Office of Corrections will ensure that all women prisoners are accommodated and managed in facilities which operate under the principles of unit management and that they are supervised by staff who have received appropriate training.*

- The prisoner population will be divided, either architecturally, geographically or administratively, into groups of an appropriate size, managed by a permanent team of staff.
- Prison staff will be permanently assigned to a staff team.
- Each staff team, provided it meets the goals of the prison, will have delegated power to control its own operations.
- Staff teams will set times for regular meetings, some of which selected prisoners will be required to attend.
- Staff and prisoners will be held accountable for their own duties, obligations, responsibilities and the operations of their unit.
- Staff in control of prisoners will be expected to perform a range of duties, which will include custodial, individual management-planning and program functions.
- Staff will support, maintain and provide a prison environment that reflects the diversity, demands and expectations of ordinary community life.
- A system of direct sanctions and rewards for prisoners, will be devised by staff at the unit level, and will be administered and controlled consistently and equitably.
Each team will set its own objective, strategies and goals. These will be reviewed at least annually. Staff will be encouraged to prepare additional goals and strategies for each review.

RECEPTION AND ORIENTATION PROGRAMS

Well administered reception and orientation programs are essential in ensuring the effective management of the prison system and the health and well-being of the prisoner population. The reception process plays a vital role in providing an environment in which both the prisoner and correctional staff are provided with an opportunity to:

- provide a forum in which the prisoner can articulate their feelings about their imprisonment and commence a process of adjustment;

- gather, clarify and exchange information which will be critical for the effective management of the prisoner, both in the short and long term; and

- provide opportunities for prisoners to participate in decisions which will effect their lives during the period of their imprisonment.

Similarly, the orientation process plays a significant role for women in the prison system in that it serves to facilitate the adjustment of women prisoners to their imprisonment and/or re-location through the provision of relevant and timely information.

The first joint corrections health reception program - the ‘F’ Reception Program - was established in the Metropolitan Reception Prison in mid-1988 to receive all male prisoners into the prison system. The main aim of the program has been to ensure that on the day of reception into the prison system, prisoners are appropriately managed in terms of their legal status, health and welfare. The process allows staff and prisoners to address critical presenting issues, whilst identifying those issues and/or needs which are more appropriately addressed or resolved at a later period during a prisoner’s imprisonment. Whilst this model is an appropriate model to implement within the women’s prison system, its implementation must recognise the different needs of women prisoners.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will provide reception and orientation programs within all women’s prisons which are targeted to the needs of women prisoners, in order to facilitate their physical and emotional adjustment to imprisonment.

Women prisoners at the point of their reception into the prison system will be provided with opportunities to address critical issues and identify offending related needs which they agree to address throughout the period of their imprisonment.

This process will provide correctional and other staff with opportunities to identify at risk prisoners and collect and record relevant information which will assist prison administrators and staff in the management of women prisoners.

The Office of Corrections will provide a major reception and orientation program for women prisoners which will operate at the main reception prison for women. All other women’s prisons will provide reception and orientation programs for women which maximise opportunities for women prisoners to address critical issues and identify and/or renegotiate their individual management plan.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that all women prisoners upon their reception into prison are treated in a manner which respects their privacy and confidentiality.
The Office of Corrections will ensure that all women prisoners, upon their reception to all women's prisons receive information on prison routines, programs and services and prisoner rights and responsibilities. Such information will be provided in appropriate community languages.

All women's prisons will provide reception and orientation programs which serve to facilitate the adjustment women prisoners experience either upon their reception into the system or upon their relocation to another women's prison.

Upon initial reception, all women prisoners will provide a detailed social history, and will undergo an assessment of their needs. This assessment will recommend the regime and individual management plan most appropriate for each prisoner and will provide a mechanism to ensure continuity of services and programs to women prisoners.

Upon transferring from one prison to another, women prisoners will undertake a detailed orientation program which will familiarise them with expectations, rules, procedures and personal development opportunities. During this process, a prisoner's individual management plan will be reviewed and, if necessary, updated.

INDIVIDUAL MANAGEMENT PLANS AND DATA COLLECTION

Individual management plans involve staff working with prisoners to identify and assess prisoners' needs, and then develop, co-ordinate and implement realistic plans and programs to meet these needs. Some of the numerous advantages in implementing this framework within a prison environment are that it will:

- promote opportunities for correctional staff and prisoners to develop positive working relationships;
- enable prisoners to participate in the decision making process;
- provide decision makers with more accurate and relevant prisoner information; and
- provide the Office with a more effective system of evaluating the provision of programs and services to prisoners.

Policy

Individual Management Plans will be developed to provide a comprehensive framework from which correctional and other relevant staff can ensure that women prisoners are effectively managed throughout the length of their sentence. This process will ensure that women prisoners are provided with opportunities to discuss their individual management plans throughout their sentence and will encourage women prisoners to participate in decisions which affect their lives.

Individual management plans will enable staff to make decisions on the safety and security of women prisoners and allow staff and women prisoners to establish mutually agreed objectives which encourage prisoners to take responsibility for the use of their time in prison.

Individual management plans will encourage consistent, professional and informed decisions to be made on all aspects of the management of women prisoners.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that information is systematically collated on each individual woman prisoner, maintaining the requirements of confidentiality.

Prisoner information will be maintained through files and a data based computer system which will be accessible to prison staff, classification, the Adult Parole Board and community based corrections.
The Individual management plans for women prisoners will outline:

- social history which will identify general personal details, information on their dependents and next of kin, sentence planning and management needs;
- personal development programs which promote the attainment of recreational, independent living and communication skills;
- programs which address the needs and problems specifically relevant to the particular circumstances of their offences;
- employment aspirations and vocational training which will provide the opportunity for women prisoners to be employed and trained in programs that enable them to develop and acquire skills;
- education programs to address the personal development and educational needs of women prisoners;
- release preparation which ensures that women prisoners have the opportunity to prepare for their re-integration into the community prior to release; and
- behaviour and performance strategies for the monitoring and supervision of mutually agreed goals.

CLASSIFICATION

Women prisoners now have a range of classification options previously unavailable to them and are now managed under a variety of prison regimes and in settings which offer the full range of security levels. Additionally, they have program and lifestyle options that provide them with incentives to acquire relevant skills and which assist them in their preparation for release. Individual management plans will be introduced throughout the women's prison system and will provide correctional staff with comprehensive information from which to base classification decisions on individual prisoners.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will ensure that all women prisoners will be classified at the lowest level of security for which they qualify and which ensures their effective management. This process will consider the programmatic and personal needs of women prisoners, in particular their participation in education and vocational training and the maintenance and strengthening of their relationships with their child or children.

- All women prisoners will be classified to an appropriate placement as soon as possible after their reception. Their classification will be based on detailed information gathered during the compilation of the prisoner's individual management plan.
- All women prisoners, having due regard to their current legal status, offending and prison history, and their management and personal needs, will be classified and placed at the lowest level of security for which they qualify.
- During the review of a woman prisoner's classification, every attempt will be made to ensure continuity of programs and services.
- Women prisoners who present security and/or management difficulties will be provided with placement or classification options designed to encourage either improvement in their behaviour or opportunities to demonstrate trust.
- Every attempt will be made to ensure that prior to release all women prisoners are provided with opportunities to prepare for release.
DRUG PREVENTION, DETECTION AND TREATMENT

It is estimated that approximately 80% of women entering the prison system are dependent upon illicit drugs and/or prescribed medications. There are a number of features of this population which are worthy of consideration when examining the problem of drugs in women's prisons. These are that women with histories of drug misuse and offending:

- often lack self-confidence and self-esteem;
- have established links with drug-using peer groups;
- have had disrupted family, schooling and employment backgrounds; and
- have a multitude of health, relationship and lifestyle problems.

The Office of Corrections has implemented a number of strategies over recent years to address the problem of drug usage amongst prisoners and the introduction of drugs into prisons throughout the State.

The issue which is most difficult to resolve for administrators of correctional facilities is that of establishing a balance between ensuring that our prisons are safe and secure whilst also maintaining a correctional system which is humane.

The Advisory Committee endorses an approach in Victoria which utilises a number of measures to ensure that the balance which is achieved results in a correctional system which is safe, secure and humane.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will ensure through the adoption of security and control, treatment and preventative measures, that the introduction of illicit drugs is minimised and the detection of drugs within women's prisons is maximised.

Prevention

Effective measures will be developed and implemented to prevent the introduction and use of illicit drugs within women's prisons. Such measures will include:

- the development and implementation of health/drug awareness programs and recreational and personal development programs in order for women prisoners to have timely and appropriate access to information and assistance to prevent their use and dependence upon drugs; and
- the enforcement and publication of offences and sanctions related to the use and trafficking of illicit drugs in order to dissuade women prisoners from being involved in drug related behaviour.

Security and Control

To minimise the introduction and use of drugs within women's prisons, security and control measures will be adopted which are effective in detecting the presence of drugs whilst not being so intrusive as to defeat the objectives of programs operating within these prisons facilities. Such measures will entail the following:

- random searches will be conducted of visitors to women's prisons, of women prisoners' cells/rooms, of property and their person and such searches will be conducted in a manner which ensures the dignity and privacy of women prisoners and visitors;
strip searches of women prisoners will be conducted wherever possible by two
women prison officers and such searches are to be conducted in a manner which
ensures the dignity and privacy of women prisoners;

- the compulsory urine testing of women prisoners will be introduced as a measure to
determine whether women prisoners are using illicit substances; and

- women prisoners will receive clear and concise information regarding the procedures
and consequences for any breach of prison regulations.

Treatment

- In order for women prisoners to address issues related to their drug use, a range of
treatment options will be made available to them. The following policies will guide the
development of such programs:

- counselling on issues related to the misuse of drugs will be available in all women's
prisons to address the more general substance abuse treatment needs of women
prisoners. There will also be provision made by the Office to operate a residential
drug treatment program in a specific women's prison to provide more intensive
support and assistance to women prisoners with illicit drug use issues. Such
programs will be conducted in a manner which ensures the dignity, respect and
privacy of women prisoners; and

- women prisoners' participation in counselling and treatment programs will be
voluntary, and women prisoners will be provided with relevant and appropriate
information and advice which will ensure that their decision to participate is an
informed one.

Although the Advisory Committee supports the notion that the participation of women prisoners in
drug counselling should be on a voluntary basis, there is similarly an important role for drug
counselling as a sanction which may be imposed by a Governor or as a requirement of the Adult
Parole Board. The following policy statements should guide the use of such a sanction or
requirement:

- where the Governor is satisfied that the use of drugs has played an integral role in
the commission of a prison offence, the Governor may provide women prisoners
with the option of receiving the appropriate prison sanction or contract the woman to
participate in an approved drug counselling program. In circumstances where the
woman fails to comply with the conditions of her contract, she will appear before the
Governor to have the original prison sanction reconsidered; and

- where the Adult Parole Board is satisfied that the use of drugs has played an integral
role in the commission of offences for which the prisoner is currently serving a
period of imprisonment, or that the use of drugs has resulted in the prisoner
committing prison offences whilst serving their current sentence, the Adult Parole
Board may order that she undertake an approved drug counselling program prior to
the Board considering her suitability for release onto Parole.

PRISONER DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Under the provisions of the Corrections Act 1986, prisoners are afforded specific rights which cannot
be removed through a disciplinary process. However, the Act does make provision for a range of
privileges to be determined, and privileges may be withdrawn as part of a disciplinary process.
A fair, strong and accountable disciplinary system must have: well informed staff administering it; well informed prisoners who are aware of it and its effect on their lives; and effective grievance mechanisms that can offer an assurance that abuse of the system will be minimised.

Policy

In order to provide women prisoners with a safe, secure and humane environment, the Office of Corrections will ensure that women prisoners are subject to open, fair, firm and consistent disciplinary systems and are provided with access to, and knowledge of, appropriate grievance mechanisms.

_disciplinary procedures will allow for a swift, fair and accountable disposition for prison offences committed by women prisoners.

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Disciplinary procedures will allow for a swift, fair and accountable disposition for prison offences committed by women prisoners.

The Office of Corrections will provide grievance mechanisms which are accessible to all women prisoners and which are responsive to grievances they may have.

Prison staff and women prisoners will be fully acquainted with disciplinary rules, behavioral expectations, the disciplinary process and the grievance mechanisms which are available to them.

CHILDREN’S ACCESS AND RESIDENCE PROGRAM

As an estimated 74 per cent of women imprisoned in this State are mothers, it is not surprising to learn that a major concern of women prisoners is one of maintaining relationships with their children. There are a number of innovative programs operating throughout the State which operate to support and strengthen this bond wherever possible.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will ensure that every means possible will be made available to prisoner mothers to maintain continuity of relationships with their children.

The Office of Corrections will provide the opportunity for women to have access to visits and residential programs with their children and in special circumstances allow children to reside in prison with their prisoner mother.

In determining a prisoner mother’s participation in residential programs and in the placement of children in prison with their mother, the Director-General will ensure that the best interests of the child are to be of paramount importance.

The security, good order and management of the prison will be given consideration in the placement of children with their prisoner mothers.

Policy

Children Residing in Prison

The Office of Corrections will provide parent prisoners with opportunities to have their child or children reside with them during their sentence where it is clearly shown to be in the best interests of the child or children to do so. The Office of Corrections will provide these opportunities in facilities which are most appropriate for the placement of children.
Assessment and Review

The Office of Corrections will ensure all prisoner mothers who have been charged or who are on remand or sentenced will be able to make application to have their children reside in prison with them. The assessment of the application will consider a variety of factors as they affect the child. Such factors will include consideration of the following:

- the previous care of the child;
- the quality of parenting;
- that the child's health needs can be met in a prison;
- that the facilities exist to provide for the child's health, safety and welfare;
- the child's age;
- current alternative placement options;
- the least disruptive placement for the child;
- the mother's sentence and response to the prison environment, including the prisoner's program participation, conduct and industry; and
- reports received from Community Services of Victoria, and other relevant professional services. In particular, reports will be requested from CSV where there has been previous contact between this agency and the parent prisoner and her child/children.

The placement of every child will be monitored and reviewed to assess and report at regular intervals on the continued appropriateness of the child's placement in prison.

Prisoner mothers will participate in the review process and may choose to be represented by an independent person to advocate on their behalf.

Mothers - Emergency Reception

The Office of Corrections will ensure that when mothers are remanded or sentenced, that they will be able to have their child remain with them until a formal assessment process is undertaken.

Care, Control and Accountability

The Office of Corrections will enter into an agreement with the prisoner mother which reflects that the prisoner mother is responsible for the safety and care of the child while the child resides in the prison.

Where appropriate, the Office of Corrections will provide specified items for a child, and the prisoner mother will be required to meet any additional costs.

Legal custody of the child will remain with the prisoner mother, but in some circumstances other prisoners may be requested by the prisoner mother to assume short term responsibility for the care of the child. Office of Corrections staff will only accept responsibility for a child where the length of care is of a short duration and where the particular staff member has received appropriate training in caring for children.

The prisoner mother will, where appropriate, have access to social security payments.

Prisoner mothers will have the opportunity to maximise the use of community child care facilities in the provision of alternative care for the child when the prisoner mother is unable to care personally for the child.

Particular prisons will be nominated for the placement of children with their prisoner mothers to ensure the provision of appropriate facilities, programs and services. This will ensure that prison environments promote the development, safety and welfare of children residing with their prisoner mothers.
Limitations

The movement and activities of children who reside in prison with their mothers may be limited to ensure the good order and management of the prison.

A child may be removed from the care of the prisoner mother if it is no longer in the child’s best interests to reside in prison or if the continued presence of the child is prejudicial to the good order and management of the prison.

Prisoner mothers who have their child or children residing with them, must provide the details of a person who will be an emergency care-giver, or the details of a contact person at an appropriate child-care facility who has agreed to provide emergency care if the child is to be removed from the prison. The Office of Corrections will in an emergency and in the absence of a nominated care-giver, contact Community Services of Victoria to arrange the temporary placement of the child or children in foster care.

Education and Employment

Women prisoners who have children residing with them will be expected to continue to participate in employment and education programs. Where appropriate, prisoner mothers should have the option to take their children with them to their place of work within or outside the prison.

Women prisoners who are pregnant will, unless medically exempted, participate in programs and employment for up to 6 weeks prior to the birth.

Participation of pregnant women or prisoner mothers’ in education and employment during the 12 week confinement period, and after this time, will be dependent upon an assessment, including an evaluation of the woman’s and/or the baby’s health.

Women prisoners are not to be financially disadvantaged through loss of prisoner earnings while on maternity confinement and will be maintained at the level of pay which they were receiving immediately prior to their confinement.

Pre and post-natal programs and services will be provided to women prisoners which promote their personal health care; provide advice on their own, or that of their child’s, nutritional requirements; and which support women prisoners in acquiring parenting skills.

Policy

Visits

The Office of Corrections will through the provision of contact and non-contact visiting programs, provide prisoner mothers with the opportunity to have contact with their children in order to maintain and strengthen their relationships.

- Residential visit program which allow prisoner mothers to have children reside with them for limited periods of time, will be provided at specific locations.

- Where access to contact visit programs are limited due to disciplinary reasons, children up to the age of 14 years may continue to participate in the contact visits program.

Policy

Services

The Office of Corrections will provide structured support and assistance to parent prisoners in order to ensure that parent prisoners receive access to relevant professionals, community agencies and programs and to minimise the possible isolation they may experience whilst in custody and upon their release.
The Office of Corrections will provide opportunities for prisoner mothers to have regular access to parenting courses that address development needs, interpersonal relationships, discipline, stimulation and parenting perceptions.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that provisions are made at prisons where children reside for parent prisoners and their child or children to access services which equate with the standards of the wider community.

HEALTH

Major developments with regard to women's health have evolved over a number of years, ranging from global strategies to specific community based approaches. Key documents which have been relevant in formulating the health policy for women prisoners are the World Health Organisation's Health for All Strategy (1977), the 'National Women's Health Policy' (1989), and the Victorian Women's Health Policy 'Why Women's Health' (1987). Both the National and State policies endorse the World Health Organisation's definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

In Victoria the provision of health services to prisoners is the responsibility of the Health Department. In 1986 the Office of Corrections and the Health Department established a Corrections Health Board to determine policy, priorities and strategies, to resolve major problems and to ensure that sufficient resources were available to deliver health services. Implementation of the decisions of the Board are through the Corrections Health Service. The Corrections Health Service is responsible for the provision of all health services to prisoners. The Corrections Health Service currently divides its activities into areas of primary care, alcohol and drug services and forensic services.

Traditionally, the pressure exerted by patients utilising Corrections Health Services has channelled the thrust of health service provision into an approach largely reflective of the "medical model". This model arguably results in "... the process of treating normal bodily functions or social issues as problems which require a medical solution. ....The medicalisation of everyday life is seen as detracting from principles of health promotion in that it deflects individuals from understanding the wider causes of illness and does not emphasise self-reliance and self-empowerment".

The health issues for women prisoners are presently believed to be:

- women's emotional and mental health;
- reproductive health and sexuality;
- drug and alcohol misuse;
- violence against women;
- environmental health;
- the health effects of sex role stereotyping; and
- lifestyle changes.

The Office of Corrections and the Corrections Health Board recognise that:

- women's health is determined by a broad range of social, environmental, economic and biological factors;
- differences in health status and health outcomes are linked to gender, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, disability, location and environment; and
- health promotion and disease prevention are necessary, along with high quality illness treatment services.

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In light of abovementioned issues the provision of health services to women will in the future encompass the provision of traditional and non-traditional health services, psychological services and recreation programs, and will be jointly provided by the Corrections Health Service and the Office of Corrections.

Policy

Provision of Health Services

The Office of Corrections will ensure that management practices, facilities, programs and services are provided in such a way as to maximise the health and well-being of women prisoners.

Women prisoners will have access to a range of health/wellness programs and services which meet the particular psychological, social and biological needs of women prisoners. This will include access to primary care and specialist medical services and health promotion programs.

Women prisoners, whenever possible, will be given access to women medical practitioners and women specialists and women prisoners will not be financially penalised as a consequence.

Women prisoners will be provided with health information to ensure that they can make informed decisions about their health care.

The Office of Corrections and Corrections Health Board will ensure that health service providers to women prisoners receive training in women's health issues.

Range of health services provided to women prisoners

Comprehensive and accessible primary care and specialist medical services will be provided, targeted to the health needs of women prisoners. Such services will reflect and be equal to such services in the community and will reflect new issues and developments which occur in the area of women's health.

Women prisoners will have access to alcohol and drug awareness programs which will reflect and be equal to, the provision of such services in the community in order to address the dependency issues surrounding women prisoners alcohol and/or drug misuse.

Women prisoners will have access to psychiatry services which will reflect and be equal to, the provision of such services in the community in order to meet the psychiatric needs of women prisoners.

Specialist women's health service providers will be involved in offering and delivering health services to women prisoners in order to provide women prisoners with a greater range of acceptable, accessible and appropriate services and to complement existing health services.

The Office of Corrections and the Corrections Health Board will ensure that women prisoners will not be prevented from accessing health services on the basis of their language, culture, age, disability or physical and/or emotional isolation.

Health promotion and provision of health information for women prisoners

As an integral part of the health services provided to women prisoners, a co-ordinated health promotion program will be delivered in order for women prisoners to have access to relevant preventative health information and to increase their awareness and understanding of issues which affect their health and well-being.

Women prisoners will have access to relevant, timely and clear information about their health and health care in order for women prisoners to take responsibility for the maintenance and improvement of their own health. Such information will serve to prevent specific health issues from occurring and to assist women prisoners in seeking appropriate medical, psychological and/or welfare assistance when necessary.
Women prisoners participation in decision making on health

Women prisoners will be informed of and have input into, decisions relating to their medical treatment and care in order that they may be involved in all aspects of their medical treatment and care and make informed decisions regarding such treatment and care.

Research and data collection on women prisoners' health

Relevant data and information on women prisoners, in particular their drug and/or alcohol use/misuse, will be regularly collected and collated to ensure health services provided to women prisoners are relevant and effective and to increase the knowledge and understanding of health service providers and correctional staff on the specific health needs of women prisoners.

Training of health care providers

Staff who are involved in the delivery of health programs to women prisoners will be provided with relevant training in the area of women’s health and will treat women prisoners with dignity and in a non-judgemental manner, and in an environment which provides for the privacy, informed consent and confidentiality of women.

Policy

Psychological Services

The Office of Corrections will ensure through the provision of psychological services that women prisoners have access to appropriate therapy and psychological programs, and that the provision of these programs will be at a standard commensurate with that which exists in the community.

Psychological services will address the particular needs of women in order to maximise their psychological well-being through:

- the provision of psychological services for women in all prisons at the point of their reception, during periods of acute need and throughout their sentence;

- the provision of psychological services will target the specific needs of women by providing direct services or contributing as consultants in target areas such as drug abuse, relationship issues, dependency and abuse issues, eating disorders, self-harm and suicide, criminal attitudes and behaviour, crisis assessment and management, relationship issues and assertiveness training;

- promoting opportunities for women to take responsibility for their psychological and emotional well-being and for their behaviour in respect to themselves and others;

- the application of preventative measures which will be targeted at the ongoing needs of women prisoners through individual and group programs; and

- the provision of services which do not focus solely on crisis intervention, and the utilisation of other services and functions including external counselling and support.

Policy

Recreation Facilities, Programs and Services

The Office of Corrections will provide access to a range of recreation facilities, equipment and programs which are targeted and appropriate to women prisoners in order to develop their self-esteem, promote healthy lifestyle behaviours and encourage their participation in fitness activities.
Range of recreation facilities, equipment and programs

Women prisoners will have access to a comprehensive recreation program that includes the provision of active and passive activities in order to promote women prisoners' health and self-esteem.

The Office of Corrections will encourage women prisoners' participation in fitness activities and health promotion programs in order to promote the adoption of healthy lifestyle behaviours.

The Office of Corrections will provide, as far as is possible and appropriate, a co-ordinated and formalised involvement of external sports associations and community sports and recreation groups in the provision of recreation programs to women prisoners in order to promote the establishment of community linkages and the exchange of relevant community sports and leisure information.

Participation of women prisoners in decision making

Women prisoners will be consulted on the development of recreation programs and will be represented on recreation committees/working parties/groups which are established to develop and implement recreation programs within women's prisons. This will occur to ensure that women participate in the decision making process and that their respective recreation needs are gauged through such a process.

The Office of Corrections will actively encourage women prisoners to participate in both passive and active recreation programs, however women prisoners' involvement in these programs will be on a voluntary basis, to ensure that women exercise self-determination in their participation in such programs.

Data collection on women's recreational needs

The Office of Corrections will ensure that as part of women prisoners individual management plans (IMP's), the recreation interests and needs of women prisoners are recorded and form a part of their individual case plan.

Co-ordination of recreational facilities, equipment and programs

The Office of Corrections will ensure that responsibility is clearly ascribed in each women's prison for an individual or individuals to co-ordinate the provision of recreation facilities, equipment and programs for women prisoners.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that those individuals responsible for the provision of recreation facilities, equipment and programs will regularly meet to discuss and examine the provision of recreation programs to women prisoners to ensure that such services and programs continue to meet the recreation objectives of the Office and are developed and implemented in a co-ordinated and cost effective manner.

Training and selection of officers responsible for recreation

The Office of Corrections will ensure that those individuals ascribed responsibility within each women's prison facility for the provision of recreation facilities, equipment and programs receive and possess the necessary training and skills to ensure effective delivery of recreation services to women prisoners.
EDUCATION, WORK AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In January 1989, responsibility for the provision of education programs in the correctional system was transferred from the Schools Division of the Ministry of Education to the State Training System. The transfer provided for each prison's education and vocational training programs to be delivered by an identified TAFE College and for the College to assume responsibility for staffing and the allocation of resources to the prison campuses. Furthermore, it is recognised by the Advisory Committee that in the development and implementation of this policy, that women have their own particular ways of knowing and their own ways of learning.

The Victorian Prison Industries Commission, established in 1984 is responsible for the development and operations of prison industries and farms throughout the State's prisons. Prisoners who attend work are paid a nominal wage which has an incentive component to encourage greater productivity. Industrial and vocational training of prisoners continues to be a high priority of the Commission with women prisoners throughout 1989/1990 being offered industrial training in garment construction, plaster casting, cardboard clicking, packaging and agriculture.

In June 1990, 81 per cent of women prisoners had partly completed their secondary education and 80 per cent of women were unemployed at the time of their imprisonment, the provision of appropriate education, work and vocational training programs to women is of particular importance.

Policy

The Office of Corrections through the Corrections Industry Training Board, the State Training System, the Division of Further Education and the Victorian Prison Industries Commission will ensure that women prisoners have access to appropriate vocational education and training services and employment. In so doing, the Office will enable women prisoners to raise their proficiencies and academic levels in literacy and numeracy and to maximise their opportunities to secure meaningful employment upon their release.

The Office of Corrections and the Victorian Prison Industries Commission will develop prison industries that provide links with vocational training.

- Women prisoners will have access to an increased range of education and vocational training programs as detailed in the Corrections Industry Training Plan.
- Vocational counselling will be made available to women prisoners on reception to ensure that their education and training needs are identified in their individual management plans (IMP's) and form part of each woman prisoner's individual case plan.
- The Office of Corrections in conjunction with the Network Manager will ensure that all curriculum, teaching methodologies and materials are gender inclusive.
- In conjunction with the State Training System, the Office of Corrections will adopt procedures to encourage competency-based training (CBT) to train women prisoners to industry specific standards, allowing certification to be based on the assessment of competence achieved in the workplace and off-the-job training.
- The Office of Corrections, through the State Training System, will examine mechanisms to recognise prior learning amongst women prisoners in order to identify appropriate entry points for vocational training where women are under-represented (eg. Business Studies Courses). Prior learning will include formal and informal training as well as life and work experience.
- The Office of Corrections will provide women prisoners with access to a range of TAFE accredited courses, in particular the Business Studies, Hospitality, Horticulture and Recreation areas through Vocational Pathways established at all women's prisons.
Through the Network Manager, the Office of Corrections will ensure that training pathways offered to women prisoners are relevant to the new career paths established in industrial awards and that they recognise the diversity of women prisoners social and economic participation and education and training needs.

The Office of Corrections will, in conjunction with the Network Manager, establish procedures for women prisoners to be actively encouraged to study in areas where they are under-represented.

Women prisoners will be provided with opportunities to achieve work habits and skills under conditions which are as close as possible to those applying in similar industries outside prison and which maximise work opportunities in prison industries and farms.

The Office of Corrections will develop mechanisms which encourage the active participation of women prisoners in local corrections education and training committees and through the Network Manager in order for women prisoners to become actively involved in the development of curriculum relevant to their training needs.

PREPARATION FOR RELEASE

In 1989-90, a significant percentage of women entering the prison system received sentences of less than five years. An evaluation of the release preparation programs which had been delivered in the past for women prisoners, revealed that they had essentially been designed with the general prisoner population in mind - men. The evaluation revealed that release preparation or community integration programs provided for women prisoners should include components that address personal growth/issues and information and assistance which address the acute 'post release' needs of women prisoners. At the time of the evaluation in 1990, 70 per cent of the total women prison population were eligible for release within the proceeding six months. It is therefore critical that community integration programs and programs which assist women prepare themselves for their eventual release, operate on a consistent and co-ordinated basis and which are appropriate to the particular needs of women prisoners.

Policy

Community Integration Program

The Office of Corrections will ensure that all women prisoners receive access to Community Integration Programs in order to prepare women for their eventual release and reintegration into the community. All prison facilities accommodating women will operate Community Integration Programs on a regular and co-ordinated basis.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that all women prisoners have access to community integration programs prior to their release in order for them to gain practical assistance which will aid in their transition from prison to the wider community.

Access to programs which meet the particular needs of women prisoners will be provided prior to release, including opportunities for women to re-establish relationships with their children and family, and programs which address life skills, finance and employment issues.

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7 An examination of the minimum sentence length of women prisoners as of 30 June 1990, revealed that 38.6 per cent of women received sentences of less than twelve months and a further 40.6 per cent received sentences of one to less than five years.

The Office of Corrections will work with supporting and appropriate community agencies so far as possible and is necessary, to assist women prisoners with appropriate documentation and identification papers; with accommodation to go to; with work or access to social security payments; advice or access to financial services; advice or access to support services for children; and with suitable clothing and sufficient means to reach their destination and maintain themselves in the period immediately following their release.

Policy

Custodial Community Permit Program (CCPP)

The Office of Corrections will provide Custodial Community Permit Programs within all women’s prisons, which are targeted and appropriate to the needs of women prisoners and which are primarily focussed at optimising opportunities for women at the end of their sentence to address their rehabilitative and reintegrative needs during the period of their imprisonment.

Rehabilitation/Reintegration

The Office of Corrections will ensure that in accordance with guidelines for rehabilitative and reintegrative CCPP, women prisoners will be provided with opportunities to engage in activities in the outside community which prepare them for their successful return to the community.

Emergency

The Office of Corrections will ensure that women prisoners, wherever practicable, will be permitted to attend funerals of family members or those with whom they have shared long standing personal relationships, or visit any such person who is critically ill. Where women prisoners are escorted to funerals or to visit a dangerously ill person, such escorts are to be conducted in as discrete and sensitive manner as security considerations permit.

Medical

The Office of Corrections will ensure that with the approval of the Medical Superintendent - Corrections Health Service, women prisoners may at their own expense be treated by a private medical practitioner, psychotherapist or chiropractor of their choice outside the prison.

Educational and Vocational Training

The Office of Corrections will ensure that, within existing guidelines, the opportunities for women prisoners to undertake educational courses and vocational training outside the prison are maximised.

Recreation

The Office of Corrections will, at each women's prison, ensure that a range of community recreational activities are made available to prisoners who are eligible for participation in such programs.

Policy

Post Release Accommodation Services

The Office of Corrections will actively work with Government and non-Government agencies to ensure that accommodation services are accessible and appropriate to women offenders, and to women prisoners upon their release, and that all women prisoners will be provided with an opportunity prior to their release to be linked up with, or introduced to, accommodation service providers.
The Office of Corrections will ensure that women receive access to programs which provide them with the necessary skills to access these services upon their release.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The management of women prisoners should emphasise their continuing part in the community, not their exclusion from it. Thus every effort must be made to involve the wider community to assist correctional staff in developing and maintaining programs within women's prisons.

The Office of Corrections has for many years actively encouraged the participation of community agencies and individuals in prisons, recognising their expertise and commitment to providing support to prisoners. For instance, representatives from various religious denominations provide religious services to women prisoners throughout the State and the Office has recently established a Community Agency Consultative Committee to ensure the most effective delivery of programs and services to prisoners. The membership of this consultative committee consists of representatives from the Office and several community agencies, the majority of which are involved in delivering services to the families of prisoners and to prisoners, pre and post release.

Furthermore, although there has been limited involvement of correctional volunteers working within prisons in the past, the Office recognises that volunteers may contribute substantially to a variety of institutional programs, including recreation, classroom and workshop tuition, social and cultural activities, friendship and counselling. Volunteers may help to bridge the gap between the relatively isolated prison environment and the community to which most women prisoners return. The latter role can be very important for any woman prisoner who lacks other community supports and would otherwise receive no visits.

In addition to the involvement of community agencies and individuals in the provision of programs and services to women prisoners, there currently exist two main advice bodies which have been established to provide independent advice to the Minister for Corrections on the operation of the prison system - Official Visitors and the Victorian Women's Prisons Council. The Minister and the Office recognise the value in, and importance of continuing to support these two independent advice bodies in fulfilling the objectives for which they were established.

Policy

Independent Advice Bodies

The Office of Corrections and the Minister will ensure that independent advice bodies, such as the Official Visitors Scheme and the Victorian Women's Prisons Council are encouraged and assisted by the Office to fulfil the roles and functions for which they were established.

- Women should be given preference in the appointment of Official Visitors to all women's prisons and all Official Visitors appointed to women's prisons should have an understanding and/or knowledge of issues relating to women prisoners.
- The Office of Corrections will ensure that Official Visitors allocated to women's prisons and the Victorian Women's Prison Council receive appropriate and timely information on the developments which are occurring in the Office in respect to women prisoners and offenders.
- The Office of Corrections and the Minister for Corrections will actively encourage Official Visitors and the Victorian Women's Prison Council to provide reports on issues relating to the management of women prisoners and the implementation of policies as determined by the Office.
- The Office of Corrections and the Minister for Corrections will ensure that advice received from Official Visitors and the Victorian Women’s Prison Council is recorded and where appropriate raised with senior executive officers of the Office for resolution.
Policy

Community Agencies

The Office of Corrections will work to maximise the involvement of the broader community and community agencies in the development and provision of services and programs in all women's prisons. The involvement of the community in the provision of programs and services will be targeted to the provision of direct support services to women prisoners, assistance and support to the families of women prisoners, and their participation in the provision of programs and services to women prisoners which will assist women prisoners in their preparation for release.

Policy

Volunteers

Volunteers providing programs and services to women prisoners will be women except in cases where a suitably qualified woman volunteer is not available.

Utilisation of volunteers in pre-release and reintegration programs for women prisoners will be maximised.

Policy

Religious Services

The Office of Corrections will ensure that women are able to access and practice the religion of their choice. Women prisoners access to chaplains and their participation in religious services, will be supported through the provision of appropriate religious facilities in which they can participate in religious services.

COMMUNICATION

There is a percentage of women prisoners who as a consequence of having poor literacy skills or as a result of their lack of confidence, may be unable to communicate effectively with uniformed and non-uniformed staff. As of June 1990, women prisoners who had partially completed their secondary education represented 81 per cent of the total women prisoner population. Although there has not been data collected of the percentage of women prisoners who are lacking in confidence, anecdotal information would indicate that this figure would be relatively high. Therefore the importance of clear, simple communication which is comprehensible to all women prisoners cannot be overemphasised, especially where failure to comprehend may serve to render their management ineffective.

Policy

Women prisoners will be provided with opportunities which will enable them to effectively communicate with staff through the provision of information which is written in a clear and readable form and through their access to staff, volunteers and qualified interpreters who have the necessary skills to assist women prisoners communicate orally or in a written form.

Wherever possible, visitors to women's prisons will receive access to such information and to staff, volunteers and interpreters who will assist visitors in understanding the information provided to them.

Information provided to women prisoners will be in plain English (or a translation from plain English into the prisoner's community language) and be comprehensible to the majority of prisoners.
Where a woman prisoner is unable to communicate clearly in, and/or comprehend plain English, an interpreter will be used to facilitate communication.

Information will be provided to visitors and the public in plain English and/or appropriate community languages to ensure that they are informed of prison regulations and their obligations as visitors to women's prisons.

Women prisoners wishing to make a written request or complaint and who lack literacy skills will be assisted to express themselves in writing by an officer, volunteer or interpreter as appropriate.

SPECIAL NEED WOMEN PRISONER GROUPS

As of June 1990, approximately 10 per cent of the women prisoner population had been born in non-English speaking countries. An additional proportion of prisoners though born in Australia, have a non-English speaking background. A significant proportion of women prisoners therefore enter the system with cultural backgrounds, needs and expectations which differ from those of Anglo-Australians combined in some cases with problems in communicating in English. Aboriginal people and communities within Victoria, are faced with higher rates of unemployment, lower standards of education and poorer overall health than the general Victorian population. When compared to their respective populations, Aboriginal people in general, and Aboriginal women in particular, are substantially over-represented in the Victorian prison population. Lacking the skills or education to secure employment, most Aboriginal people are trapped in a life typified by poverty, frustration, resentment and anger. Aboriginal women are also often involved in situations of domestic violence or head single parent households. These issues are further complicated by the relatively early age at which many Aboriginal women begin child-bearing and the continuing high mortality rate for Aboriginal children. As of June 1990, 6 per cent of the total women prisoner population were Aboriginal.

The imprisonment of disabled women prisoners presents particular challenges. To date, the women's prison system has had relatively few women prisoners entering the system who are either physically or intellectually disabled. The management of these women prisoners has arguably been appropriate given the infrequency of their contact with the prison system and the limited capacity of the prison system to cater for their particular disability. Although a specialised unit has been established in H.M. Metropolitan Reception Prison - "K" Division to accommodate intellectually disabled men prisoners, no such unit currently operates for intellectually disabled women prisoners. It is anticipated in the broadening of "K" Division's health focus, that intellectually disabled women prisoners will be accommodated in this unit, when no other suitable placement exists.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will ensure that a range of services are developed for women prisoners with special needs which are specifically directed toward their individual and social needs. Where possible, community groups will be encouraged to participate in the delivery of programs and services to this group of women prisoners, in particular women prisoners from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal women prisoners and disabled women prisoners.

- The Office of Corrections will ensure that women prisoners from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal women prisoners and disabled women prisoners, will not be disadvantaged in gaining information or communicating effectively.

- The Office of Corrections will encourage opportunities for women prisoners from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal women prisoners to access culturally relevant education, health, welfare and legal services.

- The Office of Corrections will encourage greater use of non-English speaking and Aboriginal community resources in the provision of programs to women prisoners from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal women prisoners.
The Office of Corrections will ensure that information on appropriate government services and programs will be distributed to women prisoners from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal prisoners and disabled women prisoners which meet the particular needs of these prisoner groups.

The Office of Corrections will recognise the extended nature of non-English speaking and Aboriginal family structures and the implications of this for classification and prisoner visits.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that all staff and volunteers directly involved with women prisoners from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal prisoners and disabled women prisoners receive appropriate training to enhance their ability to interact positively with these prisoner groups.

Women Prisoners From Non-English Speaking Backgrounds

Multi-lingual information for women prisoners will be made available, and when necessary qualified interpreter services will be utilised to ensure comprehension.

Aboriginal Women Prisoners

The Office of Corrections will encourage Aboriginal community groups to provide health education programs which focus on issues relevant to Aboriginal prisoners. (eg. AIDS, drugs and alcohol)

The Office of Corrections will involve Community Justice Panels and other Aboriginal community organisations in the development of community integration programs for Aboriginal women prisoners.

Disabled Women Offenders

The Office of Corrections will ensure physically disabled women prisoners will not be denied access to prison facilities and appropriate programs as a consequence of their disability.

The Office of Corrections will actively work with Disability Services to maximise opportunities for intellectually disabled women prisoners to develop their independence, facilitate their re-integration into their respective community, ensure their equality and promote their involvement in decisions affecting their lives.
NEW DIRECTIONS IN ADMINISTRATION

Two central themes have emerged in the examination of administrative services which will support the management systems established for the future management of women prisoners and offenders. These are that:

• integral to any change to the manner in which the Office of Corrections manages women prisoners and offenders, will be the need to ensure that appropriate staff and volunteers are recruited and selected to work with women prisoners and offenders and that correctional staff receive access to appropriate training programs; and

• a data system which ensures the collection and recording of information on women prisoner and offender populations, will be critical in assessing the most appropriate programs to deliver to these groups. This will also provide the necessary information for management to ensure the effective monitoring of the implementation of policies contained in this document.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

To ensure the effective management of women prisoners and offenders, the Office of Corrections must ensure that the most appropriate staff and volunteers are recruited and selected to work with this prisoner and offender population. It is recognised that the most well developed plans will fail to reach fruition if staff do not possess the necessary skills to implement the plan.

Policy

The Office of Corrections in selecting staff and volunteers for positions involving direct contact with, and management of women prisoners and offenders, will ensure that only those applicants who demonstrate an understanding of the special needs of women and aptitude for working with women prisoners and offenders will be selected.

Advertisements for vacancies will highlight, where appropriate, the need for diversity of backgrounds, attributes and skills to work with women prisoners and offenders and selection techniques will be developed to measure suitability.

Only volunteers who have satisfactorily completed an approved orientation and training course will be permitted unrestricted contact with women prisoners and offenders.

Volunteers will be sought from among people with a broad range of interests, skills and philosophies.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

General research combined with Office of Corrections data clearly indicates that women prisoners and offenders form one of the more challenging groups with which correctional professionals interact. Further, it is apparent that until recently there has been no integrated approach to addressing the needs of women prisoners and offenders and equipping staff and volunteers with appropriate skills and knowledge to meet these needs. Arguably, training is a critical element in achieving a planned change process.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will provide appropriate training and development for all staff and volunteers working with women prisoners and offenders. The training will focus on an understanding of the different needs of women and appropriate skills and management strategies necessary to effectively manage women prisoners and offenders.
Volunteer training programs will include content specifically related to the needs, characteristics and circumstances of female offenders. The training will recognise that the social, psychological and biological circumstances of women offenders often give rise to needs which differ from those of men, especially in the areas of safety, security, self sufficiency and empowerment.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that volunteers receive appropriate training prior to their registration and involvement in the provision of programs and services to women prisoners.

Officer and volunteer training will incorporate cross-cultural training and information on the more common cultural barriers and sensitivities experienced by women prisoners and offenders from non-English speaking backgrounds and Aboriginal women prisoners and offenders.

BUDGETS FOR WOMEN PRISONERS AND OFFENDERS

The provision of operational budgets to prisons and community corrections centres involves a lengthy process of evaluation and negotiation between directorate staff and senior operational staff. It is important in both the provision of budgets to operational units and in the subsequent operation of these budgets that monies are allocated to ensure that women prisoners and offenders receive access to programs and services which address their needs.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will make provision annually in the development of location budgets for the special needs of women prisoners and offenders.

In facilities and centres where women and men are managed, governors and managers will be required to set aside funds sufficient to provide for the special needs of women prisoners/offenders and will be required to report on an annual basis on the application of those funds.

MONITORING SYSTEMS

Since February 1990, the Office of Corrections has committed significant resources to the process of reviewing its management of women prisoners and offenders and developing policies which will provide the framework for the future management of women prisoners and offenders. Consequently, given foreseeable budgetary constraints it is critical that the Office establish monitoring systems which will:

• monitor the progress of the Office towards the implementation of policies, and actions arising from the adoption of these policies;

• assess the relevancy of policies and priorities established by the Advisory Committee to ensure that the needs of women prisoners and offenders are addressed and that the Office continues to allocate the necessary resources to the implementation of nominated policies and priorities; and

• assess the effectiveness of policies and priorities.

Policy

The Office of Corrections will establish monitoring systems to monitor progress towards the implementation of policies and to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of policies established for women prisoners and offenders, in order to ensure the ongoing effective and appropriate management of women prisoners and offenders.

In the development of objectives and goals, the Office will identify appropriate performance indicators and targets and establish mechanisms which will fulfil management information requirements.
Monitoring of Women's Policies

The Office of Corrections will ensure that all policies endorsed by the Minister for Corrections and the Director-General on the future management of women prisoners and offenders will be identified in an implementation plan together with responsible divisional directors and timelines.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that senior executive officers of the organisation will receive on a quarterly basis, reports from the respective divisions, on the implementation of policies as identified in the implementation plan.

The Operational Review and Inspections Division will, as part of their reviews and inspections of women's prisons and units within men's prisons and all community corrections centres, review the implementation of, and compliance with, the relevant policies identified in the implementation plan and provide reports to the Director-General on such reviews and inspections.

Relevant divisions will incorporate into divisional/operational plans, the policies which have been identified in relation to women prisoners and offenders in order to ensure that such policies remain targeted for implementation and attention.

The Office of Corrections will promote the formulation of policies in relation to women prisoners and offenders and encourage independent advice bodies to report on a regular basis on the relevance and effectiveness of these policies.

The Office of Corrections will ensure that relevant information is identified and collected from within the Office and from relevant criminal justice agencies to assist the Office evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of policies developed and implemented for women prisoners and offenders.

Assessment of the Relevance and Effectiveness of Policies

Prisons and Community Based Corrections divisions will annually conduct interviews with women prisoners and offenders and correctional and other agency staff to collect qualitative information on the relevance of policies established for women prisoners and offenders.

Prisons and Community Based Corrections divisions will assess on an annual basis the effectiveness of objectives and goals established for women prisoners and offenders against agreed performance indicators.

The Office of Corrections will review thoroughly, the policies and achievements of 'The Agenda for Change' at the end of 1995 and will amend the policies wherever appropriate.

The Operational Review and Inspections Division will undertake a review in mid-1993 of 'The Agenda for Change' and update it wherever appropriate.
CHAPTER 6

THE AGENDA FOR CHANGE:

IMPLEMENTATION
THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS CHANGE

The principles for change which are referred to in the fourth chapter can best be achieved through a plan which provides for meaningful choices for women in the immediate to short-term, but which is set within a context that looks forward to long term fundamental change. The plan, which will significantly impact on the manner in which the Office of Corrections manages women prisoners and offenders will commence in July 1991.

The following recommended plan provides the blueprint for change in the short to mid term, and is consistent with the long term change which is envisaged for the Office over the next five years.

THE PRIORITIES OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS

Implementation Committees and Committee Tasks

- That each operational division establish an implementation committee which is to consist of a senior divisional officer who will chair the committee, operational staff from the respective prisons and each of the six community based corrections regions. The membership of the committee will take into account gender balance.

- That each implementation committee develop as a priority an implementation schedule which will incorporate the recommendations contained in this section of the document and include all other policies identified in chapter five of the document. Each implementation schedule will have included in it, nominated timelines and responsible officers and this schedule is to be incorporated into divisional operational plans.

- That each implementation committee will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of all relevant policies within respective divisions, and that the Chairperson of the committee will be required to present a progress report to the Office’s Executive on a quarterly basis.

- That each operational division will, on an annual basis, provide a report which details their progress to date in relation to the implementation schedule and any other initiatives implemented for women prisoners and offenders.

- That the Women Prisoners and Offenders Advisory Committee will be reconvened in twelve months to monitor the implementation of policies and to make recommendations to the Director-General and the Minister for Corrections on the implementation of nominated policies.

Timelines and Priorities

The Women Prisoners and Offenders Advisory Committee recommends that all policies identified in this document should be implemented over the next five years, giving due consideration to the funding made available to the Office of Corrections and its subsequent financial capacity to do so.

Furthermore, in determining the priorities for the Office over the next two years it is important to acknowledge that the implementation of many of the policies can be achieved with little or no additional resourcing given that the majority of policies require only systematic changes to be made to ensure the intention of the policy is realised.

It is within this context that the following recommendations are made in relation to those policies which are to be implemented over the next two years and reflects the high priority with which the Advisory Committee has accorded to them.
Operational Divisions Responsibilities

Prisons

That the Office of Corrections provide women prisoners with a totally integrated prison system, which will ensure that each facility implements those roles and functions which have been ascribed to each of the five women's prisons and units and which provide women prisoners with opportunities to effect change in their lives through the provision of education, vocational training, work and health programs and services;

That the Office of Corrections implement the policy which will guide the provision of programs and services provided to those women prisoners accommodated in units within men's prison facilities, thus ensuring that these women prisoners receive appropriate and equitable access to programs and services;

That the Office of Corrections implement Unit Management into H.M. Prison Fairlea as the next prison facility within the State to convert to a unit managed prison, thus ensuring that all women prisoners will be managed under unit management principles and practices;

That the Office of Corrections establishes Reception and Orientation Programs within all women's prisons, with the main program to operate from H.M. Prison Fairlea, in order to provide women prisoners with opportunities to facilitate their adjustment to imprisonment and to enable them to participate in decisions which will effect their lives whilst incarcerated;

That the Health Policy, which incorporates the provision of psychological services and recreation programs, be progressively implemented, with priority to be given to the establishment of Unit 3 - "K" Division as a Health Care Unit, and the involvement of women's health service providers in the provision of health services to women prisoners throughout the State, in particular, Fairlea and Tarrengower;

That the Children's Access and Residence Program be implemented within all women's prisons, with immediate provisions made for the accommodation of children in H.M. Prison Fairlea; and

That the Community Integration Program be implemented within all women's prisons, in order to ensure that women prisoners receive access to practical advice and information which will assist them to successfully integrate into their respective communities upon release.

Community Based Corrections

That the Women As Carers policy be implemented throughout the State's six community based corrections regions, with particular priority given to community corrections centres establishing immediate arrangements with community child care agencies for the provision of care to the children of women offenders where appropriate;

That the Community Work Policy be implemented throughout the State's six community based corrections regions, thus ensuring that women offenders are provided with a range of appropriate community work locations which are free from discrimination and harassment and which allow women to fulfil their commitments as carers to children and aged and/or disabled family members;

That the Breaching Policy be implemented throughout the State's six community based corrections regions, with particular attention given to the establishment of guidelines for the determination by Community Corrections Officers of acceptable and unacceptable absences; and

That the Community Based Corrections directorate commence a process of educating the courts, other criminal justice agencies and the community on the characteristics of the women offender population, and in so doing promote the diversion of women offenders from imprisonment.
APPENDIX A:

List of Agencies and Individuals Consulted
APPENDIX A

LIST OF AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED

The following list represents those agencies and individuals who were consulted for the purposes of the 'Women Prisoners and Offenders: Discussion Paper' and/or 'The Agenda For Change'.

Community Consultation

Brosnan Centre Youth Service - Bernie Geary
Corrections Education Committee
Corrections Health Board - Lynda Stephens and Dr Peter Hearne
Department of Sport and Recreation - Diane Parsons
Epistle Post-Release Service - Tony Calabro and Christine Capella
Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic) Inc - Amanda George
Flat-Out Inc - Jani, Sue and Jude McCulloch
Job Link - Zoe Photellis
Migrant Women - Helen Robinson
Parliamentary Bills Committee
Radio - Stations:
  3AW - Father Bob McGuire
  3CR - Mary Ann - 'Smash and Grab'
  3LO - Elaine Cainty
Second Chance - Sue Meredith
Social Worker - Lal L’Estrange
TAFE - Teachers from Barwon, Fairlea, K-Division and Tarrengower Prisons
Uniting Church - Bev Fabb
Victorian Association for the Care and Re-settlement of Offenders - Helen Leyshon

Victorian Court Information and Welfare Network - Carmel Benjamin A.M. (Official Visitor)
Victorian Women’s Prisons Council - Dame Phyllis Frost, Greg Sneddon, Ida Broderick and Carmel Benjamin A.M.
YWCA - Dandenong and Westernport - Susan Batrouney
Internal Consultation

Community Based Corrections

CBC Working Party

Community Corrections Officers from the State's six community corrections regions

Regional Managers

Prisons

H.M. Metropolitan Reception Prison
K Division / Unit 3 - Custodial and Program Staff; and
Women Prisoners.

H.M. Prison Barwon - Custodial and Program Staff; and
Women Prisoners.

H.M. Prison Fairlea - Custodial, Welfare/Psychological, Medical,
Recreation and Industry Staff;
Fairlea Prisoners Classification Committee; and
Women Prisoners.

H.M. Prison Tarrenburg - Custodial, Program and Welfare Staff; and
Women Prisoners
APPENDIX B

RECENT TRENDS IN THE VICTORIAN WOMEN'S PRISON POPULATION

Table One: Number and proportion of women prisoners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total No. Women in Prison</th>
<th>Total No. Men in Prison</th>
<th>Total No. Prisoners</th>
<th>Women as a % of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983/84</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>1,916</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984/85</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1,790</td>
<td>1,878</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985/86</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>1,955</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986/87</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>1,862</td>
<td>1,956</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987/88</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>1,959</td>
<td>2,084</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988/89</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>2,128</td>
<td>2,256</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989/90</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2,191</td>
<td>2,316</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Two: Imprisonment rates per 100,000 population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women Imprisonment Rate (per 100,000 of female population)</th>
<th>Men Imprisonment Rate (per 100,000 of male population)</th>
<th>General Victoria Imprisonment Rate (per 100,000 of total Victoria population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983/84</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984/85</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985/86</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986/87</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987/88</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988/89</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>99.1</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989/90</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>100.7</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All figures calculated from:

- The ABS Australian Demographic Statistics June Quarter 1989 and 1990.
- The draft of AIC Australian Prisoners 1990.
Table Three: Education - Percentage of prisoners who have completed secondary school or above
30 June 1984 to 30 June 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Four: Employment status of all women and men prisoners
30 June 1984 - 30 June 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>WOMEN¹</th>
<th>MEN²</th>
<th>Other³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Includes technical or trade qualification.
² 1985 figures are unreliable.
³ Figures expressed as a percentage of the total women prisoner population. The figures may not total 100% due to prisoners of unknown employment status.
⁴ "Other" is all persons who were not in the labour force. They include persons undertaking home duties, receiving a pension and studying. "Other" does not include persons whose employment status was unknown.
Table Five: Percentage of prisoners less than 25 years of age

30 June 1984 - 30 June 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Six: Marital status - Percentage of all prisoners who had never married or were married at the time of reception

30 June 1984 - 30 June 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>MEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prisoners who had previously been married are excluded from the Table.
Table Seven: Percentage of unsentenced prisoners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Eight: Percentage of prisoners with no prior terms of imprisonment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Nine: Selected most serious offences of women prisoners (percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Homicide</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Robbery</th>
<th>Break &amp; Enter</th>
<th>Theft</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Justice</th>
<th>Drugs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Men 1990 | 13.0 (| 31.0  | 13.0    | 13.8          | 11.6  | 40.2  | 6.4     | 11.7  |

1 Prior terms of imprisonment may include episodes on remand.
Table Ten: Minimum sentence length of prisoners (percent)

30 June 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence Length</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 12 months</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to less than 5 years</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to less than 10 years</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years and over</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural life/Governor's Pleasure</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VICTORIAN WOMEN OFFENDER POPULATION

This section presents a descriptive analysis of the women's offenders population from the 30th June 1984 to the 30th June 1990, derived from the Office of Corrections Annual Reports and where possible a comparison made with the men offender population.

Table Eleven: Number and proportion of women offenders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total No. Women Offenders</th>
<th>No. of Women Offenders not serving a post prison order</th>
<th>Total No. of Offenders</th>
<th>Total No. of offenders not serving a post prison order</th>
<th>Women Offenders as a percentage of offenders not serving a post prison order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983/84</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2,323</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984/85</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2,381</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985/86</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1,061</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5,283</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986/87</td>
<td>1,257</td>
<td>1,195</td>
<td>6,201</td>
<td>8,096</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987/88</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>5,310</td>
<td>4,137</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988/89</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>5,182</td>
<td>4,054</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989/90</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>5,264</td>
<td>4,125</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Calculations 1983/84, 1984/85 and 1985/86 do not include Parole and Pre-Release figures as they were not available from the data contained in the respective Annual Reports.
Table Twelve: Percentage of CBC offenders who have completed secondary education or above

30 June 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Completed</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Thirteen: Employment status of all women and men offenders on reception

30 June 1990\(^1\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th></th>
<th>MEN</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Other(^2)</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% offenders</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Fourteen: Percentage of offenders less than 25 years of age

30 June 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% offenders</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) There were a high percentage of offenders with unknown employment status.

\(^2\) Unlike the prison data, the CBC "other" category does not include pensions. The Table also excludes prisoners whose employment status was unknown.
Table Fifteen: Percentage of all offenders who have never married or were married at the time of reception¹

30 June 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th></th>
<th>MEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Sixteen: Selected most serious offences of offenders

30 June 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assault</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Total Against Person</th>
<th>Burglary Fraud</th>
<th>Theft</th>
<th>Total Against Property</th>
<th>Total Drug Offence</th>
<th>Total Offence Traffic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>70.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Seventeen: Prisoners released onto parole

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987/88</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>45 released / 10 cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>718 released / 188 cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988/89</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>54 released / 12 cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>812 released / 192 cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989/90</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td>79 released / 20 cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>939 released / 301 cancelled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Offenders who had previously been married are excluded from the Table.
APPENDIX C:

Office of Corrections:

Guiding Principles
APPENDIX C

'The Way Ahead - Corporate Directions 1990 - 1995' identifies eight guiding principles underlying the Mission Statement:

1. **Range of Correctional Dispositions**

   A wide range of correctional dispositions should be developed based on the concept of a graduated restriction of liberty.

2. **Punishment is the Deprivation of Liberty**

   Correctional dispositions are, by the deprivation of liberty, a punishment in themselves. Therefore, the Office of Corrections in supervising the orders must not, except as is incidental to the maintenance of discipline or justifiable segregation, aggravate the suffering inherent in such a situation.

3. **Programs Should Address the Needs of Offenders**

   Corrections programs should address the needs and problems of offenders in the light of the particular circumstances of their offences; and meet community expectations of reparation, deterrence and protection against criminal behaviour as reflected by decisions of sentencing and releasing authorities. All educational, welfare and recreational influences and forms of assistance which are appropriate should be made available and utilised in accordance with the individual needs of offenders.

4. **Community Involvement in Corrections**

   The supervision of offenders should emphasise their continuing part in the wider community, not their exclusion from it. Thus every effort must be made to involve the wider community to assist correctional staff in developing and maintaining programs. In the case of prisons, programs must be developed which prepare offenders for release.

   Generally, one aim of all such programs should be to enhance the community's understanding of its responsibility for crime prevention, and offenders understanding of their responsibility to the community.

5. **Individualised Management of Offenders**

   Services, facilities, activities and programs should be based on the concept of individual management and designed to meet the individual needs of offenders. In particular, regard should be paid to the special needs of specific groups of offenders.

6. **Integration of Offenders into the Community**

   Correctional programs should be developed which assist offenders to integrate into the community after release. Continuity of programs should exist between prisons and community based corrections. Prior to release from prison, offenders should have made available to them services of Government and private agencies that will assist in their social integration.
7. **Staff Training**

All staff employed in correctional programs must be provided with adequate training to perform their duties. Further, an ongoing commitment to the pursuit of excellence in correctional management must be demonstrated through the provision of appropriate training and developmental opportunities for all correctional staff.

8. **Anti-Discrimination Provision**

There should be no discrimination in any respect of correctional programs on the grounds of race, colour, gender, marital status, physical disability, religion, political affiliation, national origin except as is necessary in properly meeting the needs of a disadvantaged individual or group.


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