

9 April 2019

Queensland Productivity Commission
Inquiry into Imprisonment and Recidivism

Response to Draft Report

Dear Principal Commissioner K. Wood

Please find attached a response to various recommendations from the draft report into imprisonment and recidivism in Queensland.

The focus of this submission is on improving the measurement and performance management frameworks of Queensland prisons as a method of determining the quality and therefore effectiveness and efficiency of custodial services. With this type of systems oversight, the quality and service delivery of a prison can be determined. The research is clear that high quality prison service delivery makes a significant contribution to reducing recidivism.

I look forward to the final recommendations of the report which has the potential to be an important moment in Queensland corrections.

Regards



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Response to the Queensland Productivity Commission draft report:

Inquiry into Imprisonment and Recidivism.

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Queensland Productivity Commission (QPC) draft report of 1 February, 2019 on imprisonment and recidivism in Queensland Corrective Services (QCS). As clearly identified in the QPC report, the greatest impediment to an efficient custodial system is overcrowding and the concomitant problems it creates in interfering with the QCS's capacity to achieve its outcome goals in deterrence, rehabilitation, retribution and incapacitation. International evidence indicates that if overcrowding is not curtailed, Queensland will succumb to the current dire conditions of the failing United Kingdom (UK) criminal justice system – a system closely aligned operationally to Queensland. Like Queensland, the UK is experiencing excessive overcrowding and underfunding leading to all-time highs in prisoner deaths, prisoner-on-prisoner assaults and self-harm incidents, to name only some of the dilemmas. Proposed remedies to these catastrophic systemic failures are short-term fixes such as, arming prison officers with pepper spray, rather than addressing the crux of the problems, which is, overcrowding and how best to manage prisoners in such conditions to ensure rehabilitation remains a central focus (Grierson, 2019). The QPC report together with earlier reports (e.g., the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) and the Queensland Audit Office (QAO)), provide the basis to not only avert the UK crisis but ensure the Queensland system meets its current challenges in a positive and efficient manner for improved community safety, prisoner, and crime reduction outcomes.

One goal of the QPC report is to develop a more effective and therefore efficient approach to the administration of punishment to reduce recidivism. An important part of improving effectiveness and efficiency in the criminal justice system is to have high performing prisons. Given this, the question then is what defines a high performing prison and what are its outcomes? For example, if a prison complies with United Nations protocols like the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (*OPCAT*) does this guarantee a high performing prison? The answer is probably not. While there are divergent political and public attitudes on what

a 'good' prison should be, currently, there are no performance frameworks in Queensland that can unequivocally identify a high or low performing prison. In Queensland, a definition for prison excellence does not exist nor are there valid performance measures. If asked, prisoners are more than willing to indicate which prison they prefer and why. These reasons revolve between input factors like the food quality and interpersonal issues such as officer respect (Barkworth, 2018; Liebling & Crewe, 2012; Rynne, 2005). Similarly, outputs like suicide, self-harm, and assault rates are quantitative performance indicators that in themselves tell part of the story of prison performance. While prisoner data is qualitatively useful and assault rates are quantitatively relevant in determining a prison's effectiveness, greater understanding is required before any conclusion can be reached regarding a prison's performance and outcomes. What is clear and important for the QPC recommendations is that if the criminal justice system is to be effective and efficient in reducing recidivism it is necessary to define and measure what the outcomes are for high performing prisons.

Prisons are complex social institutions whose purpose is to intentionally remove freedoms which, in doing so, impose conditions that create specific personal 'pains' in the administration of punishment (Crewe, 2005; Sykes, 1958). The removal of freedoms and the pains of imprisonment have behavioural consequences. Accordingly, the day to day operations of a prison shape its performance by impacting on prisoners' lives during their sentence and as they prepare for release. For example, the QPC report details a number of factors regarding the likelihood of prison programmes to reduce recidivism. While programmes are clearly important (Andrews, Bonta, & Wormith, 2011), one aspect that receives minimal attention in the draft report is the relationship between prison programme effectiveness and prison quality/performance. Research on prison performance (i.e., high or low performing) clearly indicates that programme success and recidivism outcomes are significantly determined by a prison's quality, that is, its institutional climate (Auty & Liebling, 2019; Day, Casey, Vess, & Huisy, 2011; Harding, 2014). The higher the prison quality the better the programme effectiveness and an increased likelihood of lower recidivism.

The following response is focused on effectiveness and efficiency in prison operations and provides an additional perspective to the goals of addressing the QPC report's sections concerning 'Improving rehabilitation and reintegration' (draft

recommendations 9, 10, 11, 12, 17 and 18). In particular, this response will focus on three specific areas; improving productive efficiency of prison through its performance measures and outcomes, performance management frameworks in system reform, and custodial inspection models.

Prison Effectiveness and Efficiency

Measuring Prison Environments and Recidivism

The QPC is very clearly focused on improving the effectiveness and the efficiency of the QCS in reducing imprisonment and recidivism. Under the heading: Improving rehabilitation and reintegration and, in particular, draft recommendations 9 and 10, the QPC have requested information on "...continuous improvement in effective and efficient rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners, and an appropriate starting point for throughcare in adult correction systems". Further, draft recommendation 11, draws heavily on research regarding the effectiveness of prison programs and governance structures to improve rehabilitation and reduce recidivism. The focus of my response is largely on custodial operations and the impact of prison service delivery in reducing recidivism. Accordingly, it is necessary to overview basic penological approaches to understand how prison performance can be more effective and efficient.

Penological approaches can be summarised in three principles that underlie the administration of modern punishment. These three principles are, a) Punishment, b) Care and c) Managerialism (English, 2013). The focus of the *Punishment* principle is on prisoner security and officer safety with little regard for prisoner rehabilitation or recidivism. In the second approach, *Care*, the primary objective is to provide rehabilitative frameworks that address offending behaviours. In the Care principle, prisoners are treated as worthy of rehabilitation opportunities through custodial systems that are procedurally just and values based (Barkworth, 2018; Liebling & Arnold, 2004; Sparks, Bottoms, & Hay, 1996). Unlike the Punishment and Care principles that are theoretically grounded, the third, and most recent principle is *Managerialism* that has its origins in the positivism of New Public Management (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Rynne, 2005). The focus of the Managerialism principle is on "...accounting technologies deployed to incentivise and make network actors accountable

for the efficient and effective delivery of secure prisons that foster improvements in prisoner treatment and rehabilitation.”(English, 2013, p.533).

Most modern anglophone custodial systems are composites of the three principals. However, at any point in time, either the Punishment or Care principle dominates the custodial approach with both being underwritten, to some extent, by Managerialist accountabilities. Which principle becomes the guiding influence in any system is largely determined by external pressures like political will and public pressure – as indicated in the QPC draft report. For example, currently in Queensland the ongoing extraordinary growth in prisoner numbers and concomitant systemic infrastructure stress forces greater emphasis of the Punishment principle to ensure safety and security. While rehabilitation remains a goal of the system and prisoner participation in programmes and education is included in operational data, programme delivery and effectiveness is curtailed by insufficient resources to cope with prisoner numbers. Further, accommodating prisoner numbers beyond a prison’s built capacity creates a security risk that necessitates and prioritises prisoner oversight and safety risk management. As indicated in the QPC draft report and other research, the Punishment approach is highly inefficient being hugely expensive, criminogenic, and a significant contributor to recidivism, particularly given the prevalence of short sentences.

Depending on the prevailing public sentiment and government policy, over the last 30 years the Queensland penological approach pendulum has swung between Punishment and Care, with Managerialism receiving growing attention. The QPC recommendations suggest the pendulum is about to swing back from its current emphasis on Punishment to the more efficient Care emphasis - provided prisoner numbers are reduced. This will be discussed further below.

What has remained constant since the 1989 Commission of Review into Corrective Services in Queensland (i.e., the Kennedy Report) is a shift towards managerialism, although this has been input/output compliance based assessments particularly in the public sector. As will be discussed later, in 1989 private prisons were introduced partly to drive a performance management framework and incentivise public sector prisons through the development of performance standards. However, in Queensland since 1989, effective performance management has, at best, only partially transpired with the public sector

prisons largely devoid of transparent performance evaluation, while the two private prisons have a more rigorous system of performance measures and penalties included in their contracts (Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland, 2018).

In complying with the Queensland Government Performance Management Framework Policy, the QCS provides data to a vast array of input and output assessments included in reports like the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services, departmental annual reports, Australian Bureau of Statistics reports and numerous other similar reports. However, this level of reporting does not inform the outcomes of prison service delivery and does not indicate system effectiveness or efficiency in contributing to reduced recidivism.

In the UK and USA, publicly available prison performance outcome evaluations are not a new paradigm, both are commonplace and expected (e.g., the weighted score card example included in the QPC report). In Australia, the extent of outcomes reporting varies across states. Of note is that Corrective Services NSW are close to introducing a comprehensive suite of performance benchmarks that include outcome measures across their custodial system (G. Sturgess, personal communication, Feb, 2019).

Internationally, prison performance evaluations are bifurcated between a) confinement/custody indexes that largely review inputs and outputs and, b) organisational climate factors that impact on a prison's moral quality or its social climate which contribute to rehabilitation outcomes. Measures included in confinement/custody indexes are closely aligned to the Punishment principal while organisational climate and prison quality measures are more relevant to the Care principal. A complete system-wide performance evaluation framework includes both types of assessment.

The following summarises the research regarding scales to assess the Punishment and Care principles. Regarding the former, a notable measure of the quality of confinement is Logan's (1992) Prison Quality Index (PQI). The PQI assesses a prison's performance on eight dimensions; security, safety, order, care, activity, justice, conditions, and management. The focus of the PQI is custodial, that is, prison conditions (e.g., sufficient bed space, quality of meals, access to medical etc). The PQI has a clear custodial/managerialist focus as opposed to a rehabilitative goal focus. The PQI assesses if a prison is meeting all of

the input requirements to ensure the safe and secure containment of offenders. The confinement quality indexes however fail to fully measure prison environments and overall performance in contributing to reduced recidivism. For example, it is possible to have a prison that scores highly on each of the PQI dimensions or similar instruments, yet the environment can be hostile and dehumanising both of which are contrary to effective rehabilitation and recidivism outcomes. Another notable example of a confinement quality index is HM Inspectorate of Prisons Healthy Prisons Report (which is mentioned in the draft QPC report in the section dealing with inspections on p.218). This type of confinement performance reporting is very much the case for Queensland's prisons.

The second element to measuring prison performance takes a rehabilitation focus and is designed to assess social climate (Moos, 1975). Factors concerning the social climate relate to, for example, how safe prisoners and staff feel, the perceived therapeutic gains from programmes and how supportive prison environments are in assisting prisoners to developing new skills. In summary, a prison's social climate is concerned with, for example, perceptions of safety, well-being, decency, respect, and humanity. The current benchmark in assessing a prison's moral/social climate is in the statistically rigorous and internationally renowned scale - Measuring the Quality of Prison Life (MQPL) developed by the Prison Research Centre (PRC) of the University of Cambridge (Liebling & Arnold, 2004). Moral climate is defined as "... those aspects of a prisoners mainly interpersonal and material treatment that render a term of imprisonment more or less humanising and/or painful." (Liebling & Arnold, 2004, p.473).

The development of sophisticated instruments to assess a prison's quality has evolved from the 1968 Correctional Institutions Environment assessment through various iterations of like-minded scales (e.g., US Federal Bureau of Prisons: Prison Social Climate Survey) (see for example, Camp & Saylor, 1998; Day et al., 2011; Gaes, Camp, Nelson, & Saylor, 2004; Toch, 1985) to the MQPL. The credibility of the MQPL is such that since 2005 HM Prison Service have contracted its application in rolling evaluations of all UK prisons with the scores included in the Annual Prison Performance Ratings produced by the Ministry of Justice. Further, the MQPL has been implemented in a number of international jurisdictions and in 2016, a research team from the PRC and Griffith University conducted an assessment of Brisbane Correctional Centre. Without going into the intricacies of the prison

moral or social climate scales, recent research indicates that prison's low in moral quality significantly and negatively impact on staff and prisoners lives and prisoners capacity to engage and learn from programs. The consequence of this negative environment is a reduction in the likelihood of positive recidivism outcomes (Auty & Liebling, 2019; Day et al., 2011; Harding, 2014).

It is unequivocal that prison programmes are crucial to reducing recidivism. However, regardless of how good a programme is, if a prison has poor quality the likelihood of meaningful gains from programme completion are diminished as are likely reductions in recidivism. It is inefficient to invest in prison programmes if the institution has poor quality and organisational climate reflected in the day to day management of the prison and staff not being supportive of prisoner rehabilitation potential. If, in the administration of punishment, a prison has poor moral quality (e.g., is overly punitive or administratively fragile) then the potentially positive outcomes from programme participation and prison life in general (increasing the risk of violence and self-harm) are diminished.

With the high incarceration rates of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia, it is unlikely that the MQPL, which was developed and normed in the UK, would be entirely suitable for Queensland prisons. With this in mind, since 2006 to date, my research has focused on measuring prison quality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Results from this research indicate that many of the MQPL items are suitable for Indigenous prisoners, however, two additional scales concerning social and emotional well-being, and culture should be included (Molnar, Rynne, & Webster, 2017; Rynne & Cassematis, 2015).

Other than indicating the likelihood of positive impacts on recidivism, whether confinement or quality assessment, prison evaluations provide direct measurement of an institution's performance. These performance measures have relevance to the appropriateness and effectiveness of inputs, outputs, and, ultimately, outcomes. The development of performance indicators assessed in prison evaluation, which will be discussed in the next section on private prisons, are an immediate measure of efficiency and effectiveness. These measures have relevance in, for example, inspections, determining value-for-money, assessing service delivery innovation, and inter-prison performance comparisons. Further, when combined with institutional administrative data (e.g.,

breaches, assaults, and sentence length), prison evaluation provides quantitative indicators of systemic impacts of service delivery at the prison and service-wide levels.

The system wide introduction of prison evaluation goes a large way to improving the transparency and governance deficiencies indicated on page 190 of the full QPC report. Regardless of a prison being private or public, each can be evaluated by confinement and prison quality measures to determine effectiveness. Doing so ensures greater accountability and transparency in the overall approach to rehabilitation and potential to provide an environment conducive to lowering recidivism.

Performance Management Frameworks

In keeping with the theme of developing evidence-based prison performance indicators to improve prison service delivery and recidivism outcomes, the following section reviews the role of private prisons in Queensland and the development of performance benchmarks as an element of an overall performance framework for all custodial services. The section will provide a brief review of the relevant history of private prisons in Queensland then outline how contract development can be used to identify key service delivery factors contributing to effective custodial services and, concomitantly, lower recidivism.

Unlike the USA where private prisons were solely reintroduced to reduce costs from skyrocketing incarceration rates and as a 'quick fix' to court orders to ease overcrowding (Harding, 1997; Logan, 1990), in Queensland, and for that matter in Australia, private prisons were primarily introduced to drive policy and work practice reform in the administration of punishment (Rynne, 2005; Rynne & Harding, 2016). In an era of New Public Management and less government (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992), and in Queensland, the post Fitzgerald anti-corruption reforms, the Kennedy Report recommended private prisons be introduced to model new innovative and efficient work practices distinct from the archaic public sector Punishment model that had existed for the previous 100 years. In the first steps towards Managerialism, these potentially innovative work practices of the private sector could then be used to develop performance benchmarks that could 'cross-fertilize' to the public sector (Harding, 1997; Kennedy, 1988). Further, privatization was

seen as an organisational development strategy to weaken the debilitating hold of the trade unions over policy through its control of the prison officer ranks.

Despite nearly 30 years of repeated government reports and inquiries recommending that the public sector adopt performance benchmark frameworks similar to that required of the private sector (see for example, Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland, 2018; Kennedy, 1988; Peach, 1999; Queensland Audit Office, 2016), the public sector remains resistant to increased accountability and transparency available through adopting meaningful evidence-based performance measures that relate to an individual prison and overall system outcomes and, ultimately, the contribution to reducing recidivism.

Private prisons are not the panacea to system wide reform. There have been numerous international and Australian examples of deplorable private sector performance leading to prison churn (i.e., the return of a prison to the public sector) for repeated contract breaches (Harding, Rynne, & Thomsen, 2019; Rynne, 2005). Further, experience shows that it is not possible to privatize poorly performing public prisons in the hope that they will miraculously be transformed into high performing private prisons – it simply does not happen. Bad prisons in the public sector are bad prisons in the private sector. Apart from ideological objections to prisons being managed and operated by the private sector, the typical complaint of private prisons is that they maximise profit through ‘cutting corners’ and understaffing and are therefore unsafe. These criticisms can of course be negated through appropriate KPI’s, purchaser monitoring and inspection regimes (Harding, 2001; Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, 2016). Alternatively, there are examples of exceptional private sector custodial service delivery such Acacia Prison in Western Australia that leads the way in setting the standard for prisoner treatment in that State (Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, 2016).

The utility of private prison contracts to positively influence recidivism is evident in two recent incentives or payment by results (PbR) based contracts for the Ravenhall Correctional Centre in Victoria and Auckland South Corrections Facility in New Zealand. For the former, the prison operators are eligible for a bonus of up to \$2 million if they reduce recidivism rates by 12% for non-indigenous and an additional bonus for a 14% reduction of Indigenous prisoners compared against public sector prisons. For the Auckland South Corrections Facility, the operator is eligible for bonuses of up to \$1.5 million for attaining

recidivism rates lower than other New Zealand prisons. In recognising the over-representation of Maori prisoners, if the private prison reduces Maori recidivism by 10% or more compared with public sector prisons, a further bonus is paid. In the New Zealand example, the bonus amount was an estimate of the projected savings from not incarcerating an individual (Eisen, 2019). In both cases, not only do the operators have an array of prison processes and programmes targeting offending behaviour but also, both have developed extensive reintegration/throughcare processes that support prisoners into the community on release. These community based processes are aligned with throughcare and Justice Reinvestment strategies as described in the QPC report.

Clearly, there are confounding variables that impact performance or incentive based prison contracts as recidivism is dependent on a range of variables. For example, prisoners frequently move across institutions during a sentence and how much impact a particular centre has on the likelihood of recidivism will be dependent on the length of stay. Further, with regard to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Maori recidivism, prison programmes or models can only do so much to counter the cumulative disadvantage factors confronting both peoples (Kurlychek & Johnson, 2019). While both exemplar prisons recognise these issues in their respective contracts, these and other influences are currently intangible given the lack of knowledge regarding the interaction between, service delivery models, prison quality, length of stay, and situational factors on release. Notwithstanding, what is important is that private prisons have been given the freedom to be innovative in service delivery and go beyond the prison walls - reaching into the community via throughcare to reduce recidivism.

In Queensland, evidence from the last 30 years of contract letting, management, and monitoring by the public sector line agency (i.e., initially the QCSC and its successor the QCS) indicates that the purchaser lacks the capacity to convert private sector contract and benchmark/KPI innovation into service wide work practice reform. This is not entirely unexpected and should not be a surprise. The primary function of the QCS is the administration of punishment in the criminal justice system – a function it performs well under difficult conditions. The commercial and oversight skills necessary in contract letting and management are specialist skills that enact top-down government lead strategic and policy goals. Contract development, tender processes and evaluation are informed by good

correctional practices that coalesce with 'on-the-ground' administration of punishment. Accordingly, the role of identifying innovative policy driven work practices by either sector and converting this to evidence-based policy is better placed under the remit of the justice reform office as per draft recommendations 17 and 18. Should a justice reform office drive strategic and policy reform, system wide policy innovation would be initiated and implemented.

Summary - Measuring Prison Environments and Performance Management

From the brief summary of prison performance evaluations identified above, the summary points for the QPC are:

- First, prison performance can, and should be, measured. In the two international jurisdictions most closely aligned with the Queensland criminal justice system (i.e., the UK and the USA), such reviews are considered part and parcel of good corrections practice. Despite numerous recommendations in various government reports, Queensland has been unable or unwilling to implement this level of accountability through performance evaluation (see next section). Performance evaluation goes to the very essence of financial and human effectiveness and efficiency in inputs/outputs and, inevitably, the outcomes identified in the QPC draft report.
- The capacity to reliably measure quantitatively and qualitatively confinement benchmarks (largely as inputs and outputs) and rehabilitation quality (outcomes) of prison performance unequivocally exists as indicated by the KPI's, benchmarks and other performance initiatives introduced in the private sector. Failure to conduct such evaluations creates an unnecessary and significant void that if filled would inform service delivery and improve custodial outcomes making service to the community more effective and efficient that would inform policy decisions and impact of recidivism.
- As the data sets grow, the quantitative data from prison performance evaluations can be matched with administrative input data (e.g., recidivism rates, prisoner-on-staff and prisoner-on-prisoner assaults, staff to prisoner ratios etc.) to develop an informed understanding of how sentencing patterns, policy, and managerial and operational approaches impact of

custodial service delivery (e.g., how internal prison factors relate to recidivism) and for inter-prison performance efficiency and effectiveness comparisons. The development of an evidence-based reporting structure will allow improved understanding of what factors in prison performance currently exist at the individual prison level, as well as, at the system level, and how these factors influence recidivism.

- The functions of initiating and monitoring a performance framework and evaluating prison performance should be with the justice reform office, an independent agency separate from the Corrective Services line agency. The justice reform office would have the role of developing the policy goals of the line agency and identifying how effectively those goals are obtained.

Inspection Models

Recommendation 33 of the CCC Taskforce Flaxton (2018 p.53) review of corruption risks in Queensland prisons is that a) an independent Inspectorate of Prisons be established, b) that this inspectorate develop consistent inspection standards, methods and reporting templates and, c) that inspection reports be publicly available. For the purposes of the Taskforce Flaxton report, independent inspection is a strategy to fortify anticorruption processes. There is another element to independent inspection that directly impacts prison performance and efficiency leading to reduced recidivism that is not available through internal audit or non-independent inspection.

English (2013, p534) proposes two approaches to inspection styles which are, *hierarchical* and *intelligent*. Hierarchical or calculative assessment includes counting and accounting for the “quantified evaluation of human performance” (p.533) (i.e., input/output focus) or a managerialist approach. The hierarchical approach includes “accounting technologies” (English, 2013, p. 535) like KPI’s that provide mechanisms to monitor, sanction, and report. Alternatively, intelligent accountability involves explaining what is occurring in the prison, or in other words, putting a narrative around the hierarchical audit that explains how custodial services are being delivered and how this service delivery is experienced by management, officers and prisoners (i.e., the moral functioning of the prison). An intelligent inspection approach uses the actors’ narratives to go beyond quantitative performance indicators to identify actual prison performance.

While important, hierarchical accountabilities do not provide the critical level of insight into how a prison actually functions or 'feels'. Through independent inspection that adopts intelligent accountability, prison auditors can (English, 2013, p 533):

- Engage actors effectively in a legislatively mandated public setting,
- Although inspection and transparency can lead to defensive behaviour, intelligent accountability can be a “powerful antidote to local collusion that masks network deficiencies”,
- “...it provides insights into the impact of unacknowledged conflicts in public and private values on network governance, performance and accountability, and the role of value alignment in mediating change.”

The West Australian Inspector of Custodial Services, the NSW Inspector of Custodial Services, the ACT Inspector of Correctional Services, the Office of the Custodial Inspector Tasmania, and HM Chief Inspector of Prisons are examples of legislated authorities that provide unfettered inspection reports directly to parliament that comprise hierarchical and intelligent accountabilities that are eventually released as public documents. In Queensland, inspection reports go directly to the QCS Commissioner and, in doing so, do not provide a level of transparency that complies with international standards of inspection (Crime and Corruption Commission Queensland, 2018; Sofronoff, 2016). The current approach of the non-transparent internal QCS Inspectorate diminishes the potential for inspection to provide organisation development utility, as well as, a regulatory role that decreases the risk of corruption. Further, public access to inspection reports increases perceptions of propriety in the delivery of custodial services and also removes the mystery that currently exists within custodial services about cross-sector (i.e., public or private) performance. Of most importance to the QPC recommendations is that open access to all independent inspection reports is a proven vehicle of system reform that fosters cross-fertilization (i.e., bilateral information exchange), improves overall service delivery, and system effectiveness that, ultimately, encourages positive prisoner treatment outcomes and lower recidivism.

Summary – Inspection

To ensure the prison system is operating at peak efficiency and effectiveness, independent and transparent inspection is an evidence-based approach that positively contributes to custodial operational performance. As previously indicated, improved prison and system outcomes increase the likelihood of reduced recidivism. Unlike the oversight functions previously identified for the justice reform office as per recommendations 17 and 18, the Inspectorate should have complete independence and report directly to parliament.

Conclusion

The above briefly summarises three methods to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Queensland custodial system. Through better understanding custodial operating practices and their impact on the social climate and deliverables for individual institutions, service delivery can be enhanced. Improved service delivery leads to higher performing prisons and reduced recidivism. If the current performance management system continues, prison performance will remain unknown and unaccountable. Accordingly, the efficiency and effectiveness of the system will largely remain undefined and unknown as to the possible gains in recidivism.

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