

DECEMBER 2018



Corrections News



A year in review

Taskforce Flaxton report

Operation Elevate

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Front cover:
QCS Officer Merinda Gilmour
and PADD dog Doug
“Thanks to all the officers from across
Queensland Corrective Services who
volunteered to work at the QCS Ekka stand.”
Commissioner Peter Martin

Corrections News is published
by the Office of the Commissioner
Queensland Corrective Services

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**Message from
the Minister**
for Queensland
Corrective Services

It is hard to believe that Queensland Corrective Services has only been a stand-alone department for one year. So much has been achieved in that time. I would like to congratulate Commissioner Martin and the entire agency on an incredibly successful first year.

It has been an honour working alongside Commissioner Martin and the senior executive team as we work towards achieving the vision of a forward thinking top-tier front line public safety agency.

The recent tabling of the *Taskforce Flaxton* report was a significant milestone.

Commissioner Martin was the former head of the Police Ethical Standards Command and he, like me, holds the firm view that there is no place for unethical behaviour in Queensland's prison system.

I am confident that Queensland Corrective Services is well-placed to respond to any issues raised by the Crime and Corruption Commission in its report.

Throughout the year I have had many opportunities to witness our officers in action and I hold great admiration for the challenging work you do under challenging and potentially dangerous conditions .

With this in mind, officer safety is always a top priority for me, and with the roll-out of load bearing vests to all front line officers this year, we have added an additional safety measure to an already stringent system. This important investment in safety enables officers to more easily wear body worn cameras.

Operation Elevate, which saw the conversion of the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre back into a women's only prison alleviated overcrowding in the womens' system, making prisons safer for officers and prisoners. Congratulations to everyone who played a role in this operation.

I am also very proud of the work done with Queensland Health to reach a near-eradication status of Hepatitis C within the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre in Mareeba. This centre is the first prison in Australia to achieve this status and recently won the Correctional Healthcare Award at a ceremony in Montreal, Canada.

I would be amiss in not acknowledging the exceptional work undertaken every day in cities and towns across Queensland by our community corrections officers. While your work often goes unseen, it is vital in keeping our community safe, and I thank you for your commitment, your initiative and your unfailing enthusiasm to make Queensland a safer place to live.

Your work in managing nearly 21,000 offenders in the community has been supported by the implementation of more than one third of the accepted recommendations of the Queensland Parole System Reform.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support and commitment to this department. The new year will bring new challenges, but I am confident we are in a strong position to continue establishing Queensland Corrective Services as a top-tier, forward thinking, public safety agency.

I wish you and your families a safe and happy festive period.



**Message from
the Commissioner**
Queensland
Corrective Services

December 21 marks Queensland Corrective Services' 1st anniversary as a stand-alone department.

What a year it has been! We have seen many changes in that time as we gear up to meet the challenges of the future as an agency in our own right.

It is only fitting that we have rounded-off a dynamic year with the tabling of the Crime and Corruption Commission's *Taskforce Flaxton* report.

Flaxton is an incredibly useful blueprint to help us achieve our vision of being a top tier front line public safety agency. We have already taken great strides in laying a solid foundation on which to build, and I strongly recommend you take the time to familiarize yourself with the *Taskforce Flaxton* report.

The important work to position us as a Department in our own right has taken us on the path of a vital organisational restructure, including the appointment of three Deputy Commissioners.

Deputy Commissioners Andrew Beck, James Koulouris and Paul Stewart have been on-board for several months now and all have brought valuable skills and experience which are already having a tangible benefit for us as an agency as we build for the future. There will be more movement on the restructure in the coming months.

November marked my first anniversary as Commissioner of Queensland Corrective Services.

I'd like to thank you for all your support in the past year, and for welcoming me so willingly into this department. Together we have achieved much, while dealing with unprecedented workloads in our day-to-day business of managing prisoners and offenders.

In the past 12 months the number of prisoners in our care increased by nearly 500, to over 9000 for the first time, with the inevitable flow-on-effect of increasing the number of people being supervised in the community to more than 21,000.

To say you have done a remarkable job under these conditions is an understatement. We are all faced with many challenges in the roles we do, but I have been incredibly impressed by the way we come together as an organisation and get on with the job.

I am very thankful for the strong support of the Minister for Corrective Services, Mark Ryan, during the past year. That support included the recent announcement of an additional \$15 million allocated over two years for 1,000 extra beds.

That means, by 2020, we will have installed almost 3,000 extra beds for prisoners to ease the overcrowding in men's prisons.

The year ahead will be both exciting and challenging for us all, as we build a corruption-resistant world class public safety agency.

I am very proud of our accomplishments over the past 12 months and invite you to read our Year in Review starting on page 8 of this edition. You will find a list of some of our milestones and achievements which would not have been possible without the contribution of every part of our department.

Thank you to everyone for your commitment and support to QCS.

I'd particularly like to acknowledge those of you who will work over the holiday period to ensure public safety is maintained while Queenslanders celebrate the festive season with their loved ones.

I wish you a safe and peaceful Christmas.



Deputy Commissioner
Custodial Operations

Andrew Beck

I would like to thank all of Queensland Corrective Services for welcoming me so warmly into the organisation.

In the months I have been here, it is apparent that the breadth and depth of experience across the organisation will have a positive impact as we continue to position ourselves as a top-tier, forward thinking, public safety agency.

One of my priorities upon joining QCS was to support Commissioner Martin in his commitment to improving and safeguarding the safety and security of every corrective services officer in Queensland.

These officers put their lives on the line each and every day to help keep our communities safe, so the timing of our Use of Force Review is a timely opportunity for us to take a systemic look at how we can best position ourselves for the future to provide long-term and sustainable improvements in safety, especially given the recommendations of Taskforce Flaxton.

We have already implemented a range of short-term measures, including load-bearing vests, body-worn cameras and boosting officer numbers in response to increases in the prisoner population.

The Use of Force Review is a foundational activity for the safety of every frontline officer across Custodial and Community Corrections and

has been structured in the following work streams:

- prevention of violence in prison and alternatives to the use of force
- control and restraint techniques and staff training
- accoutrements, personal protective equipment, specialist tactical equipment and technology
- agency emergency and specialist response capability, including use of general purpose dogs
- security systems and infrastructure – community corrections offices
- policy and legislation.

We will also be working closely with staffing groups and the Together Queensland Union and will establish 'user' and 'expert' consultation groups to ensure close engagement with all relevant parties.

The review is complex and will take time to complete, but the end result will provide us with clear recommendations based on best practice and evidence, to enhance the safety of our officers and support our case for the procurement of the right equipment, technology and training.

I look forward to progressing the review and updating our officers and stakeholders on our achievements.

I look forward to working with you in the new year.



Deputy Commissioner
Community Corrections and Specialist Operations

Paul Stewart APM

As I approach five months as Deputy Commissioner, Community Corrections and Specialist Operations, I am pleased to be offered the opportunity to contribute my first column for Corrections News.

Since being appointed as Deputy Commissioner, I have had the chance to travel across Queensland and meet many of our community corrections, specialist operations and custodial officers. During my visits, what has been evident is the passion and commitment of our people, striving towards improving outcomes and service delivery not only for those individuals under our supervision but also for victims and the community as a whole. This passion and enthusiasm makes me truly proud to be part of Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) and I thank you all for welcoming me to the department.

As you are aware, we continue to undergo significant reforms which will see QCS transform into a robust, transparent and sustainable future-facing department. We continue to progress with the implementation of the Queensland Parole System Reform (QPSR) with more than one third of accepted QPSR recommendations now completed. I have also established the QPSR Program Board which will maintain accountability and ensure effective management and continuing implementation of the program.

I would also like to take this opportunity to celebrate some key initiatives undertaken by Community Corrections and Specialist Operations this year.

The Queensland Drug and Alcohol Court was officially launched and I would like to acknowledge the Community Corrections officers involved in this integrated court model, targeting the factors that contribute to our participant's offending behaviour.

I would also like to acknowledge the significant contribution of our Community Corrections Officers and in particular, our Probation Services Officers in the *Work Development Order Stage 1* roll out. The current success and significant uptake of this scheme would not have been achieved without your support and dedication.

The expansion of the High Risk Teams across Brisbane, Ipswich and Cairns is another important step in our commitment to address domestic and family violence. I thank our officers across Queensland who continue to work collaboratively with other agencies to promote the safety of victims and to hold perpetrators to account.

QCS is commencing domestic and family violence perpetrator interventions with a trial of the Disrupting Family Violence Program (perpetrator program) at Maryborough, Woodford and Wolston correctional centres that is planned to commence in early 2019.

The QCS Victims Register (VR) has continued its support to victims in Queensland with over 340 new applications during the year. The QCS VR continues to participate in numerous community forums to promote their important and valuable service.

Addressing overcrowding in our correctional centres remains a critical focus for QCS. Our Sentence Management Officers were instrumental in the recent movement of approximately 500 prisoners over a three month period to immediately resolve female overcrowding in our correctional centres.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work our frontline officers carry out each and every day to improve the safety of our community.

I hope you and your family have a safe and restful holiday period.



Deputy Commissioner
Organisational Capability

James Koulouris

Since I joined Queensland Corrective Services, I have been fortunate to experience the transformation of a government department as it redefines its place in Queensland's criminal justice system.

For QCS this has meant establishing itself as a stand-alone department and becoming a top-tier provider of corrective services.

With a transformation of this nature, an organisational restructure is inevitable. We are taking a close look at all of our processes and how we can best position our agency in the future and deliver our services in an increasingly challenging environment.

The recommendations of Taskforce Flaxton will be incredibly helpful to guide us through this process, identifying the required competencies and structures to help us reach our vision for the future.

The report recognizes the importance of providing frontline staff with robust centralized organisational capability support in areas such as HR, Finance, Ethical Standards, Policy and Legislation.

A component of the restructure is reviewing our internal processes and one of the first products we've developed is a best-practice approach to managing projects across the organisation.

The Enterprise Portfolio Management Office (EPMO) will be used to streamline the project management process and provide a consistent approach around project delivery. It will also ensure our Board of Management is across the status of all current QCS initiatives. We are in the early stages of rolling this out, so I will provide further updates as additional tools are developed.

Highlights of the year in Organisational Capability include the procurement and roll-out of 1450 body worn vests, the ongoing expansion of the Capricornia correctional centre and delivery of 1,000 new bunk beds to address overcrowding in prisons.

Earlier in the year we made history when Commissioner Peter Martin signed an international Memorandum of Understanding with Commissioner Francis Haisoma of the Correctional Service of the Solomon Islands (CSSI). This partnership will facilitate understanding and learning from global trends and allow CSSI officers to access the same best-practice training and development opportunities through the QCS Academy.

The QCS Academy and partnering organisations also offer QCS officers a multitude of training and development opportunities. I encourage everyone to consider the many courses and

masterclasses on offer which further enhance the capability of our staff and enable us to continue driving a high-performing culture.

We will also be reviewing your feedback and analysing results from the Working for Queensland survey. Thank you to everyone who took the time to have your say. The insights we glean from the survey are important to us in shaping the future of QCS and making it the best it can be – which is more easily achieved with your help and support.

Thank you to our officers and stakeholders for your warm reception. It has been a pleasure being a part of Queensland Corrective Services. The passion and dedication of all of our officers is evident across the organisation. I look forward to a new year full of new challenges and opportunities.

Merry christmas and a happy new year.



Director
Ethical Standards Unit
Andrew Ballantyne

It has been a busy six months since I joined Queensland Corrective Services in June. Culminating in tabling of the *Taskforce Flaxton* report, which will have considerable impact on the role and function of the ESU. In that time, I have met many of you working within our great organisation, and commenced a process review of the Ethical Standards Unit (ESU) and our discipline process.

A concern frequently raised to me has been the timeliness of investigations and consistency of outcomes. To address this in the short term, a Complaints Assessment Group has been trialed to assess all new complaints received. The small team of investigators within ESU has been supported through secondments and contracted staff who have been busy investigating and assessing hundreds of matters during this time.

Of note, the Complaints Assessment Group advise me that there are a large number of complaints received regarding inappropriate access to QCS computers and other information systems. It is imperative that each of us is aware of the serious consequences of accessing unauthorised information – be it on the Integrated Offender Management System (IOMS) or any other confidential information system.

Anyone accessing information on our systems requires a sound operational reason. If you are unsure whether it is appropriate to access information, please take the time to check with your supervisor or my team.

There is no place for corrupt behavior within our organisation and unauthorised access to or misuse of information must be reported to the Queensland Police Service (QPS) and the Crime and Corruption Commission. These referrals by ESU have led to the preferring of charges and disciplinary action.

I am committed to engaging with all of our officers to develop a detailed appreciation of the issues and challenges we face, particularly in regard to professional and ethical standards and look forward to visiting all of our correctional centres in the new year.

I wish to thank each of you once again for your warm welcome and hard work, which contributes daily to the safety of all Queenslanders.

A year in review



It's been a foundational year, with significant effort being focused on positioning QCS for the future as a forward-thinking, evidence-based and sustainable front line public safety agency which plays a vital role in keeping communities safe.

KEY MILESTONES FOR QCS IN 2018

- Successfully stood up QCS as a department in its own right.
- Welcomed an additional 457 staff, including 73 people who joined us from DJAG through the MOG, as well as 215 new officers in custodial and 94 in community corrections.
- Completed 33 QPSR recommendations; with
 - o additional rehabilitation programs and expanded re-entry services
 - o the commencement of opioid substitution treatment at Numinbah and Lotus Glen Correctional Centres
 - o over 790 parolees monitored through GPS tracking since June 2017.
- Opened the Townsville District Office and the new Queensland Drug and Alcohol Court District Office.
- Supported the work of the QPC inquiry into imprisonment and recidivism and the QSAC review of sentencing options.
- Townsville Correctional Centre celebrated its 125 Year anniversary.
- Maryborough Correctional Centre celebrated its 15 Year anniversary.
- Brisbane Correctional Centre celebrated its 10 Year anniversary.
- *Operation Elevate* was successfully completed.
- Installed 1,000 purpose built bunks to reduce the number of prisoners sleeping on the floor.
- New load-bearing vests were issued to staff and DC Beck commenced the Use of Force review.
- The International Corrections and Prisons Association 2018 Excellence in Correctional Healthcare Award received by Lotus Glen Correctional Centre and Queensland Health for the Hepatitis C Treatment Project.
- Collaborated with QPS to deliver GPS tracking for bail.
- Supported the transition of 17 year old prisoners from adult corrections.
- We released our new research grants on topics to help improve QCS.
- Provided increased management training opportunities, including our new leadership program, masterclass programs, as well as the QPS Leadership in Action Program, the Australian Institute of Police Management in Sydney.
- In total, by the numbers we have trained:
 - o 464 placements in management and leadership
 - o 251 placements in community corrections specific training
 - o 379 new custodial correctional officers trained
 - o 751 placements in training delivered by through the Murridhagun cultural centre
 - o 129 placements in correctional practice competency.
- With the announcement of an additional \$15 million allocated over two years, by 2020, we will have installed almost 3,000 extra beds for prisoners to ease the overcrowding in men's prisons.
- Tabling of the Crime and Corruption Commission's *Taskforce Flaxton* report into corruption risks in custodial environments.

JANUARY TO FEBRUARY

Establishing Queensland Corrective Service as a stand-alone department.

Commissioner Martin marks 100 days at Queensland Corrective Services.



MARCH - The new year starts off with 40 new custodial officers joining the ranks

QCS welcomed 40 new custodial officers at the Queensland Corrective Services Academy during the first *Custodial Officer Entry Program* (COEP) graduation of the year.

The graduation was the first of many that took place in 2018, reinforcing QCS' commitment to ensuring appropriate staffing of its facilities in response to prisoner numbers.

The officers completed 364 hours of training over an intensive 10-week period, including practical on-the-job training experiences inside a correctional centre.

The program also focuses on offender management, correctional centre practice directives, behaviour management, conflict resolution, control and restraint, use of firearms, legislation and intelligence.

Commissioner Martin said the new graduates were following a fine tradition.

"I have made a point of visiting every correctional centre in the State since starting my role as Commissioner and I make no secret of my admiration for the staff working in our system," Commissioner Martin said.



APRIL - Congratulations to Maryborough Correctional Centre – celebrating 15 years of operation

Maryborough Correctional Centre celebrated its 15th year of operation with the unveiling of a memorial dedicated for past officers.

Commissioner Martin said the anniversary was a time to recognise the hard work, dedication and achievements of officers past and present.

"The officers at Maryborough do an excellent job in an often under-recognised field. It isn't an easy or glamorous job, but every single Queenslanders is safer for the work they do," said Commissioner Martin.

The centre first opened in 2003 and incorporated state-of-the-art technology, such as drug and contraband scanners and high tech equipment capable of detecting sound and movement around the perimeter.

It is also a major employer in the Fraser Coast region and currently employs 278 officers.

Maryborough also contributes to the local economy by prioritising local suppliers for Sales to Prisoner purchases, with the total spend for these purchases during 2017 being around \$79,000.

During its construction, 60 per cent of the workers involved in the construction were locals.



MAY - New Probation and Parole offices open in Townsville

Townsville welcomed a new Probation and Parole District Office as the base for 45 full-time officers who play an important role in the community by supervising offenders residing in Townsville, Magnetic Island and surrounding areas, including Giru, Palm Island, Home Hill, Ayr, Brandon, Charters Towers, Hughenden and Ingham.

Community Corrections officers provide an essential service to the community, ensuring public safety while reintegrating offenders.

Commissioner Martin said Community Corrections officers are the professional face of community custody, committed to reconnecting offenders with their community and preventing circumstances which might lead offenders back into prison.

The office was purpose-built to enable best-practice service delivery and accommodate other divisions of QCS.





JUNE - Load-bearing vests boost officer safety

The roll out of load-bearing vests for front-line custodial officers was introduced as an additional safety measure across Queensland's maximum security correctional centres. The first 1350 vests were issued in June, enabling officers to wear body-worn cameras – a technology shown to improve officer safety in custodial environments.

Commissioner Martin said officer safety was an absolute priority and the vests are just the start of a much broader review which will be driven by Deputy Commissioner Beck.

"Our officers do a wonderful job to make Queensland safer for everyone and they deserve to have a safe working environment, with the appropriate equipment, training and technologies to ensure they go home uninjured to their loved ones at the end of their shift," Commissioner Martin said.

All frontline custodial officers throughout Queensland have now been issued with the personally assigned vests and according to findings in a recent Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) report, body-worn cameras should be considered as a protective measure for both officer safety and in the use of complaint resolution.

Officer safety is a major focus of findings of the CCC's Taskforce Flaxton, which began in May this year. The report was given to Government this month and will provide QCS with valuable guidance as the department moves forward in the new year.

The Use of Force Review, is looking at every aspect of training, policy, equipment and technology to ensure our officers are fully supported in every possible way while they undertake a very vital public service.



JULY - Media lockup at Borallon

The recommissioning of cells at Borallon Training and Correctional Centre gave us the unique chance to give media representatives a taste for what it is like to be a prisoner for a day.

After an early start at Escort and Security Branch, where the journalists got to try out shackles and handcuffs, they were loaded into an escort vehicle for the trip to Borallon.

On arrival, the 'prisoners' were searched by pad dogs and changed into prison greens (no removal of clothing search was employed) and locked down in their cells to get an understanding of the prison environment.

This was followed by a pre-packaged lunch, which was somewhat rudely interrupted by a Code Yellow requiring the attendance of the dog squad to subdue an unruly prisoner (an officer in a bite suit).

At the completion of the experience, the Minister and Commissioner joined the group for a press conference to talk about the recommissioning of the cells, and to announce *Operation Elevate*, the conversion of Southern Queensland Correctional Centre into a women's prison to alleviate overcrowding in female prisons.

The exercise resulted in coverage across television, radio and online, and hopefully gave the media a little insight into the work of custodial correctional officers.



AUGUST - EKKA

For the first time QCS showcased our role as a top-tier public safety agency with a stand at the Ekka in the Queensland Government pavilion.

Thousands of people visited the stand over the 10 days of the show, chatting to our officers and learning more about our work.

Thanks to the many officers who volunteered their time to share their experiences and answer questions about QCS.

We received multiple requests for information on how to join QCS, and our officers were able to provide a hands-on account of their experiences and provide more information to those wanting to apply. Many positive comments and thanks were received from the public for the hard work and dedication QCS officers have to help keep Queensland safe in an often unrecognised field.

Several months of planning and hard work was involved in setting up the display, with assistance from QCS history buffs including TCC's John Edwards, who provided very useful historical material.

Without a doubt the crowd favourite was the Passive Alert Drug Detection dog demonstrations provided by various Delta Units.

Lima Seven, the perimeter response vehicle which was used by officers responding to the Abbott breakout from Sir David Longman Prison (now BCC) was also a drawcard, with many visitors seeing Lima Seven on 7 News' Flashback segment which coincided with the start of the Ekka.

The Board of Management took the opportunity to tour the stand and then hold a meeting at the RNA facility to welcome the new Deputy Commissioners.





SEPTEMBER - QCS officer Kyle Patrech wins QBANK Everyday Heroes award

Kyle Patrech puts his life on the line every day when he comes to work as a Custodial Correctional Officer in the Escort and Security Branch of Queensland Corrective Services.

This 'hat' remains attached outside of the work environment and Kyle was recently awarded the QBANK Everyday Hero award for his quick thinking and bravery during the intervention of an intense and life-threatening domestic violence situation earlier this year.

Kyle overheard a domestic dispute outside his property and called 000. He then went outside to find a female victim lying on the ground with a head wound and the male perpetrator standing over her making further threats to her life.

Kyle put his officer training into action and disarmed the perpetrator who had a knife, gesturing threats of violence towards Kyle and the victim. Kyle was able to separate the perpetrator from the victim and de-escalate the situation while awaiting the arrival of emergency services.

Kyle is also a volunteer paramedic and treated the victim for shock at the scene.

Escort and Security Branch's General Manager Peter Coyne said he was proud of the actions Kyle took, which undoubtedly saved a life.

"Our custodial officers master key skills that assist in managing the most difficult and challenging people in society as part of their training, including de-escalation techniques, control and restraint," Mr Coyne said.

Kyle said he doesn't feel as if he's done anything different to what any other person would do.

"I just thought what I did was the right thing to do at the time and am honoured to stand among all those nominees who have made outstanding contributions to the community," he said.



OCTOBER - Lotus Glen Correctional Centre wins prestigious award for Hepatitis C eradication

The Lotus Glen Correctional Centre in Mareeba won a prestigious international award for a program to eradicate Hepatitis C among prisoners.

This Australian first is helping to improve the health and wellbeing of the general prisoner population and also of remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Far Northern Queensland.

The joint Queensland Corrective Services and Queensland Health project received the Correctional Healthcare Award at the International Corrections and Prisons Association Awards in Montreal, Canada in October.

The Lotus Glen Correctional Centre Hepatitis C eradication program has led to the prison being the first prison in Australia to achieve near-eradication of the potentially deadly disease.

Commissioner Peter Martin said the project had wide ranging benefits to staff, prisoner and wider community safety.

"Prisons are recognised worldwide as potential incubators for blood-borne viruses which present real risks to officers, other prisoners, and to the community upon the prisoner's release," Commissioner Martin said.

"This joint project between QCS and Queensland Health will benefit the long-term health and wellbeing of all Far North Queensland communities."

Hepatitis Queensland also played a vital role in educating and supporting the prisoner population.



NOVEMBER - Raising awareness of domestic and family violence

As a White Ribbon accredited workplace, QCS is committed to contributing to the eradication of domestic and family violence (DFV).

QCS participated in a number of White Ribbon Events, including the Moreton Bay White Ribbon march.

Working closely with White Ribbon Australia, four new caged box trailers built by prisoners at Capricornia Correctional Centre were delivered to assist in boosting efforts to promote awareness of domestic and family violence.

Commissioner Martin said with about 87 per cent of women in QCS' care identifying as victims of abuse, it is important we play a role in ending domestic and family violence.

"Constructing the trailers is a meaningful way that prisoners can give back to the community harmed by their behavior given many of our male prisoners are perpetrators of domestic violence"

"Once the prisoners leave our custody we hope that the life and vocational skills they have learnt while in prison will make it possible for them to reintegrate into the community and become productive members of society," Commissioner Martin said.

QCS works with a range of external agencies across Queensland to provide better rehabilitation outcomes for prisoners with the aim of preventing reoffending.



Taskforce Flaxton - report



On December 14, the Crime and Corruption Commission handed down the *Taskforce Flaxton* report into corruption risks in custodial settings.

The report contains 33 recommendations to help Queensland Corrective Services identify and manage corruption risks in prisons, and can be found on the Crime and Corruption Commission's website at <http://www.ccc.qld.gov.au/research-and-publications> and <http://www.ccc.qld.gov.au/corruption/taskforce-flaxton>.

Taskforce Flaxton started its work in March 2018 and included several weeks of public hearings, during which 34 witnesses gave evidence. It also received 33 written submissions from stakeholders including QCS, the Department of Health, the unions, advocacy groups and individuals.

An important part of the process was an anonymous survey provided to officers, and a separate survey provided to prisoners.

Commissioner Martin said that the report tabled to parliament provided a valuable blueprint for QCS to allow us to achieve the vision of being a forward-thinking, top-tier public safety agency.

"The work done by the Crime and Corruption Commission, in close collaboration with QCS is immensely valuable to us as we continue to develop our capability as a stand-alone

department," Commissioner Martin said.

"I would like to thank all officers who assisted in the process, by responding to requests for information from the Crime and Corruption Commission, and who assisted in distributing the surveys to prisoners.

"I'd also like to thank the 18 per cent of custodial correctional officers who took the time to complete the officer survey to provide the Crime and Corruption Commission with your experiences of working in Queensland prisons.

"I am also thankful to the Crime and Corruption Commission for this process. It was a case study of how the expertise of the Crime and Corruption Commission can be positively leveraged to build capacity, highlight risks and identify best practice within a public administration setting.

"I cannot understate how useful this process has been for Queensland Corrective Service at this point in our development."

"Minister Mark Ryan has been very supportive through this process, and we will work closely with government to respond to the report. Once government has had time to consider the recommendations."

Recommendations

The Crime and Corruption Commission makes the following recommendations to reduce corruption risk in Queensland prisons. The Crime and Corruption Commission will publish the government response to these recommendations and any progress reports on their implementation on the Crime and Corruption Commission website (www.ccc.qld.gov.au).

1 That QCS:

- (a) develop a comprehensive measurement strategy to assess the performance of its anti-corruption strategy
- (b) incorporate anti-corruption performance reporting into appropriate governance committees to ensure appropriate oversight
- (c) publicly report anti-corruption performance outcomes.

2 That QCS revise the way it measures the performance of prisons. The performance framework should:

- (a) use consistent performance standards and a consistent performance measurement approach across all Queensland prisons
- (b) include all appropriate cost, input, output, and outcome key performance indicators (including integrity measures and data quality measures)
- (c) include strategies to improve data availability and data quality
- (d) provide greater public access to performance indicators and performance reports.

3 That QCS review its risk management framework to improve the identification, management and oversight of corruption risk.

4 That QCS review its organisational structure to:

- (a) support the delivery of its ten year strategy
- (b) provide greater role and function clarity (including span of control, reporting lines, delegations and authorisations, employee performance management)
- (c) be sufficiently agile to accommodate future changes in the agency's strategy
- (d) improve standards, drive performance and deliver efficiencies
- (e) promote internal communication.

5 That, at a minimum, the following functions be centrally controlled and services delivered in line with Service Level Standards:

- (a) human resources, including the QCS Academy, workforce planning and talent management and rostering
- (b) finance, including contract management and procurement
- (c) information technology and digital services
- (d) facilities and assets
- (e) ethical standards
- (f) intelligence.

6 That:

- (a) QCS establish an organisational-wide cultural change program to assess current culture, create a shared vision of the ideal culture, develop and implement initiatives to support cultural change, and monitor and report on the implementation of initiatives and cultural change
- (b) the organisational-wide cultural change program be monitored by the QCS Board of Management to ensure alignment of culture, strategic intent and performance priorities, and to ensure the program is adequately resourced.

7 That:

- (a) QCS, as contract manager on behalf of the State of Queensland, and private prison providers agree and implement a universal set of culture indicators
- (b) each prison measure culture on an annual basis and publicly release these findings.

8 That QCS:

- (a) commission an independent capability review to assess the agency's capability to efficiently and effectively deliver its strategic intent
- (b) develop strategies to address capability gaps (particularly human resources, information and communication technology, operational performance reporting and ethical standards)
- (c) monitor strategy development, implementation and outcomes at the QCS Board of Management.

9 That QCS:

- (a) establish a centralised function responsible for policy and practice management throughout the agency to promote performance standards and consistency
- (b) review Custodial Operations Practice Directives and local instructions to improve clarity and consistency.

10 That:

- (a) Queensland Health implement the recommendations of the Offender Health Services Review Final Report
- (b) QCS support the implementation of the recommendations of the Offender Health Services Review Final Report
- (c) QCS and Queensland Health jointly identify aspects of the QCS operating model (systems, policies and practices) that

undermine the delivery of prisoner health services and QCS, where feasible, change systems, policies or practices to facilitate better prisoner health outcomes

11 That QCS develop an agency-specific Code of Practice to complement the Code of Conduct.

12 That QCS:

- (a) include QCS values in human resource policy and practice (including recruitment and selection and performance management)
- (b) review recruitment and selection policy and practice to ensure they are meritorious and transparent
- (c) strengthen pre-employment screening, vetting and probity processes.

13 That QCS develop and implement a formal first year correctional officer graduate program to minimise early exposure to higher-risk environments and provide greater support, training and oversight during initial operational placement.

14 That QCS review mandatory refresher training to include training that responds to the needs of the prisoner cohort and targets high-risk corruption areas.

15 That QCS develop a staff rotation policy to reduce corruption risk, promote professional development and enhance performance.

16 That QCS:

- (a) establish overtime policies and procedures to reduce opportunities for manipulation
- (b) review the staffing model in prisons to provide greater flexibility, reduce the need for overtime and support the recommendations

proposed in this report

(c) establish performance standards for overtime and include overtime as a key performance indicator for prison performance.

17 That QCS:

- (a) implement an agency-wide, electronic system to record conflicts of interest and management action
- (b) develop and implement a declarable association policy.

18 That the Corrective Services Act 2006 be amended to permit an appropriate QCS delegate to direct a person (other than a prisoner) at or entering a prison to submit to a prescribed alcohol/drug test.

19 That QCS develop an integrity testing regime to identify and strengthen deficient systems and processes, and support the investigation of people suspected of engaging in corrupt conduct.

20 That the Corrective Services Act 2006 be amended to grant broader powers to search staff working in prisons.

21 That QCS establish a dedicated human source unit and review its human source management policy and process to comply with contemporary practice standards.

22 That QCS review property and exhibit management policies and practices to decrease corruption risk, improve evidentiary value and align with modern standards.

23 That QCS:

- (a) review closed circuit television coverage to reduce high-risk blind spots

- (b) replace outdated closed circuit television technology to ensure all cameras have the ability to record video footage.

24 That QCS:

- (a) increase the number of body worn cameras used in Queensland prisons
- (b) revise the body worn camera policy to clearly state when activation is mandatory.

25 That QCS increase video conference capacity in prisons to reduce the need to transport prisoners to court and health services.

26 That QCS implement an electronic mail process to decrease the volume of mail entering prisons via the postal service.

27 That QCS:

- (a) replace the Integrated Offender Management System with a system that meets recognised information management and security standards
- (b) in the interim, and with priority, implement “remediation strategies” to reduce the risk that prisoner information can be inappropriately accessed and released
- (c) identify information management as a strategic risk.

28 That QCS:

- (a) establish an agency-specific Public Interest Disclosure policy and process
- (b) review the processes and supports available to witnesses and disclosers who are employees
- (c) improve complaint management processes (consistent with the recommendations made by the Queensland Ombudsman in 2016).

29 That QCS review prisoner complaint processes to:

- (a) improve prisoner understanding of complaint processes
- (b) increase prisoner confidence in the process (with specific objectives of providing confidentiality and reducing the fear of reprisal)
- (c) provide greater consistency across prisons.

30 That QCS:

- (a) broaden the remit of the Ethical Standards Unit to provide the following functions: prevention and early intervention, professional standards, integrity policy framework, complaints management, investigation, discipline system, witness support, critical incidents, covert operations, and risk management
- (b) review the resources, capabilities, systems and processes required to deliver this broader remit
- (c) implement a staffing model that reduces the risk that staff working in the Ethical Standards Unit will be captured by those who seek to influence the proper delivery of its functions
- (d) review the discipline process to improve timeliness and provide greater consistency for decisions
- (e) establish a discipline unit, reporting to the QCS Commissioner and independent from the Ethical Standards Unit, to deal with discipline matters and develop sanction matrices.

31 That QCS:

- (a) establish, within the Ethical Standards Unit, dedicated intelligence staff to focus on staff corruption and integrity
- (b) align methodologies, systems and processes used to support the intelligence function with contemporary practice standards
- (c) centralise the intelligence function (see also Recommendation 5(f))
- (d) review policies, systems and processes to appropriately secure intelligence information
- (e) review the intelligence establishment and rostering model to provide an increased level of service to prisons.

32 That QCS and

Queensland Police Service (QPS) collaboratively review the service delivery model used to investigate criminal offences in prisons. The revised model should:

- (a) adequately describe the role and function of the Corrective Services Investigation Unit to assist in performance reporting and review
- (b) ensure that only appropriate incidents are referred to the QPS for investigation
- (c) ensure that matters are assessed, investigated and resolved in a timely manner
- (d) maximise information sharing between QPS and QCS
- (e) reduce corruption risk for QPS investigators working in prisons
- (f) facilitate the use of innovative investigative methods.

33 The CCC recommends:

- (a) the establishment of a properly resourced Independent Inspectorate of Prisons
- (b) the development of nationally consistent inspection standards, cycles, methods and reporting templates
- (c) inspection reports be made publicly available.



Operation Elevate - Addressing overcrowding in women's prisons

Earlier this year, the problem of overcrowding in the women's estate reached a critical point. We were on the verge of triple bunking. To solve this significant issue, *Operation Elevate* commenced in July involving the transition one of Queensland's male prisons into a female facility to solve the chronic overcrowding and improve conditions and outcomes for women in custody.

At the time, occupancy rate in female facilities state-wide sat at 158 percent, with Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre (BWCC) reaching 200 percent available capacity in May.

The conditions at the centres were described as dire by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

Women were sleeping on floors and, had limited access to health, education and employment opportunities, with the infrastructure continually under stress and failing.

The circumstances made working conditions for officers difficult and at times dangerous.

Operation Elevate was a significant logistical challenge requiring a multi-disciplinary approach from all areas of the business - from policy and research to escorts and sentence management, through to contracts and finance, as well as the Serco staff at Southern Queensland Correctional Centre (SQCC). All played a vital role in making this a collaborative success for QCS.

Plans were put in place to convert SQCC, a 302-bed men's prison, to its original use as a female prison.

The 268 men who were located at SQCC

were transferred to other centres in just 20 working days, with only two prisoners seeking a review of their decision.

The majority of the men were transferred to Borallon Training and Correctional Centre, which had recently recommissioned 349 beds.

SQCC was refurbished in preparation to receive women prisoners, including replacing fitout, furnishings and equipment to better suit the needs of women prisoners.

Women prisoners began to arrive at SQCC just one week later and in total 230 women were transferred from Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre (BWCC) and Townsville Women's Correctional centre (TWCC).

Significantly, all transfers of women were completed without the use of restraints.

In preparation for the conversion of SQCC, Serco officers completed more than 200 hours of shadowing BWCC officers to observe the management of women.

Throughout the operation, communication was critical, both to prisoners and stakeholders, through regular Prisoner Advisory Committee meetings, FAQ sheets and internal and external newsletters to stakeholders and officers.

Major stakeholder meetings were held at BWCC and TWCC for external stakeholders to keep them informed of the progress of the project and how it was being undertaken.

A number of video products were developed to capture key milestones of the operation and the experiences of the women being transferred to SQCC.

Operation Elevate was completed in just eight weeks, and within the QCS budget, and has delivered significant benefits to the women's estate state-wide.

The research that was conducted into the experiences of the women in custody have been extremely positive. All women are off the floors for Christmas, and have increased access to support and services which we know are critical to improving outcomes once they are released into the community.

Operation Elevate was a great success and has provided the foundation for a new women's system to be established in Queensland with a gender specific operating philosophy that recognises the unique needs of women in custody.

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Operation Elevate was a great success and has provided the foundation for a new women's system to be established in Queensland with a gender-specific operating philosophy that recognises the unique needs of women in custody.

Learnings from the operation will be examined to see how they can be applied more broadly in the management of women prisoners.



Celebrating 20 years of land rejuvenation at Petrie Creek

This year marked 20 years since the establishment of the Petrie Creek Land Rejuvenation community service project for Maroochydore Community Corrections.

Since 2005, more than 750 offenders have completed around 40,000 hours of community service on the project, giving back to the community harmed by their offending behavior.

Petrie Creek is the largest and most successful stream bank rejuvenation project in Queensland and has been

acknowledged by the Tidy Towns Awards over the years.

The anniversary was marked by the planting of commemorative trees by Sunshine Coast Council Mayor, Mark Jamieson; Petrie Creek Catchment Care Group Inc President, Frank Jenkins; Kerry Jones from the Kabi Kabi tribe and 20-year site supervisor, Garry Lawler.

Special delivery for Mount Ommaney Special School

Prisoners from Borallon Training and Correctional Centre have been busy building a pirate ship cubby house for children at the Mount Ommaney Special School.

This is the third cubby house this year that the prisoners have built and delivered to community groups in need across Queensland.

Borallon Training and Correctional Centre works closely with TAFE Queensland South West to allow prisoners the opportunity to obtain a Certificate 1 in Construction. The building of cubby houses form part of a practical component of courses offered at the centre.

Borallon Training and Correctional Centre General Manager Peter Henderson said the centre was an industries leader with the programs and activities on offer.



"Prisoners are given the opportunity to make use of the time they're serving, curbing harmful behavior and improving safety within our prisoners," Mr Henderson said.

"They also feel a sense of pride from the work they do, seeing the result and giving back to the community they have offended against."

Flying the QCS flag at the Invictus Games

Damien Irish from Townsville Correctional Centre (TCC) flew the QCS flag at the Invictus Games in October.

Justin Hemburrow from Brisbane Correctional Centre (BCC) and Damien won a gold medal in discus and Justin was a volunteer team leader for Team Rubicon at the games.

QCS employs many former defence personnel, who bring with them strong leadership, communication and team work skills to their new public safety roles with us.

Congratulations to both officers and a huge thank you from all at QCS for representing our department so well in the games.



And the winner is... Russell Stanford

Congratulations to Russell Stanford and the team at Palen Creek Correctional Centre for winning the Sustainability award at the Premier's Awards for Excellence in November.

Russell, with the support of his team, was recognised for his role in researching, sourcing and establishing an Australian native foods orchard at the centre with the aid of Indigenous prisoners and the approval of the Brisbane Council of Elders.

The aim of the project was to develop cultural awareness, gain a deeper knowledge about Indigenous foods and develop sustainable environmental practices.

Well done to Russell and the team at Palen Creek Correctional Centre.



Supporting QCS staff in the Army Reserves

Jenny Lynas shares her experience

With a background in psychology, Jenny Lynas has held various positions within corrections since she joined QCS.

She began as a counsellor at Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre in 2001, followed by counselling and psychologist roles at the former Sir David Longland Correctional Centre (now Brisbane Correctional Centre).

A few years later she moved into project and more senior management roles but found that she missed hands on psychology work.

With this in mind and a passion for adventure-type activities, Jenny decided to join the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Reserves in 2006, a move which allowed her to maintain her professional accreditation and have that client contact as well.

She initially applied as a general service officer and would've been content driving trucks, but given her psychology background, the ADF had other plans for her.

She entered as a psychology officer, which is classified as a Specialist Services Officer in recognition of the fact that specialist officers bring with them specialist technical skills, a breadth of experience and additional capability that builds on what the ADF already have.

“Being a psychologist in the Reserves has provided some of the most professionally and rewarding activities that I’ve done as a psychologist, which wouldn’t have been possible without the high level of support from my employer in QCS,” Ms Lynas said.

“QCS has been very supportive of my decision to join the ADF and encourages officers, irrespective of position or rank, to provide Reserve service if they choose.”

There are government-wide policies in place for special leave requirements specifically for Reservists, including an

employer support program to release officers to undertake military activities. This program is funded by the Federal Government to assist employers in off-setting the financial loss of staff members while on deployment.

“If the Reserves is something that interests you, pursue it. It will challenge you and allow you to do something different, but always be mindful of your priorities – family first, civilian work next, then the Reserves,” Ms Lynas said.

QCS releases Jenny from her civilian job throughout the year so she can undertake regular army exercises and pursue other training opportunities. This has included two short deployments to the Middle East.

In support of Operation Slipper in 2012 and Operation Okra in 2017, her primary role was to conduct Return-to-Australia Psychology Screens or mental health screens on soldiers returning from deployment. The screens were critical in assessing how the soldiers were tracking, that any experiences or distress they experienced or encountered on deployment were being appropriately managed and people were being linked into support if required.

Other notable Reserve opportunities where Jenny has been released from work include:

- Attendance at the 2018 Australian Military Medicine Association conference in Canberra,





- Participating in adventure training activities, which involved back country skiing and snow survival in Falls Creek – sleeping out in snow tents and building snow caves, demonstrating how you deal with adversity and physical challenges.
- Providing resilience training as part of the Op Kokoda Legacy where children of people who have passed in service walked the Kokoda Trail in their memory. Jenny developed and presented a training package for them in the lead up.
- Opportunities to parade on a part-time or full-time basis while completing a Masters in Clinical Psychology through James Cook University (JCU) in Townsville, including up to 1000 hours of placement (equates to 12 months of full-time work). QCS supported Jenny to be released without pay to meet the placement requirements however, her Reserve involvement opened up placement opportunities with a full-time three month contract with first Psychology Unit in Townsville as

well as parading on a part time basis when completing a placement at the JCU Psychology Clinic in Townsville.

Additionally, Reserves is about maintaining skills as a soldier and meeting the same standard that would be applied for full-time service – with that comes fitness, medical, dental and shooting requirements, job suitability, being prepared to deploy and making sure that all your professional skills, registrations and credentials are up to date.

“I am always mindful of my military service not adversely impacting on my work performance or my time that I’m able to dedicate to work.”

Jenny’s civilian role (aka ‘day job’) as the Director of the High Risk Offender Management Unit also keeps her very busy. Her team is responsible for the management of offenders and prisoners under the Dangerous Prisoner (Sexual Offenders) Act (DPSOA) 2003, support to Supreme Court matters as well as the supervision of high risk sexual offenders in the community, including

GPS monitoring of DPSOA and parolees throughout the State.

Currently in the Reserves, Jenny has just been promoted to Major and is acting Officer in Command of First Psychology Unit Brisbane Reserve detachment where her focus for the remainder of the year is developing her soldiers and building that capability for army to prepare them for deployment.

“My Reserve service provides a really nice balance. The skills and experiences I’ve had in terms of developing my own leadership and command in a military context and the clinical skills I have developed have been transferable, which benefits both my civilian and military roles.”

Paving the way for successful careers in QCS



Like many university students, Ashlie was looking to find an internship where she could further develop her counselling skills and gain ‘real-world’ experience.

Her course, a Masters of Counselling at the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC), required her to perform a certain amount of hours of client contact. The officer in charge of student placements at USC suggested the Maroochydore Probation and Parole office, who were looking to take interns on board for the first time.

Ashlie hadn’t considered community corrections previously, but was open to the new experience.

She started her counselling internship with a fellow student in February 2017 and their main responsibilities were to provide counselling sessions and support to individuals on community-based orders.

Days varied from counselling clients who may have been presenting with unusual behaviour, were in crisis or experiencing a major stress factor, to meeting with regular clients and applying creative and strength-based approaches. These approaches included activities such as drawing or listening to music, which encouraged and assisted them with expressing their feelings and focusing on their strengths, both of which assist in building resilience and learning to cope more positively with their situations.

“I found working with clients very rewarding and had wonderful support from staff of probation and parole. They were very respectful of my role as an intern and often referred clients directly to me,” Ashlie said.

She extended her counselling to the officers in the office by introducing mindfulness sessions that allowed officers to reflect on the challenging job they do. The sessions focused on self-care, compassion for self and others and being able to deal with stress.

Ashlie also worked closely with the District Manager to create an inviting space in the waiting area where clients would feel at ease while waiting for appointments. She would often talk with them and let them know about counselling sessions available to them.

Activities such as colouring in and drawing material were made available to clients in the waiting area and large paper was placed near a wall for people to share inspirational messages.

Ashlie said it was encouraging to come into work and see some of the positive and inspirational messages and images drawn by clients encouraging others to ‘keep going’.

Following the success of Ashlie’s nine-month internship, she decided to apply for a counsellor position at Maryborough Correctional Centre (MCC) that was advertised internally.

“I really enjoyed the work I did in community corrections and felt like I was helping people that needed help. I wanted to continue working in this capacity so when I saw the role for counsellor advertised, I decided to apply.”

Ashlie interviewed for the counsellor position, but given her experience in probation and parole and her qualifications in Psychology (Honours), the panel felt she was more suited to

the role of Provisional Psychologist and appointed her to this position.

In the role of Provisional Psychologist, Ashlie interacts with prisoners on a daily basis, completing assessments or providing intervention. She also meets with prisoners upon admission into custody and assesses their risk, well-being and institutional and welfare needs. She also works closely with the psychological services team to assess and identify prisoners at risk and works within the team and with other teams to effectively manage and assist prisoners.

In addition to her duties at MCC, she is also working towards completing her 4+2 internship and becoming a registered general psychologist.

Ashlie says employment with QCS is a challenging, rewarding and highly interesting area to work in.

“Working as an intern and now permanently employed with QCS has provided me with a variety of employment, professional and personal development opportunities. I am so grateful for the experiences I have gained so far and the strong start to my career.”

Queensland Parole System Reform

A year in review

Looking back on 2018, it's fair to say the Queensland Parole System Review implementation team has achieved a great deal.

More than one third of accepted QPSR recommendations have now been completed. These relate to legislative changes, establishment of the Parole Board Queensland, expansion of GPS monitoring, and opioid substitution treatment for women in South East Queensland and men in Lotus Glen correctional centres. In partnership with the Re-entry provider and the Department of Housing and Public Works, successful post-release housing outcomes have been delivered for women on parole. This work will continue following the Housing Taskforce Final Report on housing options for prisoners.

I'd like to acknowledge the enormous body of work completed by the Offender Management Reform Team, led by Dr Anna Macklin, including the KPMG / Swinburne University engagement, Time and Motion Study and the procurement of new offender programs and services. The outcome of this work will be transformational. It includes the proposed reintroduction of a risk needs responsivity model, new assessment tools and revised practices to enable end to end case management.

I would also like to acknowledge the volume of work that has been done by Sentence Management, Community Corrections and the QCS PSR's, who have been compiling and providing a range of written and verbal advisory reports and other critical documentation to support Parole Board Queensland. This is complex work and we will continue to refine and enhance this important component of the parole system through the work we will now focus on in a phased implementation of the end-to end case management approach as recommended in the QPSR.

Dr Lacey Schaefer from Griffith University completed the Probation and Parole Training review and we now have a solid blueprint for future training and development. Again this information, together with work on a workforce strategy, will be used to inform the ongoing development of

Community Corrections recruiting and training into the future.

In the last quarter of 2018, the program conducted a benefits review and consolidation of governance arrangements. It is the QPSR Program Board's job to ensure effective management of the program and maintain accountability, leadership, direction, risk management and transparency of operations.

The Program Board membership includes my role as the Senior Responsible Officer, Mr James Koulouris, Deputy Commissioner, Organisational Capability and Mr Andrew Beck, Deputy Commissioner, Custodial Operations. Ms Samantha Newman, Executive Director, Specialist Operations is leading the rehabilitation service projects and Sarah Hyde, General Manager, Community Corrections will lead case management and training projects. Fiona Patterson Director, and Vanessa Hollis, Program Manager from the Reform Planning and Coordination Unit are responsible for the program's planning, management and support functions.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in QCS for their hard work, professionalism and enthusiasm in ensuring the best possible outcomes for this ongoing historic reform program.

Since joining QCS in August, I have been impressed by your willingness to embrace change and go the extra yard.

While it's still early days, we are delivering QPSR reforms which will lead to safer communities for all Queenslanders.

Deputy Commissioner,
Community Corrections and
Specialist Operations

Paul Stewart APM



Nurturing female prisoners through positive community re-entry programs

Prisoner post-release programs for men and women exist to support them as they re-enter the community following a period of incarceration.

Historically, re-entry services have been designed for men and modified to address specific needs of women.

In an ideal world, this would work effectively for both, but given women's pathways in and out of crime are significantly different to those of men, so is the need for a separate, purpose-designed service to address the specific and unique needs of women.

The women's re-entry program or MARA as it is more widely known, was designed as a gender-specific program to ensure we are giving female prisoners the best possible chance of success on release from prison.

"Having the tools and systems in place to help our female prisoners once they leave our care in a correctional environment is paramount to their success back into the community," said Samantha Newman, Executive Director, Specialist Operations.

"We felt a new service was needed to specifically address the unique needs of females both while in custody and after release, so in 2015 we introduced MARA and demand for the service continues to grow," Ms Newman said.

One successful service user is a 59 year old Aboriginal woman. Upon release from prison, she reported to QCS that her MARA worker helped her address long-standing difficulties in securing accommodation, reconnecting with her family and improving her ability to care for her children.

Working with MARA, she was able

to secure a Department of Housing property, set up her home with essential items such as a refrigerator and washing machine, which resulted in her children being returned to her care.

With the help of MARA, she was also supported to connect with a trauma and mental health therapist which allowed her to address the causal issues of her past drug use.

She reported to QCS that she felt MARA believed in her, supported her when she was feeling overwhelmed and advocated for her when she wasn't being heard.

She has now been living successfully in the community on parole for the past 12 months.

Service uptake has grown since the launch of MARA

2016 - 2017

957 women receiving support while in custody
114 women receiving support after release

Between 1 July 2017 through to March 2018

701 women receiving support while in custody
114 women receiving support after release

DAY
12
12 DAYS OF GIVING BACK

This year we have been highlighting the community service work done by prisoners and offenders in our '12 days of giving back' social media campaign.

QCS officers were asked to submit projects and initiatives they have been working on over this christmas season which allow prisoners and offenders to give back to the community.

These projects not only give back but play an important role in teaching life and vocational skills, which can lead to employment upon release and reduce the risk of reoffending. Some of the projects submitted included:

- Trauma Teddies, which were handstitched, not only to donate to childrens' hospitals, but for emergency services to hand out to children in emergency situations.
- Handwoven cloth mats and waterproof mats, woven out of plastic bags, have been donated to victims of domestic violence and destributed to the homeless.
- Dog toys to be donated to animal rescue shelters.
- Jigsaw puzzles have been made for children in fostercare and also people suffering from dementia.
- Filled toiletry bags for homeless and disadvantaged women.
- Food prepared by prisoners and cattle donated to food banks to feed disadvantaged families.
- Cookies baked and distributed to aged persons, disadvgned, and homeless members of the community.

If you have a project you would like to share with us, please send it to our media team by emailing QCSmedia@dcs.qld.gov.au.



Friendly footy fundraiser

Congratulations to the officers from Capricornia Correctional Centre for winning the charity football game against the Queensland Police Service 46-24 last month in Rockhampton.

The game was a fundraiser for drought relief, raising \$15,000 for Drought Angels. Well done to all.



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