

# **OUTCARE INCORPORATED**

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**Parliament of Western Australia**

**Community Development and Justice Committee**

**‘Making our prisons work’  
An Inquiry into the efficiency and effectiveness of  
prisoner education, training and employment  
strategies**

**Written Submission**

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**OUTCARE INCORPORATED  
27 MOORE STREET  
EAST PERTH WA 6004**

**P: (08) 6263 8622  
F: (08) 6263 8611  
E: [outcare@outcare.com.au](mailto:outcare@outcare.com.au)  
W: [www.outcare.com.au](http://www.outcare.com.au)**



## **OUTCARE: WA's MAJOR NON GOVERNMENT PROVIDER OF CRIME PREVENTION SERVICES**

Outcare Incorporated is Western Australia's only specialist non government provider of crime prevention services and programs. Established in the early 1960's it has grown into an award winning and well respected not-for-profit organisation making the Western Australian community a safer place to live in by providing rehabilitative and supportive services for juveniles and adults at risk of offending, offenders, ex-offenders and their families.

Our broad range of education, intervention and reform programs reduce the re-offending rate and supports successful rehabilitation and re-integration of offenders into society. In turn, this leads to a safer community and it reduces crime and its associated costs.

Outcare looks to the future, not at the past. It's about creating a new beginning for people and a new beginning for the community of Western Australia.

Because of this background, Outcare is in a unique position to provide the Committee with a well informed "insider" submission free from the pressures that government agencies face.

From this position of knowledge, Outcare knows that there are a number of prison education, training and employment strategies issues which if addressed would "make our prisons work" more efficiently and effectively. Our submission details these.

## SUBMISSION HIGHLIGHTS

Outcare's detailed response follows in our submission, but essentially our message for the "Making our prisons work" Inquiry is condensed here into the following summary highlights:

**Growing muster** - With the muster over the last couple of years growing at about 20% a year, accommodation rather than education, training and rehabilitation programs are the current government prison focus. However, evidence shows that education, training and rehabilitation programs cut recidivism, which is currently 40%, by half. Therefore education, training and rehabilitation programs currently given to less than 10% of the prison population should be greatly increased as they are a muster reducing crime prevention strategy as well as education and rehabilitation.

**Throughcare works** - Throughcare programs whereby people are seen by the same organisation/counsellor while in prison and when in the community work. They are also proven recidivism reduction programs and should be included in the types of education, training and rehabilitation programs we suggest be greatly increased.

**More directed and meaningful programs/work opportunities needed** - Too few current education/training and work opportunities are directed and meaningful, in ways that will assist ex-offenders get work "on the outside" and help them reintegrate back into the community.

**Lack of co-ordination and continuity in the prison system** - Because of its size and nature, the different sections in the Department of Corrective Services and in the prisons don't communicate well leading to systematic problems. Education, training or programs a prisoner is attending in one prison may not be able to be continued when he/she is transferred to another prison.

**Not enough mental health and alcohol and other drugs intervention** - 80%+ of prisoners have alcohol and/or other drugs issues and over half have mental health problems, some with both drug/alcohol and mental health co-morbidity health problems. However there are few prison programs addressing these health issues.

**Parole Board required courses and prison provided ones differ** - The programs that the Prisoner Review Board wants prisoners to go on and what is offered by the Department of Corrective Services do not always coincide.

**Need for basic numeracy and literacy and life skills courses** - The majority of prisoners have low literacy and numeracy skills (many at Year 7/8 level) and do not have basic life skills. More basic literacy and numeracy and life skills training courses are needed.

**Judge courses by outcomes not attendance** - Sometimes too much emphasis may be placed on attending courses in prisons, not on participant outcomes. As a result prisoners go on inappropriate courses or go on courses they have no intention of following up on or using "on the outside". It is important to note that the Prisoner Review Board is very clear that prisoners will only be considered for parole based on the outcomes of education/training they have been on or programs they have attended, not their attendance.

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training and employment strategies***

**Key Statistics**

- According to the Department of Corrective Services' Weekly Offender Statistics:
  - the adult prisoner population (muster) increased from 3,737 on 12 June 2008 to 4,817 on 10 December 2009. This is an increase of 28.9% in 18 months or an annual increase of 19.3%;
  - the most recent adult prisoner population (muster) was 4,879 on 18 February 2010.
- According to the Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report:
  - the cost of keeping an adult offender in prison in 2008/09 was \$273.17 a day or \$99,700 a year compared to \$272.91 a day or \$99,610 a year, an increase of 0.1%;
  - the cost of keeping a juvenile offender in detention in 2008/09 was \$610.79 a day or \$222,940 a year compared to \$473.78 a day or \$172,930 a year, an increase of 28.9%, although in 2008/09 an extra \$43.8 million was allocated to juvenile offender costs that were not included in 2007/08 making direct comparisons impossible;
  - in April 2009 336 prison and community offenders were engaged in offender programs, 3.4% of the 9,859 adults in prison (4,156) or on community based orders (5,703) at 30 April 2009. This compares to 144 in April 2008;
  - the courts incarcerated an additional 654 people in 2008/09 than they did in 2007/08;
  - at 30 June 2009 there were 856 prisoners in prison who had their parole cancelled, suspended, deferred, denied or refused compared to 495 at 30 June 2008. An increase of 361 or 72.9%;
  - in 2008/09 the average out-of-cell hours for adult prisoners in 2008/09 was 11.81 hours compared to 11.74 in 2007/08;
  - the daily average adult Aboriginal prisoner population for 2008/09 was 41.6% of the total adult prisoner population;
  - the increase of 5.0% in the number of Aboriginal prisoners during 2008/09 compared to 2007/08 was at a slower rate than the increase in the number of non-Aboriginal prisoners (5.9%);
  - in 2008/09 most prisoners were rated as medium-security (54.8%).
  - in 2008/09 most prisoners were aged between 25 and 39 years (54.7%);
  - in the March 2009 quarter the adult imprisonment rate was 240.6 per 100,000 people in WA. This compares to 233.1 in the March 2008 quarter, a 3.2% increase;
  - the prison return rate for adult offenders within two years of release was 39.53% in 2008/09 compared to 36.39% in 2007/08, an 8.6% increase;
  - the detention return rate for juvenile offenders within two years of release was 51.32% in 2008/09 compared to 50% in 2007/08, a 2.6% increase;
  - there were 0.9 serious assaults on prisoners and staff per 100 prisoners in 2008/09 compared to 0.74 in 2007/08 a percentage increase of 21.6%;

- in 2008/09 Adult Offender Services costs exceeded budget by \$36.2 million and Juvenile Offender Services by \$13.8 million, total \$50.0 million;
  - between it starting on 1 September 2008 and 20 June 2009, 44 prisoners were approved to go on the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP);
  - the Department contracted the *Provision of Psychological Assessment and Counselling Services for Adult Offenders* program to various non-government agencies to the value of \$3,000,000 in 2008/09;
  - the Department contracted the *Provision of Moving on From Dependencies (MOFD)* program to various non-government agencies to the value of \$1,003,274;
  - the Department contracted the *Provision of Pre-Employment Psychometric Assessment Services* to a non-government agency for \$275,000 in 2008/09;
  - the Department contracted the *Provision of a Drug and Alcohol Throughcare Services (DATS)* to two non-government agencies for a combined \$1,368,621 in 2008/09;
- According to the Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) submission of 6 August 2009 to the WA Parliament's Education and Health - Legislative Assembly Standing Committee Inquiry into the adequacy and appropriateness of prevention and treatment services for alcohol and illicit drug problems in Western Australia:
    - in mid 2001 between 37% and 52% of offenders in Australia reported that their offending was attributable to their drug problem (Makkai & Payne, 2003);
    - During 2003-04 in Australia, it was estimated that 33% of young people in detention attributed their offending to drug and alcohol use (Prichard & Payne, 2003);
    - In relation to juvenile offenders, an Australian study indicated that the use of drugs exacerbated offending, with 35% of Indigenous and 29% of non Indigenous youths attributing their offending to their drug use (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008);
    - In Australia, 71% of youths had used one type of drug (including alcohol) regularly in the six months prior to detention, and 29% more than one drug regularly (Prichard & Payne, 2003);
    - An estimate of 91% of prisoners, in 2005, with alcohol and other drug problems do not have access to treatment and support in jail (budget submission presented by DCS and DAO 2006);
    - Of all women prisoners surveyed in 2003, 78% of respondents reported they had frequently used drugs and alcohol in the six months prior to their arrest (DCS, 2003);
    - In 2007, 15% (the highest in the country) of East Perth lockup detainees who had illicitly used drugs in the past 12 months self-reported they had been turned away from treatment due to lack of places (Institute of Criminology, 2005);
    - The total cost per prisoner per day in 2007 was \$269 or \$98,000 per year per prisoner (Productivity Commission 2009) as opposed to \$98 per day from residential rehabilitation (Moore et al. 2007);

- 60% of females and 50% males in custody with and alcohol and other drug problems also have a mental health problem (Australian Government National Drug Strategy, 2008);
  - It has been recognised that alcohol and other drug use is more than a symptom of Aboriginal incarceration, it is the principle cause (Pearson, 2007);
  - Aboriginal adults are 13 times more likely to be imprisoned , however in 2007 in Western Australia, Aboriginal people were 21 times more likely to be in prison than non-Indigenous (ABS, 2007);
  - In Western Australia in 2003, between 17% and 26% of people dealt with by the courts were Aboriginal (ANCD, 2009);
  - Aboriginal persons arrested by police increased from 20% in 1991 to 28.5% in 2003 (ANCD, 2009);
  - Male prisoners are at increased risk of suicide and death from overdose in the period immediately following their release (Kariminia, Law et al. 2007);
  - In WA, Aboriginal male ex-prisoners demonstrated higher mortality rates relative to non-Aboriginal male ex-prisoners (Hobbs et al, 2006);
  - Female Aboriginal prisoners experience greater rates of mental health problems and substance misuse than male prisoners (Johnson 2004) and the rate of Aboriginal female incarceration increase by 343% between 1991 & 2005, despite the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommending that “imprisonment should be utilised only as a sanction of last resort” (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice, 2005);
  - 68% of Aboriginal adult police detainees tested positive to drugs and 63.8 self- reported that they had drunk alcohol within 48 hours before their arrest (Adam et al. 2007) and Aboriginal male offenders are more likely to be dependent on alcohol than non-Aboriginal male offenders (Putt et al, 2005);
  - Aboriginal prisoners are twice as likely to re-offend within two years of being released (Willis, 2008);
  - Aboriginal people who are incarcerated suffer from a loss of cultural identity and a disconnection from their family, which highlights the need for post-release programs focusing on reconnecting prisoners with family and community as a recidivism prevention strategy (NIDAC, 2009);
- The Minister for Corrective Services, Hon Christian Porter MLA told Parliament on 25 November 2009 that:
    - 540 prisoners had been case managed through the Department of Corrective Services’ Education Throughcare program. For the 107 prisoners who have been placed into employment through this program, the rate of re-offending is 14%;
    - 525 offenders commenced a program in the first quarter of 2009/10 with a projected 2,052 for the full 2009/10 year, an increase of 68% over the previous year;
  - According to the ALP media release “Re-offending risk rises with overcrowding” on 20/1/10, “The Prisoner Employment Program (PEP), introduced by Labor, is a particularly successful program with only 13 per

cent of prisoners who have completed the program returning to jail compared with a rate of 40 per cent for offenders who did not undertake the program. Unfortunately, funding and space limitations and the current state of overcrowding mean only 116 prisoners have been fully engaged in PEP since it began in September 2008. This is almost insignificant when you consider there are 4,831 prisoners currently in the system.”

- The Review of the State Forensic Mental Health Service Report tabled in the WA Parliament’s Legislative Assembly (*Tabled Paper No. 1181 Tabled on 13-Aug-2009*) states that 80%+ of WA prisoners have an alcohol and/or other drug problem.



**1. The Committee will examine and report on opportunities for work and the development of a workplace culture within WA prisons**

**a. Excessively high muster impacting negatively on opportunities for work within WA prisons - issue**

- Current large (4,879 at 18 February 2010) and growing musters (annual growth rate currently 19.3% a year) lead to prison overcrowding with accommodation needs being the necessary focus rather than work opportunities which are lagging behind accommodation. Indeed the Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report states the growing muster has led to “an impaired ability to deliver programs and services to support re-entry to the community, resulting in increased time in prison and consequently increased pressure on capacity”.
- Partly because of the increasing musters, a structured day is not in place in all prisons (where prisoners must either work or study to receive gratuities). This naturally reduces opportunities for work. Additionally, structured days must have meaningful work to be useful. It is of little use to provide menial or limited/non-productive work which can teach bad work ethics.
- Because of the high muster and overcrowding and the consequential lagging behind of work, rehabilitation and education opportunities, prisoners have more “idle” time with the associated risk of trouble from prisoners with nothing to do. To quote the Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report overcrowding leads to “increased tension within the prisoner population which potentially impacts on the safety and security of the community and staff as well as prisoners”.

**b. Development of a workplace culture occurring in small pockets only within WA prisons - issue**

- Development of a workplace culture is occurring in small pockets only; namely at Acacia, Wooroloo and Karnet Prison Farms. However these are mainly small projects and are usually delivered when the prisoner is approaching release. Indeed, the Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report draws attention to what it considers to be a highlight, 336 community offenders and prisoners on offender programs in April 2009 compared to 144 in April 2008. While this 133% increase is welcome, it still only represents 3.4% of the 9,859 adults in prison (4,156) or on community based orders (5,703) at 30 April 2009.
- The introduction of the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) in September 2008 is another program which shows great potential with the recidivism rate for its graduates being 13% compared to the general prison population's 40%. However in the more than a year since it began only 116 prisoners have been accepted onto the program, only 2.4% of the 4,879 18 February 2010 muster. Currently, PEP has too many rules

and requirements for prisoners to be accepted onto it. In order for it to be more successful, either the rules need to be relaxed or it should be contracted out to an organisation such as Outcare with a proven track record in rolling out successful employment programs for prisoners.

- The current programs such as PEP give prisoners a small amount of choice but with little or no consideration given to individual preference in work provided. As a result some prisoners are getting training (such as bricklaying) that they do not intend to use on the outside while others who may benefit from the training, and would use the learned skills in the community, are unable to get on courses.

**c. Virtually no consideration given to career development within WA prisons - issue**

- Currently there is virtually no consideration given to career development. Education and training programs tend to be isolated from prison work as for instance Australia has a severe shortage of chefs, but little opportunity exists for a prisoner working as a kitchen hand to progress to become a chef by the time they are released.

**c. Throughcare education and employment programs models work by getting ex-offenders work and reducing re-offending but are available to very few prisoners - issue**

- The Minister for Corrective Services, Hon Christian Porter MLA told Parliament on 25 November 2009 that 540 prisoners had been case managed through the Department of Corrective Services' education Throughcare program. For the 107 prisoners who have been placed into employment through this program, the rate of re-offending was 14%. This compares to the Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report reported 2008/09 re-offending rate of 40% for all adult ex-offenders. This is a very good result, but with the muster being 4,879 on 18 February 2010 this is only scratching the surface.
- Outcare through its Employment and Training Services has a been assisting offenders in prison and post release with Throughcare career counselling, resume preparation, job search strategies, job placement, police clearances, and drivers' licences; to help them find employment. However, like the prison programs the funding is too small to have meaningful effect. It works well but reaches only a very small percentage of those who could and should be helped

## Recommendations

### **1.1 Increase work opportunities in prison by at least 20% a year in order to maintain the current ratio of prisoners accessing work opportunities to total prison muster:**

Currently the prison muster is increasing by nearly 20% a year. Therefore in order just to maintain the current ratio of prisoners accessing work opportunities, they need to increase by 20% a year.

### **1.2 Increase the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) and make it easier to access so that 1,000 prisoners go on it each year:**

The evidence coming out of the WA prisons shows that those prisoners who go on employment programs are more likely to obtain employment upon release and are less likely to re-offend (14% recidivism vs. 40% for the general ex-offender population). With the prison population currently increasing by 20% a year it makes a great deal of sense to increase education and employment programs from less than 5% of the muster to more than 20%. The current rules and regulations associated with PEP mean in its current form it could not find 1,000 prisoners a year for the program. The Department of Corrective Services therefore needs to relax the PEP eligibility rules or it should be contracted out to an organisation such as Outcare with a proven track record in rolling out successful employment programs for prisoners.

### **1.3 Introduce structured work days at all WA prisons:**

Currently structured work days (where you must either work or study to receive gratuities) are only available at some prisons. This reduces the ability for prisoners to obtain opportunities for work or education. Outcare would like to see all prisons have structured work days. It would lead to reduced re-offending, reduced incarcerated numbers, fewer victims of crime and savings to the taxpayer.

### **1.4 Look to organisations such as Outcare who have a proven record of running *Throughcare* programs successfully to roll out more work opportunities *Throughcare* programs:**

Throughcare programs are those that start while a person is in prison and continue when they are released and are back in the community. The evidence shows that they reduce recidivism by half. Indeed, the Minister for Corrective Services Hon Christian Porter MLA told Parliament on 25 November 2009 that the Department of Corrective Services' education services won a national award for innovation and excellence for its Throughcare program. Outcare has been running successful Throughcare programs for many years which have also won awards for excellence. In this regard, its Employment and Training Services assist offenders in prison and post release with career counselling, resume preparation, job search strategies, job placement/advocacy with employers, police clearances, and drivers' licences; to help them find and keep employment.

**2. The Committee will examine and report on current rehabilitative programs and strategies in Western Australian prisons;**

**a. Excessively high muster impacting negatively on rehabilitative programs and strategies in WA prisons - issue**

- Current large (4,879 at 18 February 2010) and growing musters (annual growth rate currently 19.3% a year) cause prison overcrowding with accommodation being the necessary focus rather than rehabilitation programs which are lagging behind accommodation. In this regard the Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report states the growing muster has led to “an impaired ability to deliver programs and services to support re-entry to the community, resulting in increased time in prison and consequently increased pressure on capacity”.

**b. The requirement of the Prisoner Review Board (PRB) that prisoners undergo the rehabilitative programs identified for them at sentencing before being considered for parole has had a positive effect on the number rehabilitative programs available in WA prisons but they are still not nearly enough to meet need - issue**

- Since Justice Narelle Johnson was appointed Chairperson to the PRB in 2009, the PRB has become stricter on allowing parole, and breaching parole. Essentially parole is only allowed once a prisoner has undergone the rehabilitative programs identified for them at sentencing, and those on parole are returned to prison for any violations of their parole conditions. Previously prisoners were allowed to go on rehabilitative programs post release if there were none available in prison, and they were not returned to prison for minor parole violations. The Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report states that at 30 June 2009 there were 856 prisoners in prison who had their parole cancelled, suspended, deferred, denied or refused compared to 495 at 30 June 2008. An increase of 361 or 72.9%. In addition, the courts incarcerated 654 more people in 2008/09 than they did in 2007/08.
- Prisoner wanting to get parole or being denied parole by the PRB for not going on rehabilitation programs, frequently cannot get on the programs they need as they are often booked to capacity and do not allow for the time frame the prisoner has. Therefore when the prisoner comes to his/her finite time, the same prisoner has often still not attended the program that they were held over for.
- While the number of rehabilitative programs available and being undertaken by prisoners is increasing, with 336 prison and community offenders engaged in offender programs which include rehabilitative programs in April 2009 compared to 144 in April 2008, this is still only 3.4% of those eligible.

- The increased education and rehabilitation activity in prisons has resulted in outside providers such as Outcare having restricted access to prison facilities, training rooms and the like.
- There can be conflicting demands on prisoners who are required to attend mandated programs. There appears to the outsider to be little or no communication between the education and rehabilitative program divisions of the Department with them appearing to have little or no idea of what the other is doing and as such the demands on a prisoner can result in rehabilitative programs and or education not being completed.
- The Review of the State Forensic Mental Health Service tabled in Parliament on 13 August 2009 stated 80%+ of WA prisoners have an alcohol and/or other drug problem. WANADA's 6 August 2009 submission to the WA Parliament's Education and Health - Legislative Assembly Standing Committee Inquiry into the adequacy and appropriateness of prevention and treatment services for alcohol and illicit drug problems in Western Australia stated that 60% of female and 50% of male prisoners with an alcohol and other drug problems also had a mental health problem; that an estimated 91% of prisoners, in 2005, with alcohol and other drug problems did not have access to treatment and support in jail; and that in mid 2001 between 37% and 52% of offenders in Australia reported that their offending was attributable to their drug problem. These statistics relate solely to the *Addictions Offending* programs, and there would be more prisoners needing *Cognitive Skills, General Offending, Sex Offending, and Violent Offending* rehabilitative programs. Therefore the April 2009's 3.4% of offenders engaged in offender programs is only just scratching the surface. Even a 50% participation rate would be inadequate to meet the need that is in excess of 80%.
- There is a need for mental health and substance use co-morbidity programs. The Review of the State Forensic Mental Health Service Report released in August 2009 says 80%+ prisoners have drug and/or alcohol use issues and the National Drug Strategy of 2008 said 60% of females and 50% males in custody with an alcohol and other drug problems also have a mental health problem. This translates into more than a third of prisoners with co-morbidity issues but with no specific programs to address co-morbidity. Outcare's drug and alcohol counsellors are often asked to provide counselling services for long term prisoners who are desperate for help from someone outside the prison services.

**c. Need to educate/rehabilitate prisoners to enable them to cope in the community on release - issue**

- Currently programs are often not addressing the primary life skill needs of prisoners to effectively engage them in their community upon release. There is a need for pragmatic life skills programs giving them the skills to

contend with day-to-day issues they will encounter in the community (e.g. paying a number of bills at the post office, etc). Ideally a *Life Skills* program/service would be delivered in a specified unit allowing for skills building over a 7 day week, cooking, cleaning, and budgeting while attending work in the prison learning the juggling that this takes to live in the community. Additionally, this unit could encompass the management of conflict resolution and other skills building from programs they are attending or are scheduled to attend while in the prison.

- Prisoners that are imprisoned for driving without a licence are released back into the community without a valid drivers licence. Being under a court imposed driving suspension means they are unable to obtain a licence until after their release from prison. Many just don't bother doing this on release and so drive whilst under suspension. If imprisoned for driving without a licence they should have to undergo a rehabilitative intensive driver education program and be released with a provisional drivers licence. This is a crime prevention and a community safety issue.

**d. Rehabilitative programs and strategies in WA prisons are mostly short in duration or prison only programs when evidence shows that the most successful rehabilitation occurs when the rehabilitation continues after prisoners are released back into the community - issue**

- The Department of Corrective Services' "Offender Services Prison and Community Programs Guide 2009/10" of 4 June 2009 details the Department's approach to treatment programs for offenders, and lists the 25 programs it intended to roll out in WA prisons in 2009/10. Of these 25, 5 are being delivered in the community only. This leaves 20 planned for delivery in WA prisons. Of these 20, 4 are new ones, 1 is an updated one, and 1 is being replaced by another. 14 of the 20 are short courses of 100 or fewer hours, 3 are medium length courses of between 100 and 200 hours duration, and only 3 of more than 200 hours in duration.
- The Department of Corrective Services' Annual Report 2008/09 states that it contracted two non-government agencies a combined \$1,368,621 for the *Provision of a Drug and Alcohol Throughcare Services (DATS)* in 2008/09. This indicates that the Department supports non-government agencies as well as itself providing Throughcare rehabilitative programs.
- It is well established that the most successful rehabilitation programs, especially alcohol and other drug rehabilitation programs are ones that are provided over a number of years with the person undergoing rehabilitation establishing a relationship with and dealing with the same counsellor/professional over this period. In the context of prisoners, with the exception of those prisoners with long sentences (i.e. over 5 years before eligible for parole) this is best done by a Throughcare program run by a non-government agency that can see the person while they are in prison and continue seeing them when they return to the community.

## **Recommendations**

### **2.1 That in order to rehabilitate prisoners and reduce re-offending that rehabilitative programs for offenders be increased so that at least half of the prison population access a rehabilitation program relevant to their offending behaviour:**

Evidence shows that more than 80% of prisoners need to go on a rehabilitative program and that they would benefit from such a program. We also know that over 50% of offenders in Australia reported that their offending was attributable to a problem they can be rehabilitated from. We also have evidence that ex-offenders who have undergone rehabilitation have about half the rate of recidivism compared to the general prison population. With the current prison muster increasing by nearly 20% a year, it makes sense to increase rehabilitative programs. In April 2009 3.4% of offenders were on offender programs. We believe the government should aim to increase the number of rehabilitative programs so that at least half of offenders incarcerated go on rehabilitative programs appropriate for their rehabilitation requirements. If this reduced recidivism by half from 40% to 20% and based on the 18 February 2010 muster of 4,879 this could potentially reduce the muster by 20% in the long run, or 975. With the cost of incarceration for an adult prisoner being \$100,000 per year this could potentially save the taxpayer \$97.5 million a year. If it was only a quarter this successful, this would still be a saving to the taxpayer of \$24.4 million a year. This does not take into account the reduced police and court costs, and the reduced number of victims of crime.

### **2.2 That more primary needs programs are delivered:**

Parenting programs for male prisoners, and more basic life skills programs addressing cooking, housekeeping, cleaning, budgeting etc need to be provided so that prisoners being released into the community are able to cope with what living in the community requires. This is a crime prevention strategy.

### **2.3 Open a Life Skills unit where prisoners could gain life skills during all 7 days of the week:**

A *Life Skills* program/service should be delivered in a specified unit where skills are built over the 7 day week, including cooking, cleaning, and budgeting while attending work in the prison. This teaches prisoners in a controlled environment how to care for multiple issues necessary for living in the community. This unit should also encompass the management of conflict resolution and other skills building from programs prisoners are attending or are scheduled to attend while in the prison.

### **2.4 That mental health and substance use co-morbidity programs be introduced:**

With a third of all prisoners having mental health and drug and/or alcohol co-morbidity issues, co-morbidity programs need to be introduced in prisons.

**2.5 That there be better liaison between the education and the programs areas of the Department of Corrective Services:**

With the Prisoner Review Board (PRB) requiring prisoners to attend education and/or rehabilitative programs before being eligible for parole, it is incumbent on the education and programs areas of the Department to work together to ensure that the individual prisoner requirements are met in a way that education opportunities and rehabilitative programs do not conflict with each other to maximise the opportunities for prisoners and to enable them to be ready for parole at the earliest opportunity.

**2.6 Introduce intensive driver education courses for offenders imprisoned for driving without a licence:**

Prisoners who are imprisoned for driving without a licence are currently released back into the community without a valid drivers licence. Being under a court imposed driving suspension means they are unable to obtain a licence until after their release from prison. Many just don't bother waiting for their suspension from driving to end and going through the processes to get it back once released and drive whilst under suspension. If they are caught doing so they run the risk of a further conviction, further suspension and imprisonment, and a viscous cycle can ensue. Therefore Outcare believes that if imprisoned for driving without a licence prisoners should have to undergo a rehabilitative intensive driver education program and be released with a provisional drivers licence. This is a crime prevention and a community safety solution.

**2.7 That as evidence shows that the most successful rehabilitative programs are throughcare ones, that the government increases the number of rehabilitative Throughcare programs contracted out to non-government agencies:**

The Department runs its own rehabilitative Throughcare programs and funds non-government agencies to provide others. Evidence shows that these programs are very successful and can lead to a reduction of more than half in re-offending. Throughcare programs run by non-government agencies such as Outcare can have the same counsellor work with a client both during their time in prison and while they are in the community. Throughcare programs prevent crime, are cost savers, and an all-inclusive program could save taxpayers over \$100 million a year.



- 3. The Committee will examine and report on the impact of prison education and training programs on post-release outcomes and the data collection capacity within government to evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs;**
- a. Excessively high muster impacting negatively on the impact of prison education and training programs on post-release outcomes - issue**
- Current large (4,879 at 18 February 2010) and growing musters (annual growth rate currently 19.3% a year) cause prison overcrowding with accommodation being the necessary focus rather than other issues such as the post-release outcomes of education and rehabilitative programs. In this regard the Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report states the growing muster has led to “an impaired ability to deliver programs and services to support re-entry to the community, resulting in increased time in prison and consequently increased pressure on capacity”.
  - Partly in response to the increasing muster Education Campus’ in some of the metropolitan prisons have discontinued full-time studies. This reduces the opportunity for education and training to impact on post-release outcomes.
- b. Education and training being provided in WA prisons are increasing but a muster growing by 20% a year means increasing education and training by 20% is a nil pro-rate increase. They are still not nearly enough to meet need so their impact on post-release outcomes is diminished and can only have minimal effect - issue**
- The Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report states that at 30 June 2009 there were 856 prisoners in prison who had their parole cancelled, suspended, deferred, denied or refused compared to 495 at 30 June 2008. An increase of 361 or 72.9%. In addition, the courts incarcerated 654 more people in 2008/09 than they did in 2007/08. This added an extra 1,015 prisoners. Therefore just doing the same amount of prisoner education and training means a reduced ratio of prisoners accessing programs and therefore having any effect on post-release outcomes.
  - While the number of offender programs available and being undertaken by prisoners is increasing, with 336 prison and community offenders engaged in offender programs which include rehabilitative programs in April 2009 compared to 144 in April 2008, this is still only 3.4% of those eligible. Therefore even a large post-release effect of these programs is very minimal in the context of the total prisoner population.
- c. Post release outcomes would be enhanced if there were more programs training prisoners to cope in the community on release from basic literacy and numeracy to life skills - issue**

- Currently programs are often not addressing the primary needs of prisoners to effectively engage them in their community. There is a need for pragmatic programs around how to contend with day-to-day issues they will encounter in the community (e.g. parenting skills for males, paying bills at the post office, etc). More life skills programs covering cooking, cleaning, and other housekeeping and budgeting are needed. Ideally a *Life Skills* program/service would be delivered in a specified unit allowing for skills building over a 7 day week, cooking, cleaning, and budgeting while attending work in the prison learning the juggling that this takes to live in the community. Additionally, this unit could encompass the management of conflict resolution and other skills building from programs they are attending or are scheduled to attend while in the prison.
  - Although many prisoners say they finished school in Year 10, when they are asked about attendance, many of them have effectively only Year 7/8 competencies. Incarceration provides a window of opportunity to get basic literacy and numeracy skills but there are limited opportunities for this to happen and Outcare staff observe inmates bored and unoccupied, especially in Acacia and Casuarina where there is less opportunity for work.
  - Outcare reception staff say many ex-offenders come to Outcare unannounced asking for assistance with basic computing issues. These include writing documents, printing, emailing and the like. They don't appear to have been given this basic knowledge when incarcerated.
  - Outcare's Youth Services have highlighted a lack of education amongst young people as an issue. By education they don't mean traditional middle class education but a life component relative to the needs and lack of skills and opportunities of these offenders. This would include, literacy and numeracy, cultural learning differences, education on how to overcome dependency on welfare and how to become employable, how to gain community worth and acceptance, and how to increase self worth.
- c. Post release outcomes would be enhanced if more education and training had long term or recurrent funding rather than short term or one-off funding- issue**
- With much of the in-house and externally run education and training programs funding being short term there are few long term outcomes. Short term funding is not going to address 16 -18yrs of abuse, conditioning and neglect. Long Term Management and supports must be implemented to result in long term outcomes. These will not only benefit the offender but also the community and have good value for investment. Funding/programming needs to aim for long term outcome based results.

- There is a sad lack of throughcare planning for young people entering the Justice System. For a reduction in recidivism young people must be involved in their throughcare plan that needs to commence prior to conviction/sentence through to release and positive program/s and interaction in the community. Also, throughcare models must have long term outcomes focuses and agreement from all government and non-government agencies involved with the offender and (where appropriate) their family.

***Data collection capacity within government to evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs***

Outcare supports the Department of Corrective Services' trend towards evaluating the effectiveness of existing programs. Rigorous evaluation of what the Department of Corrective Services does so that prison programs become effective evidence based ones is essential if they are to become an effective use of taxpayer money.

**Recommendations**

**3.1 Re-introduce full-time study in Education Campuses at all WA prisons:**

With the pressure of the muster which is increasing at the rate of 20% a year, some prisons have discontinued full-time studies. To enable the impact of prison education and training programs on post-release outcomes to be increased, full-time study should be re-introduced at all WA prisons.

**3.2 Increase the number of education and training options at WA prisons by more than 20% a year, aiming for 50% of all prisoners accessing education or training whilst incarcerated:**

With the prison population increasing by 20% a year, just increasing education and training programs by 20% is only standing still as far as the ratio of prisoners accessing education and training goes. Again with less than 5% of prisoners accessing education and training at any moment, outcomes of education and training will at best have a very small effect. Education and training needs to be increased greatly so that at least 50% of prisoners get some appropriate education and training whilst in prison.

**3.3 Provide more appropriate basic skills education and training in WA prisons so that more than 50% of prisoners receive some basic skills education and training appropriate to their individual circumstances:**

In order for post release outcomes to be positively affected by prison education and training programs more basic education and training needs to be provided as well as life skills training. Basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills, and life skills training will reduce the current 40% recidivism rate so it will more than pay for itself. This education and training shouldn't be aimed the traditional middle class model, but should address the needs of marginalised or welfare dependent people so that they can fit back into the community and not re-offend.

**3.4 That as evidence shows that the most successful education and training programs are throughcare ones, that the government increases the number of education and training Throughcare programs contracted out to non-government agencies:**

The Department of Corrective Services runs its own Throughcare programs and funds non-government agencies to provide others. Evidence shows that these programs are very successful and can lead to a reduction of more than half in re-offending. Throughcare programs run by non-government agencies such as Outcare can have the same person work with a client both during their time in prison and while they are in the community. It can also provide the desperately needed Throughcare planning for individual circumstances that “take it or leave it” programs delivered in prison alone can’t. Throughcare programs prevent crime, are cost savers, and an all-inclusive program could save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars a year.

***Open a Life Skills unit where prisoners could gain life skills during all 7 days of the week:***

As mentioned in recommendation 2.3, a *Life Skills* program/service should be delivered in a specified unit where skills are built over the 7 day week, including cooking, cleaning, and budgeting while attending work in the prison. This teaches prisoners in a controlled environment how to care for multiple issues necessary for living in the community. This unit should also encompass the management of conflict resolution and other skills building from programs prisoners are attending or are scheduled to attend while in the prison. As this is a duplicated recommendation it is not repeated here.

- 4. The Committee will examine and report on the gaps in post release outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders;**
- a. Excessively high muster impacting negatively on the ability to provide Aboriginal specific programs and so is impacting negatively on the gaps in post release outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders - issue**
- Current large (4,879 at 18 February 2010) and growing musters (annual growth rate currently 19.3% a year) cause prison overcrowding with accommodation being the necessary focus rather than other issues such as reducing the gap in post-release outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders. In this regard the Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report states the growing muster has led to “an impaired ability to deliver programs and services to support re-entry to the community, resulting in increased time in prison and consequently increased pressure on capacity”.
  - The Department of Corrective Services’ 2008/09 Annual Report says the increase of 5.0% in the number of Aboriginal prisoners during 2008/09 compared to 2007/08 was at a slower rate than the increase in the number of non-Aboriginal prisoners which was 5.9% and that the daily average adult Aboriginal prisoner population for 2008/09 was 41.6% of the total adult prisoner population. This means that the big increase in the WA prison muster applies almost equally to Aboriginal people as it does to non-Aboriginal people.
  - The Western Australian Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (WANADA) submission of 6 August 2009 to the WA Parliament’s Education and Health - Legislative Assembly Standing Committee Inquiry into the adequacy and appropriateness of prevention and treatment services for alcohol and illicit drug problems in Western Australia quotes the following statistics:
    - Aboriginal adults are 13 times more likely to be imprisoned , however in 2007 in Western Australia, Aboriginal people were 21 times more likely to be in prison than non-Indigenous (ABS, 2007);
    - In Western Australia in 2003, between 17% and 26% of people dealt with by the courts were Aboriginal (ANCD, 2009);
    - Female Aboriginal prisoners experience greater rates of mental health problems and substance misuse than male prisoners (Johnson 2004) and the rate of Aboriginal female incarceration increase by 343% between 1991 & 2005, despite the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommending that “imprisonment should be utilised only as a sanction of last resort” (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice, 2005);
    - 68% of Aboriginal adult police detainees tested positive to drugs and 63.8 self- reported that they had drunk alcohol within 48 hours before their arrest (Adam et al. 2007) and Aboriginal male

offenders are more likely to be dependent on alcohol than non-Aboriginal male offenders (Putt et al, 2005);

- Aboriginal prisoners are twice as likely to re-offend within two years of being released (Willis, 2008);
- Aboriginal people who are incarcerated suffer from a loss of cultural identity and a disconnection from their family, which highlights the need for post-release programs focusing on reconnecting prisoners with family and community as a recidivism prevention strategy (NIDAC, 2009)

All of this shows the immense gap between post release outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders.

**b. Aboriginal offenders more often than non-Aboriginal offenders return to situations that led them to offend in the first place - issue**

- Aboriginal offenders regularly return to the environment that led to their offending behaviour. This includes dysfunctional/violent family unit, alcohol and other substance abuse, generational welfare dependency, and a lack of access to suitable accommodation. This is not to say that Aboriginal culture accepts this type of behaviour. It doesn't, but as with some of the non-Aboriginal offender population, Aboriginal offenders often on release face the reality of returning to an unchanged situation, one that caused their offending in the first place.
- There is a propensity for a culture within the above cohort of Aboriginal offenders to be unemployed, celebratory of their release, and "bullet proof" in so much as they are engaged in a culture of the "have now" mentality. This is reflected in the high rate of re-offending within a short period of release to get either money or property (TV etc.). This is constantly given as reasons for re-offending to Outcare counsellors in conversation with them and is not necessarily reflected in convictions.
- Outcare has noticed that over the years there has been a change in the substances that Aboriginal offenders have abused. In the past it was almost exclusively confined to alcohol and cannabis. The younger generation of Aboriginal offenders are increasingly taking amphetamines, heroin and other injecting illegal drugs as well as abusing alcohol and cannabis.

**c. More work needs to be done with Aboriginal offenders families to reduce Aboriginal offenders returning to situations that led them to offend in the first place - issue**

- As the Aboriginal culture is emphasises responsibilities towards the extended family unit, it is incumbent on the government to work with the families of offenders as well as the offenders themselves to ensure the family group as a whole understand what they need to do to assist the Aboriginal offender to do upon release so as not to get back into situations that lead to re-offending.

**d. Target Aboriginal offenders showing a genuine desire to change their re-offending ways - issue**

- The group of Aboriginal men who work well post-release within Outcare's Re-entry Link program are those who have reached the point of wanting a different life-style than that of recidivism. This group of clients usually has to disengage with their family to be successful.

**e. Provide post-release accommodation specific to the needs of Aboriginal people - issue**

- Post-release accommodation offered by Outcare does not suit most Aboriginal men. They want to be accommodated with their families, and would like the housing to be provided with no end date.
- At Outcare the group of Aboriginal men who do not engage post-release are frequent users of our Emergency Relief program. This sometimes allows us to engage with them at a later period of post-release.

**f. Provide more programs and education specific to the needs of Aboriginal people - issue**

- Programs such as the Federal government's Indigenous Employment Program (IEP) that provide targeted pre-release training and post release mentoring have seen improved results. As these programs are expensive and labour intensive thought should be given to expanding them in a less expensive way.

**Recommendations**

**4.1 Increase Aboriginal specific programs and education to 40% to reflect the Aboriginal percentage of the total prison population:**

Of the 20 prison based programs planned for 2009/10 as outlined in the Department of Corrective Services' "Offender Services Prison and Community Programs Guide 2009/10" dated 4 June 2009, only 4 (or 20%) of them are Aboriginal specific. This should be increased to 8 of 20 (or 10 of 25) to reflect that 40% of WA adult prisoners are Aboriginal. In addition, work should be undertaken to reduce the costs of these additional Aboriginal specific programs.

**4.2 Engage with, educate and get families of Aboriginal offenders to change behaviours that lead to offending:**

As well as running more Aboriginal specific programs/education, because Aboriginal culture emphasises the extended family, have programs that work with Aboriginal offenders families to get them to change behaviours that lead to offending. These should mirror and connect with Aboriginal specific and mainstream programs delivered to the Aboriginal offender.

**4.3 Have post release accommodation options that enable Aboriginal ex-offenders to be accommodated with their families in a situation discouraging rather than encouraging re-offending:**

Where Aboriginal ex-offenders and their families indicate a willingness to change offending behaviour there should be post-release accommodation options that enable them to remove themselves from situations that drive them towards re-offending.

**4.4 That as evidence shows that the most successful programs are Throughcare ones, that the government provides Aboriginal specific Throughcare programs contracted out to non-government agencies:**

The Department of Corrective Services runs its own Throughcare programs and funds non-government agencies to provide others. Evidence shows that these programs are very successful and can halve re-offending.

Throughcare programs run by non-government agencies such as Outcare can have the same person work with an Aboriginal client both during their time in prison and while they are in the community. Throughcare programs prevent crime, are cost savers, and comprehensive Aboriginal specific Throughcare programs could save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars a year.



- 5. The Committee will examine and report on the legislative and community incentives and impediments to prisoner employment, education and training;**
- a. Excessively high muster impacting negatively on the ability of prisons to provide prisoner employment, education and training - issue**
- Current large (4,879 at 18 February 2010) and growing musters (annual growth rate currently 19.3% a year) cause prison overcrowding with accommodation being the necessary focus rather than other issues such as providing prisoner employment opportunities, education and training. In this regard the Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report states the growing muster has led to “an impaired ability to deliver programs and services to support re-entry to the community, resulting in increased time in prison and consequently increased pressure on capacity”.
  - Recent changes to the legislation such as doing away with the “Truth in Sentencing” legislation, the introduction of mandatory sentences for assaults on certain public officers, the tightening up of motor vehicle and drivers licence legislation has been partially responsible for the increase in the prison muster. This 20% annual increase has put pressure on prison programs where an increase of 20% is just maintaining a program at previous year’s ratios. For example, the courts incarcerated 654 more people in 2008/09 than they did in 2007/08.
- b. Currently as there is little choice in employment opportunities and little consideration given to work preference and this is an impediment to prisoner employment - issue**
- Although prisons are beginning to provide more training for employment opportunities, there is little choice and a desire to get parole means there is competition for places with prisoners putting their names down for and getting training that they do not intend to use post release.
- c. Currently as there is competition for limited education and training and rehabilitation program places and this is an impediment to prisoner education and training and subsequent post-release employment - issue**
- As with employment opportunities, although prisons are beginning to provide more education and training and rehabilitation program opportunities, the desire to get parole means there is competition for places with prisoners putting their names down for and getting on program that they don’t need but which they hope will increase their chances of parole, while prisoners who would benefit from the courses can’t get onto them.

**d. Accommodation post release should be located close to where ex-offenders are working or undergoing training - issue**

- Where possible allocate accommodation closer to where ex-offenders' training is being held or place of employment is. This will minimise travel, save time and cost to the ex-offender and encourage completion of courses or continuation of employment.

**e. Where programs are evaluated as good and are award winning, they should be recurrently funded - issue**

- Programs such as the *Keeping Kids Out of Crime* that have won consecutive awards over the past three years for its community value on youth and the *Second Chance Business Register* should be recurrently funded. This rewards good programs and is evidenced based practice.
- Programs like the *Second Chance Business Register* which has strong support from the business community where 55 employers having over 50,000 employees judge ex-offenders for jobs with them on risk and relevance are left on hold because governments are unwilling to fund them. These programs prevent crime and should be supported.

**Recommendations**

**5.1 With the muster growing at 20% a year, there needs to be a big injection of funding into education and training, rehabilitation programs and work opportunities to enable more ex-offenders to reintegrate into the community and halve the current 40% recidivism rate:**

As mentioned previously, the current increase in education and training, rehabilitation programs and work opportunities is welcomed, but it needs to be massively increased so that the majority of prisoners get the rehabilitation program they need, get relevant education and training and work opportunities so that they can successfully re-integrate back into the community upon release. Evidence shows such programs reduce recidivism by half. This would cut the prison muster, save taxpayers money, reduce the number of victims of crime, and provide more employed contributing members of society.

**5.2 Provide more post-release accommodation closer to ex-offenders places of training and employment:**

By providing ex-offenders with more accommodation options, particularly those closer to potential training and employment locations encourages the ex-offenders to stay on training or in employment, saves them money and reduces recidivism.

**5.3 Recurrently refund proven good programs:**

Where programs on one-off funding or externally funded prove to be worthwhile, they should be encouraged by being recurrently refunded.

**5.4 That as evidence shows that the most successful programs are Throughcare ones, that the government provides community incentives by way of Throughcare programs contracted out to non-government agencies:**

The Department of Corrective Services runs its own Throughcare programs and funds non-government agencies to provide others. Evidence shows that these programs are very successful and can halve re-offending.

Throughcare programs run by non-government agencies such as Outcare can have the same person work with a client both during their time in prison and while they are in the community. Throughcare programs prevent crime, are cost savers, and an all-inclusive program could save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars a year.

***Introduce intensive driver education courses for offenders imprisoned for driving without a licence***

As mentioned in recommendation 2.6, prisoners who are imprisoned for driving without a licence are currently released back into the community without a valid drivers licence. Being under a court imposed driving suspension means they are unable to obtain a licence until after their release from prison. Many just don't bother waiting for their suspension from driving to end and going through the processes to get it back once released and drive whilst under suspension. If they are caught doing so they run the risk of a further conviction, further suspension and imprisonment, and a viscous cycle can ensue. Therefore Outcare believes that if imprisoned for driving without a licence prisoners should have to undergo a rehabilitative intensive driver education program and be released with a provisional drivers licence. This is a crime prevention and a community safety solution. As this is a duplicated recommendation it is not repeated here.

**6. The Committee will examine and report on the integration of behaviour management, education and training strategies with real work opportunities**

**a. Excessively high muster impacting negatively on the ability of prisons to integrate behaviour management, education and training strategies with real work opportunities - issue**

- Current large (4,879 at 18 February 2010) and growing musters (annual growth rate currently 19.3% a year) cause prison overcrowding with accommodation being the necessary focus rather than other issues such as integrating behaviour management, education and training strategies with real work opportunities. In this regard the Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report states the growing muster has led to “an impaired ability to deliver programs and services to support re-entry to the community, resulting in increased time in prison and consequently increased pressure on capacity”.

**b. Difficulty of ex-offender to secure employment post release because many did not work prior to sentencing so even when behaviour management, education and training strategies have been integrated it does not necessarily lead to real work opportunities - issue**

- It is Outcare’s experience that it is very difficult for our many ex-offenders to secure permanent employment post-release. A significant number of them have not worked prior to being sentenced and this impedes their ability to be able to show a potential employer that they have a work ethic. There are a number of Outcare ex-offender clients who get work through their own contacts and there are also a number of ex-offender clients who believe that compared to Centrelink payments, they are better off not working.

**c. A culture of going on courses to get parole - issue**

- For a certain sub-section of prisoners there is a culture of doing programs to get parole with no intention of taking on board what was learned.

**d. The Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) is doing this but because it is being rolled out in the metropolitan fringe minimum security prisons find it harder to do - issue**

- PEP is meant to provide the integration of behaviour management, education and training strategies with real work opportunities but is hampered in being able to do this well because of it is rolled out at the remote location minimum security prisons where real work opportunities and education, training and programs are more difficult to run.

**Recommendations**

**6.1 Ensure that those prisoners going on integrated programs get real work opportunities so that they can get real experience on their CV:**

With many ex-prisoners not having worked prior to being sentenced they need to have done some “real” work in prison so that they can show potential employers that they have a work ethic.

**6.2 Prioritise for education, training, programs and work opportunities those prisoner who will genuinely benefit from them and increase the number of available education, training, programs and work opportunities for prisoners:**

With parole being nearly impossible to obtain without having attended education, training or programs, more and more prisoners are putting their names down for programs they feel will assist them to get parole rather than ones that they are interested in or fell will help them overcome a problem (eg substance use or violent behaviour). With limited programs, this means that some prisoners who would benefit from attending such courses are unable to do so. These prisoners should get on courses and be given work opportunities before the others, and more courses and work opportunities need to be provided.

**6.3 That as evidence shows that the most successful integrated programs are Throughcare ones, that the government provides them by way of Throughcare programs contracted out to non-government agencies:**

The Department of Corrective Services runs its own Throughcare programs and funds non-government agencies to provide others. Evidence shows that throughcare programs partly because they can integrate a number of programs and work opportunities are very successful and can halve re-offending. Throughcare programs run by non-government agencies such as Outcare can have the same person/organisation work with a client both during their time in prison and while they are in the community. Throughcare programs prevent crime, are cost savers, and an all-inclusive program could save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars a year.

***Increase the Prisoner Employment Program (PEP) and make it easier to access so that 1,000 prisoners go on it each year***

As mentioned in recommendation 1.2, the evidence coming out of the WA prisons shows that those prisoners who go on employment programs are more likely to obtain employment upon release and are less likely to re-offend (14% recidivism vs. 40% for the general ex-offenders). With the prison population currently increasing by 20% a year it makes a great deal of sense to increase education and employment programs from less than 5% of the muster to more than 20%. The current rules and regulations associated with PEP mean in its current for it could not find 1,000 prisoners a year for the program. The Department of Corrective Services therefore needs to relax the PEP eligibility rules or it should be contracted out to an organisation such as Outcare with a proven track record in rolling out successful employment programs for prisoners. As this is a duplicated recommendation it is not repeated here.

- 7. The Committee will examine and report on the success of alternative strategies, nationally and internationally in reducing recidivism; and**
- a. Excessively high muster impacting negatively on the ability of prisons to institute alternative strategies that will reduce recidivism - issue**
- Current large (4,879 at 18 February 2010) and growing musters (annual growth rate currently 19.3% a year) cause prison overcrowding with accommodation being the necessary focus rather than other issues such as reducing recidivism. In this regard the Department of Corrective Services 2008/09 Annual Report states the growing muster has led to “an impaired ability to deliver programs and services to support re-entry to the community, resulting in increased time in prison and consequently increased pressure on capacity”.
  - The Department of Corrective Services’ Annual Report 2008/09 says the rate of return, which it defines as the rate of return to the offender management system, by distinct adult offenders within two years of release from custody or the termination of a community-based order was 39.53% in 2008/09 above the targeted 37%.
- b. Lack of assessment processes that allow for release planning and the provision structured work release - issue**
- Internationally there have been great results from using assessment processes that allow for release planning and for the provision of structured work release to community based supervised accommodation/ work.
- c. Provision of more, suitable transitional accommodation on release - issue**
- Internationally there are identified strengths in providing transitional housing that could include a reward system of moving through accommodation i.e. from a dormitory style to shared accommodation to a self care unit whilst participating in programs, work and or voluntary community hours equal to work.
- d. Circles of Support and Accountability model particularly for released sex offenders - issue**
- Introduced very successfully in Canada (where recidivism was reduced by over 70%), the *Circles of Support and Accountability* model involves help by a circle of individuals who assist the ex-offender reintegrate back into the community by giving them support in return for accountability.

## Recommendations

### **7.1 Introduce greater assessment processes that allow for better release planning and the provision of structured work release:**

Internationally in jurisdictions where prisoner release is planned more than in WA, and prisoners are released into structured work situations, recidivism rates have gone down.

### **7.2 Provide more, suitable transitional accommodation for those prisoners who have nowhere to go upon release:**

Where various accommodation options are available to those ex-offenders who upon release from prison have nowhere to go, evidence shows that their recidivism rate goes down.

### **7.3 Fund targeted *Circles of Support and Accountability*:**

For high risk or notorious prisoners where re-offending would be unacceptable to the community, fund *Circles of Support and Accountability* which are proven to greatly reduce recidivism.

### **7.4 That as evidence shows that Throughcare programs cut recidivism by half, that the government provides them by way of Throughcare programs contracted out to non-government agencies:**

The Department of Corrective Services runs its own Throughcare programs and funds non-government agencies to provide others. Evidence shows that these programs can halve re-offending. Throughcare programs run by non-government agencies such as Outcare can have the same person and/or organisation work with a client both during their time in prison and while they are in the community. Throughcare programs prevent crime, are cost savers, and an all-inclusive program could save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars a year.