



COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS SERVICE TASMANIA

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This is the first in a series of papers prepared for and in collaboration with the Department of Justice and Industrial Relations. The purpose of this paper is to simply describe the basic features of community corrections as a service agency. The information provided in this paper is based upon information and advice provided by the Tasmanian Community Corrections Service. Future papers in this series will explore new developments, contemporary issues and innovative practices in the field, with a particular emphasis on 'what works' and evidence-based research.

General Features

Community Corrections provides a range of non-custodial sentencing options including community service orders and probation supervision.

Mission Statement

The objective of Community Corrections is to enable people who are found guilty of offences to achieve socially responsible behaviour within the family and community, paying particular attention to the principles of Restorative Justice.

- Recognising Victims of Crime
- Developing Culturally Specific Services delivery to Indigenous offenders
- Developing and Maintaining Strategic Partnerships with Other Agencies

Objectives

- Reporting on Offenders, (eg. Reports to the Parole Board)

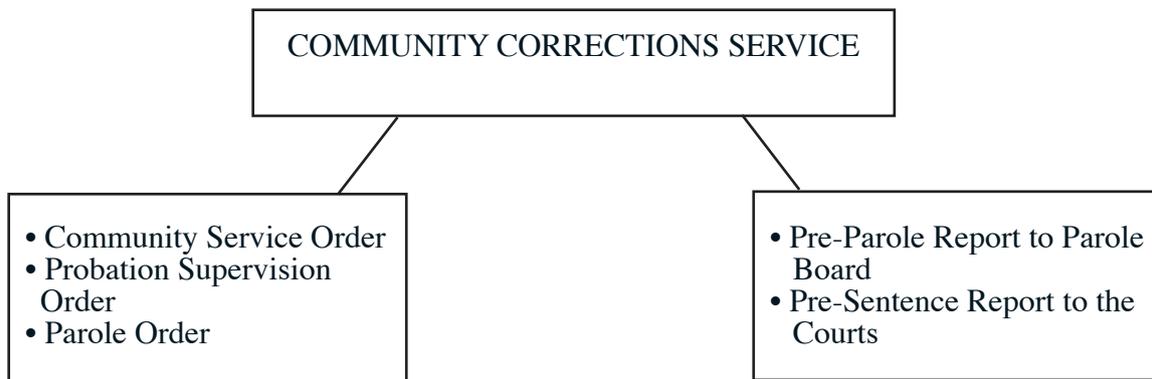
- Administrating Probation/Parole Supervision and Suspended Sentences
- Facilitating Programs
- Administrating Community Service Orders
- Enforcement of Orders
- Establishing Strong Linkages with Prison Service

Vision

Under the auspices of Tasmania Together and in recognition of the Department's commitment to restorative justice, Community Corrections aim to develop and apply strategies in a manner, which will:

- denounce crime and prevent crime in a general way;
- assist victims;
- make good harm occasioned by crime; (and)
- maximise the effectiveness of the Justice system.

Offender Management



Community Supervision Orders

A priority for the supervision of offenders serving community based sentences is the successful completion of the court order. This means maximising the likelihood of offenders complying with the conditions of the order and identifying and taking necessary action where there is a breach of the order.

Parole Orders

These Orders are made by the Parole Board to enable prisoners to serve up to half their sentence in the community under the supervision of Community Corrections. The desired outcome of a period of supervision is to minimise the risk of offending and its effect on the community by encouraging offenders to achieve responsible behaviour. The supervision focuses on offending behaviour and development of, or referral to, programs aimed at improving social attitudes and personal circumstances.

Probation Supervision Orders

Offenders are supervised to minimise the risk of offending and its effect on the community by encouraging offenders to achieve responsible behaviour through the administration and enforcement of orders and conditions imposed by the courts. The focus is on offending behaviour, and development of, or referral to, programs aimed at improving social attitudes and personal circumstances.

This category also includes supervision of suspended sentences where supervision by a Probation Officer is one of the conditions of the order.

Community Service Order

These are imposed by the Courts and require a specified amount of community service work or personal development under the supervision of Community Corrections. This program is administered and enforced in a manner that reflects the penalty imposed by the courts to encourage offenders to achieve responsible behaviour, including performing useful tasks that provide reparation to the community, improving social attitudes and skills, and improving interaction between offenders and the public.

What is Parole?

Parole is an agreement between the parole board and a prisoner which allows the prisoner to be released from prison to complete the sentence under the supervision of a parole officer. It does not mean that the offender has served their sentence. While on parole the offender is still deemed to be a prisoner.

Reporting and Programs

Reporting on Offenders

Community Corrections prepares written and verbal reports for decision makers to assist in court dispositions or release from prison. When a request for a report is received it specifies the date by which the report is required. In 2001-02 there were 1,000 reports (verbal and written) provided by Community Corrections.

Developing Stronger Links

Community Corrections has developed stronger links with Youth Justice, Forensic Mental Health Services, and Drug and Alcohol Services, and continues to build on links with the Prison Service. There are a wide range of key players involved with Community Corrections, and multi-agency and cross-institutional work is an integral part of its activities.

Risk /Needs Assessment Review

A Statewide review of the Wisconsin Risk/Needs Assessment Tool and its application in case management practices was conducted and evaluated during 2002. The results of the review and evaluation form the basis of further developments and enhancements relating to case management in the foreseeable future.

Offender risk and needs assessment is crucial to program planning and to the development of effective and suitable case management strategies. It is also important to link such assessments to restorative justice frameworks - in ways that enhance offender prospects while repairing harm to victims and the wider community.

Cognitive Skill Program

Following the purchase of the manual, fourteen Community Corrections staff and two Prison Service staff have already been trained in the delivery of a UK Cognitive Skills programme called "Offending Is Not The Only Choice". A trainer from the Wales based Cognitive Centre Foundation, travelled to Tasmania to facilitate training in the delivery of the program.

Six programs were recently commenced, two each in the Southern region, Northern region and the North West regions of the State. The pilots are to be evaluated and a 'Train the Trainer' training program will be conducted by the Cognitive Centre Foundation from 2003-04.

PADV Partnership Project

Domestic Violence Perpetrator Program Scoping Study: This project is a federally funded initiative, which began in June 2001. It focuses on scoping the need for a domestic violence perpetrator program in Tasmania and the type of program that would best address the behaviour of perpetrators and protect the victim's status. Research has been completed and the draft report is now available. Systematic research of this nature is essential to program developments within Community Corrections generally.

What is a Probation Order?

A probation order is an order of the court. It means that the offender must be of good behaviour and comply with any other conditions during the period of the order. It is common for a "supervision" condition to be part of an order. Probation orders, which have a supervision condition, means that for the duration of the order, you are to be under the supervision of a probation officer.

Agency Performance

Cost of community supervision

What is a Community Service Order?

A Community Service Order is a sentence of the court. It means that the offender will be required to perform community service for the specified number of hours, under the direction and supervision of officers of Community Corrections. A record will be kept in relation to the attendance and conduct. Some of the work will be of a nature designed to assist individuals or welfare organisations in need of labour but unable to afford paid help. Pensioners, and community service organisations are examples of those that offenders will be required to assist. Some of the Orders may involve personal development for the offender.

The cost of community supervision per offender per day is a measure of the efficiency of the Community Corrections system. A range of factors, including the intensity of the supervision, the mix of different types of orders, and scale of operation directly affect ongoing operational costs.

While costs per offender per day have risen from \$4.52 in 1997-98 to \$8.90 in 2001-02, compared to the use of imprisonment, Community Corrections is a much less expensive form of offender management. Furthermore, evidence has shown that with more expenditure on rehabilitation and restorative justice programs the greater the likelihood that recidivism will be reduced.

Performance Indicators

Quantity Measures:

Number of Orders
Number of Orders completed
Number of Orders revoked
Number of participants completing Cognitive Skills Program

Quality Measures:

Re-offending rates

Cost Measures:

Daily cost of service provision per offender

The development of national indicators in Corrective Services has enabled some comparisons to be made between jurisdictions. Continued improvement in reliability and validity can be anticipated as consistent standards are agreed to and information systems are enhanced to adhere to the standards.

Community Corrections is responsible for the supervision of offenders subject to a range of Community Supervision Orders including:

- Probation and Suspended Sentence Supervision;
- Community Service Orders; and
- Parole Orders.

Agency Philosophy

Community Corrections is committed to the principles of restorative justice. Future work of the agency will need to include performance measures that reflect the translation of this philosophy into practical programs and activities.

CRIMINOLOGY RESEARCH UNIT

The Work of Community Corrections: A Snapshot

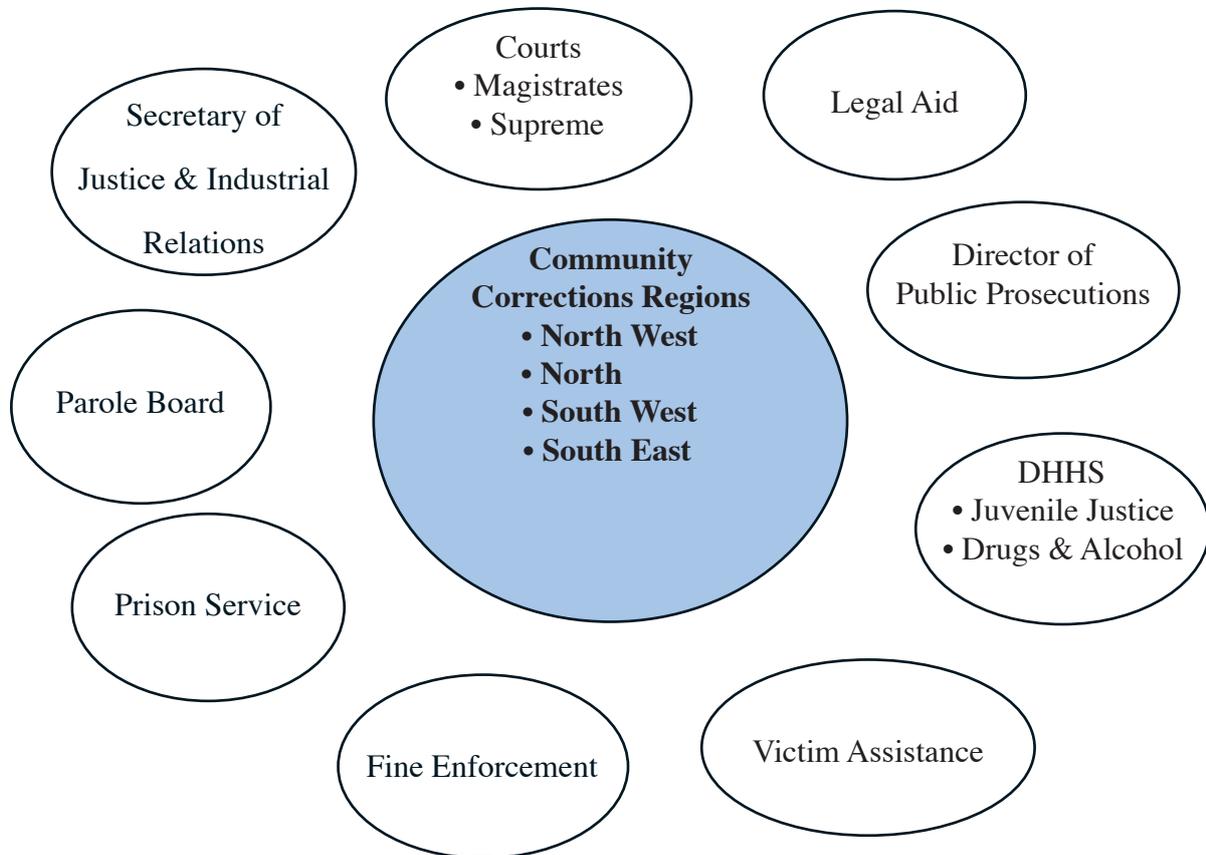
Table 1
Community Corrections Clients 1997-98 to 2001-02

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Percentage of community supervision orders completed	96%	91%	85%	92%	89.3%
Number of community supervision orders imposed	2053 Orders	1899 Orders	1865 Orders	1407 Orders	1503 Orders
Percentage of probation supervision orders completed	73%	86%	94%	97%	96%
Number of probation supervision orders imposed	833 Orders	618 Orders	589 Orders	495 Orders	569 Orders
Percentage of Parole Orders Completed	73%	73%	70%	71%	60%
Number of Parole Orders imposed	52 Orders	52 Orders	76 Orders	115 Orders	111 Orders
Percentage of Community Services Orders Completed	93%	80%	80%	88%	81%
Number of Community Service Orders Imposed	1340 Orders	1292 Orders	1245 Orders	912 Orders	801 Orders

Table 2
Community Corrections Court & Parole Board Reports 1997-98 to 2001-02

	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02
Written	666	642	Na	664	536
Oral	773	854	Na	379	464
Total reports prepared	1436	1496	1055	1043	1000

Key Players for Community Corrections



Risk Assessment

A substantial part of community corrections work is based upon close assessment of offender needs and of the risks of the offender committing another crime. Factors that are examined include such things as:

- Age at first conviction
- Number of prior convictions
- Alcohol usage problems
- Other drug usage problems
- Employment history
- Family relationships
- Academic/vocational skills
- Companions/associations
- Health
- Mental ability
- Emotional stability

Responding to Offenders

Accurate and comprehensive assessment of needs and risks provide the platform for program development and individual offender case management. Responses may include such things as:

- Referrals to appropriate training, counselling, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, and other community-based agencies
- Non-therapeutic and non-treatment programs such as the 'Cognitive Skills Program', that is designed to provide skills training to high and medium risk offenders

Assessment of Offender Risk

1. Number of address changes in the last 12 months (prior to incarceration for parolees) eg. two or more
2. Attitudes to offence eg. dependent or unwilling to accept responsibility
3. Number of prior Community Correctional Orders, (Adult or Children's Court) eg. two or more
4. Number of breaches of Community Correctional Orders (Adult or Children's Court) eg. one or more
5. Age at first conviction (Adult or Children's Court) eg. 19 or younger
6. Number of prior indictable offences (Adult or Children's Court) eg. two or more
7. Nature of convictions of adult/child eg. burglary, theft, car theft, robbery OR worthless cheques or forgery, credit cards, deception
8. Assaultive offences within last two years eg. gross bodily harm, abduction, armed robbery, murder, manslaughter, serious sexual offences
9. Percentage of time employed in last 12 months eg. 60% or more
10. Alcohol usage problems (prior to and during incarceration for parolees) eg. no interference with functioning
11. Other drug usage problems (prior to and during incarceration for parolees) eg. frequent abuse; serious disruption; needs treatment

Assessment of Offender Needs

1. Marital and family relationships eg. some dysfunction but potential for improvement
2. Academic and vocational skills eg. minimal skill level causing serious problems
3. Employment eg. unsatisfactory employment or unemployed but has adequate job skills
4. Financial management eg. situational or minor difficulties
5. Companions eg. associations almost completely negative
6. Health eg. disability or illness interferes with functioning but treatment is self managed
7. Mental ability eg. deficiencies severely limit independent functioning; moderate or significant intellectual impairment
8. Emotional stability eg. emotional instability or psychiatric disorder significantly reduces adequate functioning eg lashes out or retreats into self
9. Alcohol usage eg. frequent abuse or serious disruption
10. Other drug use eg. frequent substance abuse or serious disruption
11. Community Correction Officer's impression of offender's needs eg. minimum through to maximum

From Assessment to Response

Overall Offender Assessment

		Needs		
		L	M	H
Risks	L	L	L	M
	M	L	M	H
	H	M	H	H

Supervision Level Low Medium High

Types of Responses

The level of supervision and the type of program response depends upon the assessment of individual risks and needs.

Community Service

Many offenders are required to engage in some type of community service, such as

- Gardening eg. mowing lawns, weeding, and building fences
- Packing needles for the Needle Exchange Program
- Helping regional community organisations set up rural shows
- Sorting and filing of historical archives
- Working for various community service groups such as Rotary and Lions Clubs

Cognitive Skills Program

What is it?

The Cognitive Skills Program is based upon the 'Offending Is Not The only Choice' model that

aims to train offenders in problem-solving as a way to interact with the world around them. As a skill training program, the intention is to teach offenders how to stop, think and assess options and consequences before they act. An important part of the program is to consider a range of moral dilemmas, many of which focus on offending behaviour, and to learn how to judge what is right and wrong by developing and practicing moral reasoning. The training involves examining alternative ways in which to respond to situations and conflicts. It also includes consideration of the impact of one's actions on victims.

Who is it for?

Assessment and suitability for the program is based upon multiple factors including matching appropriate risk level, demonstrating a desire for change, length of order and individual situational factors. Exclusions for the program include sex offenders, severe mental health and substance abuse issues in which cognitions are shown to be adversely affected, significant developmental and intellectual disabilities, and availability factors such as whether in full-time study or work.