

Appendix 3: About the audit

Audit objective

This audit assessed whether prison programs aimed at reducing reoffending are available, accessible and effective.

Audit scope and focus

The audit sought to answer the following questions:

1. Are relevant programs to address reoffending available?
2. Are programs accessible to prisoners?
3. Are programs effective in reducing reoffending behaviour?

Audit Exclusions

The audit will not seek to examine:

- question the merits of NSW Government policy objectives.
- vocational programs. The Inspector of Custodial Services will undertake a review of this in 2017. Given this, and that vocational programs are not often a requirement for parole, we have excluded them from scope.
- general, non-therapeutic behaviour management programs (for example, controlling privileges or out of cell time) aimed at encouraging prisoners to comply with direction in prison.
- post-release programs and follow-up.
- programs for juvenile offenders. This was audited previously in April 2016.

Audit Criteria

For audit question 1 we checked whether:

- all prisoners receive a timely assessment of their program needs.
- available programs address relevant prisoner offending behaviours.
- the case management process effectively monitors prisoner progress and ensures program needs are met.

For audit question 2 we checked whether:

- offenders complete programs before their earliest possible release date.
- prison processes and facilities support prisoners attending programs.
- accountability frameworks at the local level ensure that participation in programs is prioritised.

For audit question 3 we checked whether:

- programs are effective in reducing offender behaviour.
- Corrective Services NSW monitors program effectiveness with relevant performance indicators.
- programs are delivered in accordance with their guidelines and specifications.

Audit approach

We focused on a selection of programs targeted at prisoners who make up more than half of the prison population. The rate of reoffending for the offences targeted is also high - at 63 per cent for assaults, 42 per cent for sexual assaults and 63 per cent for drug offences:

- Violent Offender Program (VOTP) - is an intensive therapy program for men who have a history of violent behaviour. It is conducted in a separate unit within prison and targets high risk and high needs offenders.

- EQUIPS Aggression - is designed to increase participants' ability to manage difficult life events and minimise aggressive behaviour. The program contains 5 modules and targets offenders who have a LSI-R of medium to high.
- Custody Based Intensive Program (CUBIT) - is an intensive therapy program for men who have sexually abused adults and/or children. The program targets offenders that have been assessed as high risk as per the Static-99.
- EQUIPS Addiction - is designed to address the addictive behaviour of medium to high risk offenders and to provide participants with a pathway to support services for addictive behaviours. The program contains 5 modules and targets offenders with a LSI-R of medium to high.
- EQUIPS Foundation (General offender program) - is a general 20-session therapeutic program available to all medium to high-risk offenders regardless of their offence type.
- EQUIPS Domestic Abuse - is based on a psycho-behavioural framework and has strong therapeutic influence in its delivery. The program places a strong emphasis on inviting perpetrators to accept responsibility for their offending behaviour.
- Intensive Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program (IDATP) - is a six to eight-month high intensity group treatment program for offenders whose alcohol and other drug use have been identified to be directly linked to their offending behaviour.

Audit fieldwork

As part of this audit we visited the following correctional centres:

- Cessnock Correctional Centre
- Junee Correctional Centre
- Metropolitan Special Programs Centre
- Dillwynia Correctional Centre
- Outer Metropolitan Multi-Purpose Correctional Centre

Audit methodology

Our performance audit methodology is designed to satisfy Australian Audit Standards ASAE 3500 on performance auditing. The Standard requires the audit team to comply with relevant ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance and draw a conclusion on the audit objective. Our processes have also been designed to comply with the auditing requirements specified in the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the co-operation and assistance provided by Corrective Services New South Wales. In particular, we wish to thank our liaison officers and staff who participated in interviews and provided material relevant to the audit.

We would also like to thank other stakeholders that spoke to us and provided material during the audit.

Audit team

Phyllis Poon and Daksha Sridhar conducted the performance audit. Kathrina Lo and Claudia Migotto provided direction and quality assurance.

Audit cost

Including staff costs, travel and overheads, the estimated cost of the audit is \$307,000.