

CRIMINOLOGY RESEARCH UNIT

Occasional Paper No. 2

November 2003



UNIVERSITY
OF TASMANIA

An Evaluation of the 'Inside Out' Prison Program

by

Rob White & Ron Mason

Contact:
Professor Rob White
Director
Criminology Research Unit
School of Sociology & Social Work
Private Bag 17
Hobart Tasmania
Australia 7001
Telephone +61 3 62262877
Facsimile +61 3 62262279
Email r.d.white@utas.edu.au

ISSN 1447-9966

Preface

Importance of Evaluation

In its simplest sense evaluation is about assessing how well a strategy or programme is performing, how it might be improved, and in some cases, whether or not it should be continued.

The success of a particular strategy or programme cannot be taken for granted, no matter how good the intentions of the people involved or how laudable the goals and objectives. Evaluation, then, seeks to determine, in a structured and considered manner, how successful a programme has been as well as how it might be improved.

For funding bodies the crucial question is whether a particular strategy or programme provides the best value for money in relation to its aims and objectives and the needs of its client group. Increasingly, funding bodies insist upon a detailed description about how a programme is to be assessed.

In an environment of increasing competition for scarce resources, evaluation becomes critical to not only the effective operation of strategies or programmes but also their continued or future operation. Without effective evaluation procedures in place questions such as appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness cannot be addressed – issues of primary importance to funding bodies. Without this information it is impossible to determine how well a programme is performing.

Agencies or organisations that do not include evaluation as part of its planning process and programme operation do so at their own peril.

This Evaluation

In undertaking any evaluation consideration must be given to the context or environment within which any particular programme is operating - this impacts on the type of evaluation method employed.

While quantitative analysis is useful for ascertaining prisoner numbers and contacts, it is limited in the amount of information it can provide about the programme itself and the impact it has on clients. This type of approach also assumes that the relevant data and data collection methods are in place – this was

not the case in this evaluation. Therefore, two alternative methods of evaluation were utilised. These were:

Contextual analysis

This method concerns itself with how the initiative was implemented, whether implementation went as planned and the ways in which the context of the initiative was set up encouraged or undermined the impact of the initiative. This information was gained through interviews and analysis of official documents and records.

Qualitative analysis

This method is aimed at gaining information about how people feel about a particular programme from a number of perspectives. From an operational point of view this involved conducting semi-structured interviews in which prisoners and others were encouraged to speak for themselves about the 'Inside Out' programme and what it meant for them. It is the collective experience, perceptions and attitudes of each party (prisoners, prison personnel and families) that make up the body of the report.

This type of approach is common for these types of institutional settings and has been utilised in other prison-based evaluations in Tasmania and elsewhere. It was on the basis of results from these two approaches that the appropriateness and effectiveness of the 'Inside Out' programme was determined.

Lastly, evaluation is also an iterative process and to this end a preliminary 'interim' report was sent to all parties for feedback. It should be noted that the aim of this process was not to see how 'happy' people were with the report but to clarify issues that emerged from the evaluation process and to comment on its findings.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to the many people who took the time to speak with us about the 'Inside Out' programme. In the course of this project, we have been fortunate to have received excellent cooperation from all parties concerned – including prison authorities, prison staff, prisoners, programme managers and staff, and the families of prisoners. Special thanks are due to Kevin Tomkins for layout and design of the occasional paper series, and to Della Clark for administrative assistance for the evaluation.

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Executive Summary

The following report describes the findings of an evaluation undertaken of 'Inside Out', a prisoner support programme conducted under the auspices of Care and Communication Concern, a nation wide Christian based welfare and mission organisation.

The report begins by briefly reviewing the context for the introduction of the 'Inside Out' programme and describes the key activities of the current programme, including aims and objectives, methods of operation, and services provided. It then provides an assessment of positive and negative aspects of service provision from a number of perspectives – including programme implementation, reporting mechanisms, accountability, and administrative and supervisory support. The report concludes with a series of observations regarding the main issues and problems identified during the course of the evaluation.

Key Findings

The key findings of this evaluation are:

- (1) Prisoners valued the 'Inside Out' programme and thought it provided a useful non-institutional avenue for inmates to reduce/relieve the stresses associated with incarceration by providing someone to talk to and communicate with, and that it enabled them to better liaise with their families and loved ones. It also provided an avenue to release pent up emotions.
- (2) Prison authorities have mixed attitudes towards the program, due to (a) problems with how it was introduced and implemented; (b) how funding was established and subsequently allocated for the program; (c) differing perceptions among prison officials regarding the status and role of a 'lay' worker within the prison environment; and (d) the perceived lack of reporting and accountability of a prison funded programme.
- (3) From a service provision perspective, whilst the 'Inside Out' Support Worker was highly committed and motivated to assist prisoners and their families, there were serious shortcomings in the support available to the worker – both from prison authorities (such as provision of adequate

space, or suitable report back /consultative mechanisms) and from the funded organisation (in the form of a locally based support networks and constructive administrative and supervisory support).

- (4) That the support worker himself was inevitably placed in an ambiguous position due the nature of the work. On the one hand, to do the job effectively, requires certain personal qualities and task related attributes. On the other hand, these very qualities and attributes may be seen as inappropriate in secure punishment facilities. This is a Catch 22 situation that can only be resolved by careful consideration of the philosophical rationale guiding prison management and prison programmes.

Recommendations

- That there be regular consultation between prison authorities and the Attorney General's office, and that no programme be approved or implemented without full analysis of costs and benefits, and assessment of the programme background and history.
 - That for any prison programme, internally or externally run, that there be a comprehensive and detailed description of the program including aims, strategies and performance measures, and that this be circulated to all relevant parties (including inmates and prison staff).
 - That for each prison support worker there be a Position Description, which provides an outline of key tasks and responsibilities, including reporting obligations and the responsibilities of prison authorities to each worker.
 - That there should be clarification of specified target groups for particular programmes, and that performance indicators (e.g., specific tasks) and administrative protocols (e.g., information from prison authorities) be developed in relation to these target groups.
 - That there be development of improved reporting mechanisms and procedures (for example, through the use of a reporting pro forma) that provide user-friendly mechanisms for reporting, and that there be structured opportunity for regular consultations between programme staff and prisoner support services.
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- That tensions arising from diverse interpretations of prison programmes and prison priorities (e.g., security versus services) be addressed via pre-service and in-service training and education programmes that reflect 'best practice' contemporary penology.

- That issues of service provision as they relate to recidivism, suicidal behaviour and self-harm, prisoner and family support, post-release and so on, be evaluated in the context of an assessment of the 'whole of prison' environment and the constellation of services and programmes on offer. Such an evaluation could also consider diverse programmes' aims and goals, and the direct and indirect influences of each on any of the above concerns.

In summary, it was found that while the programme provides an invaluable service to prisoners, there are aspects of the programme, particularly relating to reporting mechanisms and procedures, that require attention. Overall, however, the programme represents excellent value for money, given the time, energy and resources put into direct service provision by the key Support Worker, and the positive response from prisoners and their families to the service

Introduction

This report describes the findings of an evaluation study of 'Inside Out', a programme directed at providing material and non-material support to prisoners and their families, with the aim of preventing suicide and self-harm among prisoners.

The evaluation was commissioned by Corrective Services, for completion by 30 June 2003.

The report begins by briefly reviewing the context for the introduction of the 'Inside Out' programme and describes the key activities of the current programme. It then provides an assessment of positive and negative aspects of service provision. The report concludes with a series of observations regarding the main issues and problems identified during the course of the evaluation.

Methodology for Evaluation

Qualitative research methods were utilised to undertake the evaluation. That is, key stakeholders were interviewed in a semi-structured manner to gain their impression of the program in question. In the main respondents were encouraged to speak for themselves and identify key issues, problems or concerns. Quotes contained within the report are utilised to represent generally held views or comments. The report is thus written from the perspective of those involved – it is the collective perceptions and attitudes of each party (inmates, prison authorities and programme staff) that make up the body of this report.

Two primary questions were central to the evaluation. These were;

What are the benefits and strengths of the programme?

What are the limitations and shortcomings of the programme?

It was on the basis of answers to these questions that the appropriateness and effectiveness of program delivery was determined.

Information for this evaluation was derived from two main sources. These were:

Analysis of documentation held by various agencies, such as Attorney General's Office, Department of Justice (Corporate Office), Corrective Services, Care and Communication Concern (CCC), and the Inside Out service. Interviews with major stakeholders

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 persons associated with the program. The sample comprised the following people:

Prisoners

- 12 prisoners ranging from age 18-57 years
- 10 male prisoners [9 from maximum, 1 from medium security]
- 2 female prisoners

Prison Officers

- Director of Prisons,
- General Manager, Maximum Security
- Manager, Custodial Services, Maximum Security
- Manager, Accommodation Services, Maximum Security,
- Manager, Medium Security
- Manager, Women's Prison
- 2 Staff members Prisoner Support Unit

Service Provider

- Program Manager 'Inside Out'
- Support Worker 'Inside Out'

Family Members

- 2 families from the North of the state
- 2 families from the South of the state

Inmates were asked about their awareness, knowledge and level of involvement, if any, with 'Inside Out'. Additionally, questions were asked to gain prisoner views relative to the programme's operation and outcomes.

Managers of Risdon Prison and programme staff of 'Inside Out' were asked to provide a history of the implementation of the programme as it related to them. This included discussion of the programme's aims and objectives, its day to day operation, together with any problems or issues encountered, and finally their view as to the overall effectiveness of the programme.

Context of the Programme

Policy initiatives

The 'Inside Out' programme emerged after consultation between the Attorney General's Department and representatives of Care and Communication Concern (CCC), a Victorian based Christian organisation that provides welfare services across Australia.

The initial meeting of a representative of the CCC with the then Attorney General emanated from a spate of deaths within the prison that attracted considerable media coverage. Reports into the prison deaths prepared by the Ombudsman and by the Coroner were highly critical of the lack of suitable prison programmes, and there was considerable pressure to respond to such criticisms. The origins of the agreement between the CCC and the Department of Justice and Industrial Relations, therefore, stemmed from concerns to set into place a prisoner support programme as quickly as possible.

As a result of the meeting between the Attorney General and the CCC, the programme was subsequently introduced into the prison system at the invitation of the Minister and officially launched on 21 October 2000.

'Inside Out' was to commence on November 1, 2000 and was to be conducted by members of the "God's Squad Motorcycle Club", under the auspices of the CCC.

The program was to be funded from the Prison Services budget.

Programme implementation

Very little time was allocated for consultation involving prison officials and the Minister's office about the proposed programme. It was only a matter of days from first contact of the CCC with the Attorney General, to the program commencing operations within the Prison. The short time frame between the announcement and implementation of the programme appears to have taken everyone by surprise. It certainly caused considerable concern among Prison Authorities.

The Director of Prisons stated that he was unable to:

...work out what the programme was or how it was to be implemented - and it was un funded. Sixty thousand dollars had to be found. The program was also to cover Ashley. We don't have financial responsibility for Ashley – it's funded by Health and Human Services – so were also paying for a program in an institution we do not fund.¹

Further, expressing a sentiment shared by most Managers within the Prison during the interviews, the Director commented that:

There was no written description of the programme. I only learnt about the program through experience.

The lack of operational details was compounded by lack of protocols surrounding reporting and accountability.

There was no structure to launch the program. We had no idea what it was delivering and they were flying by the seat of their pants They were given carte blanche, there was no accountability at all.

The programme was perceived by prison staff as being imposed on the prison, with very little consultation between the Prison and the Attorney General's office, or the Prison and the CCC, either prior to or after implementation.

The implementation process itself, therefore, has caused considerable resentment within Prison services, regardless of service provision issues as such. As one Prison official stated:

It was introduced two years ago. The first I heard of it was when I was instructed by the Director. We weren't consulted. No systems were in place. Those in maximum weren't really happy about it.

This resentment appears to stem from two primary sources.

- (1) the financial burden of paying for the programme (including an agency – Ashley – for which they had no financial responsibility).
- (2) the programme was perceived as being inadequately described,

¹ While a service rationale does exist for coverage of Ashley as well as Risdon – namely, the importance of a seamless relationship across the youth and adult systems in order to reduce suicide – in practice, the Support Worker only provided this service on a voluntary basis.

there was an absence of reporting mechanisms, and little was actually known about the service

The following statement would appear to sum up the situation:

The program is paid for with a budget we don't have and there's no results. It's impossible to say how the programs going. We can't measure the impact of what he's doing. [Prison manager]

While there is little doubt that in many government and prison circles there was broad-based support for the introduction of this type of programme, the manner of its implementation had far reaching consequences.

The 'Inside Out' Programme

Terms of Reference for Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the service relevance, processes and practices of service delivery, and the management and administration of the 'Inside Out' programme.

Among other things, the terms of reference for this report also ask for the 'Inside Out' programme to be evaluated according to its appropriateness and effectiveness vis-à-vis recidivism (i.e., re-offending). However, two issues quickly emerged that confounded this task.

First, in the absence of a memorandum of understanding between the service provider and a relevant prison authority, there was no clear, agreed-upon outcomes statement that included a reduction in re-offending. Moreover, as demonstrated below, reducing re-offending has not been considered an aim or objective of the 'Inside Out' programme, although it may have an indirect influence in this regard.

Secondly, any assessment of recidivism would require a methodology that embraces all programmes and interventions, both inside and outside prison, and across time. In other words, while a programme may be designed to reduce recidivism, repeat offending is shaped by a multitude of social and environmental factors that can rarely be addressed by one service or programme alone.

The main focus of the present evaluation, therefore, is on the service mandate as expressed in documents relating to the aims and objectives of the programme.

Aims and objectives

The stated objectives of the 'Inside Out' programme appear to be:

- To provide an early detection and referral service for prisoners at risk of self harm or suicide
- To enhance adult/family and community support for prisoners within the target group
- To provide an independent support and advocate service for prisoners within the target group
- To enhance the community's understanding of needs of prisoners within the target group.

These objectives are contained in a document entitled 'Inside Out Prison Support Project – A Proposal Developed for Tasmania' [no date].

The first report of the 'Inside Out Support Project' [15.12.2000] stated that the primary aims are:

- To assist in the reduction of death by suicide across the prisoner age group of 17 to 25 years held within Tasmanian prisons
- Assist in the reduction of suicidal thinking, suicidal behaviour, and the injury and self harm that may result in the target group
- Enhanced resilience and resourcefulness, interconnectedness, respect, and the mental health of young prisoners and their families and friends and reduce the prevalence of risk factors for suicide for this prisoner age group
- Increase the level of support available in tangible ways to individual prisoners, families and possibly communities affected by suicide or suicidal

behaviours

- Extend and enhance community understanding of suicide and self harm within the Tasmanian prison system and its prevention
- To ensure the support and advocacy provided to the target group remains independent from the prison service but works within their requirements for an outside provider

Another document, entitled 'Inside Out Prison Support Project 2nd Report [30.04.2001] identified the following as primary aims and objectives:

- Suicide prevention of young prisoners
- Assist in the reduction of suicidal and self harm behaviour of young prisoners
- Enhance the resourcefulness of young prisoners and their families and friends and reduce the risk factors for suicide for young prisoners
- Increase the level of support available to individual prisoners, families and possibly communities affected by suicide
- Extend and enhance community understanding of suicide and self harm within the Tasmania prison system and its prevention
- To ensure the support and advocacy provided to the target group remains independent from the prison service

From discussions held with the Program Manager of 'Inside Out', the main aim of the programme was described as to:

reduce suicide and self harm by identifying high-risk inmates.

This is echoed by the Support Worker [the key direct service provider] who suggested that his role was:

the informal assessment of suicide potential...and ...my aim is the welfare and looking after of inmates.

Both suicide prevention and a reduction in recidivism were also mentioned as aims of the programme in internal memos from Corrective Services division, and in the terms of reference of this evaluation.

However, there is no single document that describes the aims and objectives of the 'Inside Out' programme. The total list of aims was drawn from a number of documents. Even though there appear to be a number of common aims, they are expressed differently in some cases, and expanded on in others. This has not assisted in obtaining a clear understanding of the programme, or of linking aims to activities.

A reduction in recidivism is not a stated aim of the 'Inside Out' programme. In the documents cited, the programme's main aims appear to be suicide prevention, achieved primarily through personal prisoner support and family liaison. This indicates confusion or a lack of shared meaning (or possibly consensus) between both parties as to what the overall outcome of the programme was to be.

The manager of 'Inside Out' has stated that it is not their role to reduce re-offending, but to assist in the prevention of suicide and self-harm. Programme operation would appear to confirm this (see below). This is also reflected in the Attorney General's media statement launching the programme [25.10.2000], where he stated that: 'The program is part of the suicide prevention strategy that has been developed by the prison service.'

According to all parties, 'Inside Out' is intended to target prisoners between the ages of 18 and 25 years of age.

However, over time and given the scope of need within the prisoner population and the lack of services available, the programme has evolved to include prisoners from all age groups.

Methods of operation

The programme commenced with two workers (whose combined workload was equivalent to one full-time employee). One resigned 6 months into the operation, for reasons unknown and undisclosed to the evaluators. At this time, the remaining worker became full-time. A second worker was not employed until recently (when someone was employed, on a half-time basis, through corporate

sponsorship for a period of 6 months). Given that for most of the period under review, there was only the one Support Worker, this report will assume service provision by one worker only.

The [Inside Out] Support Worker circulates throughout the Risdon prison system during the week, visiting Maximum (and occasionally Medium) on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the Women's Prison on Wednesdays.

Inmates access the Support Worker through both formal and informal channels. In some instances inmates forward a formal written request. This is passed on to the Prisoner Support Unit (PSU) and then onto the Support Worker. At other times, inmates may see the Support Worker at the cross gates area in maximum security and in the 'yards' at medium and women's prisons, and make contact then.

There appears to be no real obstacles to accessing the Support Worker. When asked what had to be done to see him, one inmate replied:

Not much. You know he's going to be at the cross gates area. I know when he's available. Or you might ask one of the officers to call him. The officers have Mike's card. It's pretty easy to see him and there are no delays in seeing him.

The ease with which prisoners are able to access the Support Worker is evident by the number of requests received and this is further confirmed by comments received from some custodial and all PSU staff interviewed.

The Support Worker appears to employ an informal "peer based" approach to service provision. That is, in parallel to similar types of drug and alcohol service provision, the worker is not identified with the institution, but with the target group, while obviously not being a member of this group.

He enjoys mostly unfettered access to inmates, more so in medium and women's than in maximum, where he is not allowed access to the prison yards or industry areas. He sometimes sits down and eats with inmates or has a chat and a smoke and cup of tea. The Support Worker makes himself readily available to inmates, in a style that is conducive to inmates wishing to communicate with him.

He has a chat and coffee. He's visible and approachable and friendly... Mike is REAL no bullshit.

The Support Worker thus attempts to build relationships with prisoners strategically through a mostly informal approach to service delivery². It is important for him to befriend inmates and this is not easily achieved.

However, his style of work and interaction does not sit well with some custodial staff. This is recognised by the prisoners.

Mike can't jump in to do too much or he'll stand out and he'll be seen to be on the prisoner's side. [prison inmate]

Expressed another way:

If you side with the prisoner your offside with the prison hierarchy. [prison inmate]

Comments such as the above were common among both inmates and prison personnel.

Service provision

The following is based on an analysis of interviews conducted with inmates and describes those services conducted for inmates as described by them.

[Inmate support: non-material](#)

This includes an informal 'counselling' role - someone to talk to:

An inmate suggested I see Mike. I was pretty down you know. I was able to off load to Mike. It's hard to express your feelings in here. Mike was supportive and caring and understanding. He'll do anything to fix things and he'll go out of his way.

The above exemplifies what another inmate referred to as "dumping"; the act of expressing frustration, concern or some other personal or emotional issue to an outsider – an outlet.

If Mike wasn't here and you were down you might take it out on another inmate. Someone's kid might be sick. Before he may have attacked someone because of grief and worry... whereas Mike will

² It is noted that the CCC has a conscious policy of strategic intervention of this nature. In other words, it is policy and part of the theoretical framework of the CCC to utilise informal approaches as a key method of engagement with prisoners.

reassure. Mike will get it out of them. An inmate may think things are hopeless but Mike will give a ray of light. An inmate wouldn't be able to unload to prison staff.

As alluded to above, Mike is also a popular alternative to other more prison based methods of counselling.

I've been to the psychs here and Mike is 100% better... I was grieving for my daughter (separation from her) and I was very upset, I was bawling you know? I balled for the first 6 months I was here. Well I went to the psych nurse and the next thing I know they put me in the tank. You know they strip you naked, give you a horsehair blanket and you have to sleep on this shitty bed. For a lot of guys the tank makes them worse.

From another:

There's no one else to talk to. The psychs just want to give you drugs and turn you psycho. If you mention depression they think it's suicide and chuck you in the tank and stuff you full of drugs.

A member of PSU mentioned that:

A lot of guys are conscious of what happens if you go to see the psychologist (the tank). They have a lot of respect for Mike. The benefits of unloading should not be underestimated.

Perhaps to sum the situation up generally, prisoners were wary of the prison system in toto:

Don't want special treatment from screws. Screws interrogate. You don't talk to screws about anything, it's not healthy.

From the above it appears that for some the Support Worker acts as a 'confidante' and for others as a 'safety valve' in times of personal crisis. He is someone who is not part of the prison hierarchy – he is an outsider – and he provides inmates with an 'informal' mechanism for the resolution and/or expression of personal issues. Many inmates will not approach custodial staff or prison services, thus for many inmates the Inside Out Support Worker is one of the only alternatives. This highlights the need for a service that is external to the prison as such

– even though this creates ambiguity with regards to prison operations and accountability.

[Inmate Support: material](#)

This aspect of service provision can take many forms including arranging storage of inmate's property, arranging appointments, and shopping for anything from shoes to clothes to televisions. However, this type of service provision has been severely curtailed in recent times, according to the Support Worker. Apparently it was perceived by management as potentially compromising the security of the prison.

Little things that on the 'outside' are taken for granted loom very large for those on the 'inside'.

If you don't have contact with the outside world there are very few people you can trust to get things done.

Mike's a friend to a lot of people in here. We haven't got people we can depend on for radios and TV's. He's the only one we can go to.

Not all inmates or custodial staff agree with the idea of approaching Mike for non-essential or non-important reasons:

Some inmates try to take advantage of Mike. They just use him to get things for him. [prison inmate]

Or less subtly;

When they need things they need to go through proper channels. He's trying to curry favour with the crims... he's just another vessel to get stuff. He's too much on their side. [prison officer]

However for others, these services, especially storage of personal items was viewed positively:

He's organised storage for me. This is a great help because it's all I have. I don't have to start over again if its there waiting for me. If I haven't got anything when I get out I have to jump through a window. [prison inmate]

Family Liaison & Support:

The programme also provides support for families of inmates including parents, partners and numerous relations. A number of comments relating to establishing contact with families, telephone calls to family members and doing other 'unexpected' things emerged from those interviewed.

Yes, he contacted my Dad for me. I was worried for my father so Mike volunteered to see my father, sister and step mum. My little niece combed his beard! He's very approachable and he's been to see them twice. He also bought the presents for my daughter's birthday in March. He also put out a birthday wish for me to her on TTT. Mike got it done. Little things like that make a hell of a lot of difference. Mike is like a friend.

From a female inmate:

He has a chat with my husband every week. He brings me messages from him... He makes me smile every day. My husband is a bit shy about personal things but with Mike he opens up... He gave me photos of my husband, off his own bat. I was surprised and very pleased.

These descriptions suggest that the Support Worker acts as a conduit between families and inmates, and from their perspective reduces/alleviates possible anxieties that either party may have as well as maintaining 'meaningful' contact between each party. Imprisonment creates enormous pressures on family, friends and prisoners, and this is reflected in instances of suicide and self harm. By providing family support, Inside Out thereby helps to alleviate some the stressors associated with incarceration.

Advocacy:

Mike has appeared for inmates around disciplinary issues as well as represented inmates when they have felt victimised by warders or have felt discriminated against or been fearful of the yard.

Mike's been to me about four times about specific inmate issues.

He came in an advocacy role to deal with disciplinary issues. The inmates felt that they had been victimised by custodial officers. [prison officer]

In another example, he provided an inmate with regulations regarding the rights of worship within the prison. For some there was the issue of possessions:

I was out of touch for weeks. Everything I owned was sold off. We need someone to act as an intermediary. Power of attorney and circumstances like that.

Post Release support:

From documentation and interviews with programme staff it appears that the service provided by the Support Worker includes 'voluntary' work with inmates post release and following up inmates at the request of community corrections. At other times this has meant the provision of accommodation and contact with other services (accommodation, work, DSS etc).

Referrals:

Inmates with specific issues are referred by the Support Worker either to PSU staff or the prison chaplain or hospital staff³.

Positive Aspects of Service

Building of Relationships

It is not easy to interact freely with an inmate population or to gain their trust, let alone act effectively in a support role. It would appear from the numbers of inmates who access the Support Worker, and from the testimony of inmates and most prison staff, that the Support Worker is well liked and popular with inmates for all types of issues ranging from the personal/emotional to the material.

The Support Worker regularly receives unsolicited mail from prisoners, and former prisoners, thanking him for his assistance. Many of the former prisoners make reference to how they are 'staying out of gaol' and have now established themselves in some kind of work or trade. It is notable, as well, that when the position appeared to be in danger, a petition was circulated by and among

prisoners, and 160 inmates signed the document. Letters of thanks and petitions in support both indicate strong support for the worker.

It is important to point out that it is the explicit philosophy, theoretical framework and program orientation of the Inside Out programme as a whole to focus on relationship-building with prisoners.

It is clear that the Support Worker operates from the basis of building up rapport and trust with inmates. He achieves this by engaging inmates, not simply doing things for them, but talking with them and being there for them. He is there for them and the prisoners know it. There are a number of reasons why this Support Worker in particular is so popular with inmates and so successful in building solid relationships with them.

Personal qualities:

The Support Worker is non-threatening and a good listener. He also appears to go out of his way and to go above and beyond the call of duty. All would attest to this fact. This is exemplified by the comment 'the bloke has a big heart'.

Or from another inmate;

You have to understand that the majority of inmates are uneducated, uncouth and full of hate and anger. To deal with these takes a special person, someone with genuine concern.

From a custodial manager:

Mike's an asset to us. He's a genuine guy and non-confrontational.

It is these personal qualities that go toward explaining the Support Worker's popularity with not only inmates but also prison personnel generally.

Trust:

This quality perhaps accounts for most of the Support Worker's success with inmates and was mentioned by almost all of those interviewed. He is a man that can be trusted with confidences, "you know its not going to go elsewhere." It is one of his best assets in achieving acceptance by inmates. Image and demeanour may

³ According to the Program Manager of Inside Out, staff are trained in needs assessment, including for example Beck's depression inventory, so that appropriate referrals can be made.

be one thing but trust is very different. In the words of the inmates:

It takes a long time to get people's trust and Mike has that trust.

Another example:

He's someone who you can talk to who you can trust and won't blab.

He has a good rep. For a first timer you always ask yourself who you can talk to who you can trust... if they tell Mike it stays with Mike.

Or more succinctly:

Mike's got trust. He's a wicked bloke.

Trust is a rare and valuable commodity if inmate experiences are anything to go by and most custodial staff do not have it (trust of inmates). Certainly it would be difficult for an inmate to entrust a confidence with a staff member without it becoming formal (written down and reported on) or blown out of proportion (e.g. the tank). The Support Worker is an island of trust in an ocean of distrust.

Reliability

Inmates know that if they do make a request to the Support Worker it will be done, that he will carry through on what he says. This implies that formal channels are less reliable from an inmate perspective. Inmates have a natural hostility to wardens; they don't trust them and the formal request process is perceived as a source of power for prison wardens (the power to deny, make it difficult or to 'forget' or lose a request). Thus, the Support Worker provides a more viable and reliable alternative for inmates than do formal channels.

Image and acceptance

The Support Worker's image is an attractor to inmates, especially for young people. His image gets him in the door and gives him an element of 'cred'.

God Squad are accepted. Their colours are accepted in any bike club in Australia and they are straight shooters. A lot of God Squad are fringe dwellers and they are accepted everywhere. That's his big in.

Bikes are an attractor for young people and once you meet him... lonely kids with hard lives – they warm to him. They are attracted by the image first and after they meet him they are impressed with the man.

His image as a “fringe dweller” is attractive to young inmates and has given him an ‘in’. The qualities of trust and reliability are traits that are harder to achieve. The Support Worker appears to have achieved acceptance through developing relationships with inmates; relationships built on these two qualities. From an inmate perspective he could be best described as a Good Samaritan in black leather.

Benefits of service

Alternative Source of Relief in Times of Stress

If we accept inmate comments at face value then it is clear that the programme has impacted on them positively. First, the Worker acts as a support for those who may be experiencing difficulty of one kind or another. He is a safety valve for inmates in times of personal crisis and as mentioned above, the benefits of unloading should not be underestimated no matter how intangible the results may be.

Another indicator of the perceived value of the service is the number of inmates that request to see him. Even if we take account of time wasters (e.g., prisoners who use the Support Worker simply to get out of the yard for a while), his popularity with and impact on inmates cannot be denied. It is doubtful that any prison-sponsored program would have the level of acceptance that this Support Worker enjoys with the inmate population.

A lot of inmates won't talk to anyone, but they will Mike, so that's a plus. [prison official]

From the point of view of suicide prevention and related matters, the service provided appears to play an essential ‘cooling out’ role vis-à-vis life stressors⁴. This is illustrated in the quotes below.

If it wasn't for Mike I think I would have necked myself. [prisoner].

I have self-harmed myself (shows scars from wrist slashing attempt). Haven't self harmed since Mike. He has helped me through the tough times. [prisoner].

While difficult to quantify how many suicides or instances of self-harm were prevented by this programme, it is apparent from comments such as these that the presence of the Support Worker was integral to the emotional well-being, and safety, of some prisoners.

[Alternative Source of Advocacy on Prison Issues](#)

There are relatively few persons within the prison who are in a position to advocate on behalf of individual prisoners. This is a valuable service, both from the point of view of the prison population in general, and in relation to specific individuals.

Advocacy in this context refers to specific complaints (against prison personnel) or meeting the needs of prisoners (such as family matters) that require some sort of official response.

Advocacy, also, significantly, refers to instances where vulnerable prisoners may need someone to talk with about victimisation at the hands of other prisoners or anxieties related to prison culture.

The key role here is that of 'go between' amongst a range of different players and interests in the prison setting.

[Liaison between Inside and Outside](#)

An important aspect of the service is that it provides a conduit between family members and inmates. The evidence suggests that this is especially popular with inmates and their families.

Given that prisoners have families, and that families suffer and worry while their kin are in prison, it is vital that non-threatening contact be maintained between parties. Communication is one of the tasks the service provides.

Prison can make you paranoid. Especially about family. Mike helps reduce the paranoia. Once you get to see him it dispels any uncertainty you may have had. [prisoner].

⁴ The programme was introduced as a direct result of 5 deaths in a short period of time at Risdon Prison. Since the programme's commencement, there has been one death in custody (outside the target age group, approximately 35 years of age).

Another important function of the service is to foster relationship building. This demands special qualities, and commitment to people inside and outside of the institution.

According to family members on the outside, the Support Worker undertakes a number of activities that are of great benefit to them. These include:

- Arranging transport for relatives of inmates to visit the prison
- Arranging accommodation for families when they visit their relations
- Carrying out various errands such as picking up clothing for prisoners
- Conveying personal information between family members
- Talking with family members about the prison system and the prison experience

Typical comments from family members made reference to the importance of the Support Worker in relieving anxieties about the prison and the welfare of their family member.

Mike was very good. This was all a new experience for us. We didn't know anything about prison. He explained it to us and we were better for knowing it. He is very useful especially for those people not used to it [prison]. It comes as such a shock. [family member].

One family member made reference to the riots at Christmas time.

It was horrendous for us. I rang Mike hysterical. It had been advertised on TV and in the paper, and we didn't have a clue what was going on. Mike provided us with the information we needed. That is, [the prisoner] was OK and not part of it [the riot]. [family member]

Unique role

The Support Worker appears to provide a valuable and unique role within the prison. In part this stems from his personality and ability to relate to inmates. His image as a fringe dweller provides him with a basis for interaction, but it is his ability to engender the trust of inmates that sets him apart from others. There is no doubt that this individual is highly valued by all inmates and a number of

custodial staff, including other support workers.

I don't think we could do without him. He's well received by the guys...it's his appearance, the blokishness and his ability to get on with inmates.

I'd hate to think of what would happen if we lost him. PSU couldn't fill the gap for example the family stuff. No one here does it. [prison official]

Or from an inmate's perspective:

Prison programs are inconsistent. Inside Out is consistent and they battle away.

This uniqueness is enhanced because of a lack of support workers in the prison and also because some aspects of the programme (e.g. family liaison) are outside the brief of PSU workers. Not only do they not have the training, experience and networks to undertake the role, but also it is a role that is outside the current operational framework of the prison, whose main role is custodial.

Negative Aspects of Service

Method of implementation

It is clear from the literature reviewed and interviews conducted that the method of implementation was problematic. The hastiness in which the programme was implemented, the lack of consultation with Prison authorities, negative funding implications for prison services, and the absence of an adequate program description and reporting regime, created initial opposition to the programme and reservations about its continuance.

The method in which 'Inside Out' was developed and introduced is a lesson in how not to approach programme implementation.

Programme description and expectations

A lack of an adequate programme description has left many in the dark as regards what the program is about (its aims and objectives) and left many confused as to what is expected of the programme.

From the outset, the programme has been poorly documented and

the framework for delivery has been unclear. [prison official]

From a custodial officer:

Inside Out seems secretive. Doesn't appear to be a lot of value because we don't know what it's here for.

This perceived lack of clarity has meant that, among prison staff, there has not been a clear understanding of what the programme was to provide and how it was to be operationalised. This may go part way to explaining why most of those interviewed could not provide a concise, clear statement as to what the programme was.

Reporting mechanisms

This is a problem area and is recognised by all concerned as one of the biggest sources of contention between Prison management and 'Inside Out'. It is mentioned frequently throughout the documentation, and in interviews.

There's a difficulty in measuring tangible results. We don't know what objectives are in place and we also need to know what's going on at a general level. [prison official]

There appears to be very little effective reporting undertaken on the programme, and according to prison management this has only been done when requested by management.

Certainly, the reports sighted by the Evaluators are less than adequate for an effective appraisal of the program.

Is there any benefit from what he's doing? There appears to be a benefit, but what that benefit is, is hard to answer because there's no way of assessing the end result. [prison official]

According to the Program Manager of the CCC, in response to the Interim Evaluation report:

Accountability is through our organisation and through the reporting mechanisms of written reports back to the Attorney General's office.
and

All reporting has been done as agreed to the Attorney General in addition whenever requested we have provided reports to prison officials.

However, the Secretary of Justice and Industrial Relations pointed out in correspondence dated 7 December 2001:

Although the program objectives and philosophy are without question strongly supported, in the absence of detailed, relevant and formal reporting or an objective evaluation it is difficult to assess in detail the value of an ongoing partnership funded solely by this Service.

From the evidence available, it can only be concluded that:

- (1) effective reporting mechanisms have not been put in place;
- (2) there is some dispute as to whether the reporting is meant to be to the Attorney General's Office (i.e., to the Minister) or to the Department of Justice & Industrial Relations (i.e., to the corporate office) or to Corrective Services (i.e., prison managers);
- (3) this has prevented the setting of appropriate performance benchmarks for any adequate assessment of the program.

This has contributed significantly to tensions between the program and prison management and remains a contentious issue.

Data collection

According to CCC records, the Support Worker had the following pattern of work in the years 2000 to 2003, as presented in Tables 1a, 1b and 2.

Table 1a:
Prison Visits and Prisoner Contacts Relating to Service
2000-2002

	2000-2001	2001 - 2002	2000 – 2001	2001 - 2002
<u>Prison</u>	<u>Prison Visits</u>	<u>Prison Visits</u>	<u>Prisoner Contacts</u>	<u>Prisoner Contacts</u>
Risdon	151	210	1946	550
Womens	63	41	200	128
Hayes	34	35	27	130
Medium	22	22	45	10
Ashley	84	0	1250	0
Hobart Remand	74	54	140	165
Launceston	41	0	47	0
<u>Total</u>	<u>469</u>	<u>362</u>	<u>3655</u>	<u>1003</u>

Table 1b:
Prison visits and Prisoner Contacts Relating to Service
2002-2003

	Nov 2002 – April 2003	
<u>Prison</u>	<u>Prison Visits</u>	<u>Prisoner contacts</u>
Risdon	69	269
Women's	25	100
Hayes	13	35
Medium	13	71
Hobart Remand	27	95
Hospital	5	13
<u>Total</u>	152	583

Table 2:
Age and Gender of Prisoners Using Service
2000-2002

Age	2000-2001				2001 – 2002			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
25+ years	105	41	13	16	103	54	11	44
22-24 years	40	16	16	20	31	16	3	12
20-21years	56	22	46	58	35	18	8	32
18-19 years	38	15	4	6	27	12	3	12
16-17 years	16	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	255	100	79	100	188	100	25	100

There was considerable difficulty in deciphering prisoner data in the annual reports. For example, the above information indicates an extraordinary level of contact with inmates. However, other data showed that there were 255 contacts

with male prisoners, and 79 with female in the period 2000-2001 – but the nature of these specific contacts was unclear. Another set of data in the same report, stated that in the first 6 month period the total number of prisoner contacts was 745 [from November 2000 to April 2001], but by the end of September 2001, the total number of prisoner contacts has risen to 3655, an increase of 2800 over a five month period.

In the next year's report [the 12 months from October 2001 to September 2002], the total number of prisoner contacts was recorded as 1003, a substantial decline overall from the previous reported contacts.

This finding suggests two things. First, that quantification of service use is poor. There is no consistency in how contacts are reported, or what 'contact' actually means from the point of view of the figures provided. There is no uniform reporting mechanism. It is hard to interpret what the figures provided are meant to be describing. If they are taken at face value, they raise questions about how so many prisoners [e.g., 3,655 in 2000-2001] could be serviced by one person, who bases their work on gaining the confidence and trust of each inmate. Given the positive feedback on the performance of the Support Worker, it is clear that the figures are misleading from the point of view of actual service operations.

Secondly, it is questionable whether a quantitative measure of this kind is anything other than an 'activity' measure at any rate. In other words, these sorts of figures give no real insight into the quality and outcome of the service being provided. They simply provide a rough indication of service provider-prisoner contact. No conclusions can be drawn, either way, about the effectiveness or efficiency of the service from these figures.

Accountability

There appears to be two sources of conflict as regards accountability. One is the accountability from a reporting perspective, and the other is operating within Prison protocols. Criticisms of the service were, at least in part, linked to specific operational arms of the prison – security was perceived to be linked to rule-following and visible adherence to hierarchical chains of command. Conversely, prisoner support was perceived to warrant a looser form of interaction within a service-provision context.

It was felt by a number of custodial staff that the Support Worker operated outside accepted policies and procedures and that he should toe the line.

There are good reasons for procedures. I don't think he trusts us. Problems? Make them accountable, that's my biggest gripe.

Or from another perspective:

Custodial staff see Mike as being completely independent and they don't like this. He's treading a tightrope. You can't fight custodial - they always win. They are controlling power freaks and are obstacles to programs. You have to get on with them or get zero done. Custodial officers are undermining. [prison official]

It appears that any resentment towards the Support Worker from custodial staff arises from the perception that he somehow works outside the system. The fact that he appears to have "free reign" and reports to no one compounds resentment and distrust. It was felt by custodial staff in particular that he should be reporting regularly and be answerable to someone within prisoner services.

Additional problems with accountability from a management perspective revolve around fiscal accountability and appear linked to the absence of effective reporting mechanisms.

To ensure maximum benefits for the parties involved, any program must include close monitoring of outcomes and be subject to a high level of accountability for funds spent. This has yet to be fully developed in the Inside Out program operating within Risdon, in part because of the internal difficulties faced by the Prison Service in establishing accountability mechanisms. [internal prison memorandum, 30.08.2001]

From a service agency perspective, the issue of accountability means something different. Specifically, it was suggested that an agency such as Inside Out, that relied upon relationship-building with prisoners of the type described in this report, ought to be accountable, not directly to the prison service, but to an 'external' body such as the Attorney General's Department or corporate affairs within the Department of Justice and Industrial Relations.

Target group

It was suggested that the Support Worker operates too much with older inmates, to the exclusion of the ostensible target group for the programme.

It was to target under 25 year olds. Over 50% of his clients are over 25. You would expect some to be over 25, but not 50%. There is a list of inmates at PSU and he hasn't accessed this list. He hasn't got the support for the workload. The programme was initially for two people. They never replaced that person. There's no admin support to get lists, stats etc. He's drowning under the workload. He needs to redirect his focus on the target population. [prison official]

There exists a perception that the Support Worker sees too many older longer-term inmates, time wasters and users, and that he should focus more fully on the target group (18-25) and use the 'induction list' (list of new inmates) to identify those within this age group. His interaction with older, longer-term inmates is perceived by some prison staff as fraternising.

Lack of supervision and support

The Support Worker appears to perform the service in a less than ideal work environment. He has no office or administrative support to speak of, and currently shares space with PSU staff.

There was a lack of training and support for the worker. CCC was haphazard in the instigation of training and support. There was no support in the early stages. We raised the issue with a woman (CCC Program Director) and they admitted they do not provide enough support and training. [prison official]

The program manager of Inside Out seems to concur with this appraisal:

The organisation (CCC) could have provided more support. A lot of communication is by phone. The prison chaplain is also there and Mike goes to Melbourne a couple of times a year. We remotely provide support for Mike and this is mainly emotional and moral support.

The fact that the program director and the auspicing body are located in Melbourne has not aided matters. Thus, supervision, training and support are always conducted “from a distance” or “remotely” as stated by the program manager. In the main the Support Worker has been left to his own devices, with very little, if any, administrative, supervisory and personal support. Any support appears to be much less than what is required for the job.

Further, two years elapsed before another worker was employed to replace the ‘original’ support worker. Up until recently the Support Worker has been operating as a ‘one man band’. It is also clear that his workload is significant – more than one person can realistically tackle. Of course this is a perennial problem with most prisoner support services; the demand usually far outstrips the resources available for assistance.

Value for money & alternative services

This is another major issue for prison managers, who are generally of the view that they would receive better value for money elsewhere. A number of alternative agencies were put forward as examples of who could provide a similar or better service for less money.

I don't see any value in it at all. Anglicare will provide the same service for \$25,000, with a personal support worker. I've had the position description from them. [prison official]

Moreover, because of problems with reporting, management does not have a clear idea of the service, its funding and whether it is worthwhile.

The money spent on this program is 25% of annual allocation by non-prison service staff. We're not convinced we're getting value for money... I do mind paying for it. I can get a better product for the money than this programme. [prison official]

The point of these criticisms is not that the Support Worker is not working hard enough or that prisoners are not receiving benefit from the Inside Out programme. Rather, it is that given the proportion of money within the prison budget allocated for such services, then comparisons between services on the basis of ‘track record’ and a sound delivery and evaluation framework, are legitimate concerns.

The consequences of funding the program is a reduction in alternate services within Risdon Prison and elsewhere. Work is currently being undertaken to scope a peer education programme within Risdon Prison, which would enable well trained, long term inmates to provide support and suicide risk assessment to other inmates. Additionally we have received an offer of partial funding of a prison chaplain via the Anglican Church. The position would also provide befriending support to inmates, and the opportunity to support families and at risk young inmates within the prison. (internal memorandum, [2.11.01], Prison Services).

It has already been established that one of the main attractions of the 'Inside Out' programme is the fact that it is an outside agency, one that is not linked to prison services or restricted by prison protocols or procedures. Conversely, aspects of the peer education programme, it could be argued, are already being undertaken by 'Inside Out', in the sense that younger inmates are seeing their older counterparts taking advantage of the service and doing so in good faith.

The chaplain position referred to in relation to Anglicare is a personal support worker. However, this has not, to date, been fully developed at a practical level as a prisoner based programme. For obvious reasons, therefore, it likewise does not have the history of inmate interaction that 'Inside Out' has, and thus comparisons of actual service provision are impossible without concrete evidence. Furthermore, without specific details regarding how much time and activity would be devoted to this work by Anglicare, it is difficult to do other than speculate about its potential impact. What is known, however, is that the present Support Worker has an enormous workload and he presently devotes considerable time and energy to prisoners and their families, well beyond the normal requirements of such a position. Whether or not Anglicare would be able to match this record is debatable.

Life line was also mentioned by one prison official as a possible alternative to 'Inside Out'. Lifeline is primarily a telephone-based method of suicide prevention. Access to a telephone is certainly a big issue here. But, also, given the prison setting, it is essential that such intervention involve direct face-to-face interaction with people who, literally, know what it is like to be within that environment. Moreover, there is the issue of prisoner trust and acceptance that lies at the heart of much service provision in a custodial context.

Conclusion

Service provider or the programme

As mentioned there was very little criticism of Mike Tamplin the Support Worker, from either the point of view of his personality or the way in which he conducts himself. Most admit that he does a good job and that the inmates like him. As a senior manager commented:

I don't have concerns with Mike, my major concern is the lack of structure, the lack of reporting and the target group.

I don't know what to keep - 'Inside Out' or Mike. The individual or the programme?

One inmate put the issues in a nutshell:

The MAN makes the program

It seems clear that Mike is a unique person with unique skills. The question then becomes, is it the man or is it the programme that is worthwhile? Certainly inmate perceptions of the worker are important. For them at least, the qualities of the person are perceived as being more important than the programme itself.

However, it is also clear that an external programme of this nature, informed by a philosophy of constructive engagement with prisoners, gives space within which a Mike Tamplin can exercise their skills to the fullest extent. Programmes such as this attract individuals who have these sorts of talents and qualities. Moreover, one wonders whether the Support Worker could achieve the same results without an outside organisation of this kind.

Obstacles to delivery

There are a number of obstacles to service delivery and these appear, to a large extent, to stem from the perceptions each party [custodial staff versus prisoners] has of the other:

A major obstacle is the fact that prison staff think he's too big for his boots and he doesn't go through proper channels. [prison inmate]

Problems? Yes, red tape and management. They're happy to see you miserable. You have to be punished. They resent him because he's genuine. An outside agency presents problems inside. [prison inmate]

The above provides an insight into the impact that attitude can have on judgements about the usefulness or otherwise of a particular programme. Certainly cultural attitudes play a part in one's perceptions of crime and punishment and as a consequence an individual's view on what inmates should and should not be entitled to in relation to rights and privileges.

It's different in maximum. There it's about power struggles and you can't train them (custodial officers). [prison official]

And:

It depends on how you look at it. Either people are here as a punishment or for punishment. [prison official]

Thus the attitudes of some custodial staff are perceived as an obstacle to efficient service delivery. This occurs where support staff or welfare workers are viewed as "do gooders" that somehow undermine the prison structure, which in turn is perceived to be first and foremost about containment and control. Outside of maximum, it was observed, however, that there was scope for more enlightened and progressive approaches to prison programmes.

The attitude and culture are much more welcoming and open in Medium and women's prison.

Outsider Status and Inside Effectiveness

A common theme of the discussions surrounding the Inside Out programme was the nature of its status as an 'outside' agency provider, and how this related to the success or otherwise of the service. This was reflected in both prisoner comments, and in prison services documentation.

The Prisoner's View

Working outside the prison structure allows him to do a better job. If Mike wasn't here there would be no one to assist inmates. Mike gets trust from being an outsider. There is nothing left to fill the gap if he goes. [prisoner].

Inmates need someone who is on the outside. Mike has no alternative agendas like others, he's open and honest and he has gaol cred. [prisoner].

A Manager's View

"For example, one particular inmate...was a severe self-mutilator and suffered from low self esteem and a tendency to continually 'mix it' with other inmates, resulting in sanctions imposed and lengthy transfers to the Ridson Prison Hospital.

Mike applied himself diligently [to the prisoner] and slowly won her confidence. We are amazed at the transformation from a troublesome young woman to one talking constantly about a future and looking forward to release from prison, as well as now having a good rapport with staff.

As this programme is totally independent of the prison system the inmates are less suspicious of Mike Tamplin therefore discussing confidential issues that they would not discuss with staff so staff wholly support the continuance of this programme and look forward to the valued support of Mike Tamplin in the future". [internal document, women's prison, 20.11.01].

As discussed elsewhere in this report, however, the 'outsider' status, while beneficial from a service provision perspective, appeared in some instances to create problems and tensions from a prison operational perspective. As observed in other prison programme evaluations and inquiries, this reflects a perennial issue within any custodial situation. Namely, differences between 'custodial' and 'welfare' priorities, and the relative emphasis that is placed on security versus services⁵.

Concluding Remarks

The essential findings of this evaluation are:

- (1) that the prisoners valued the 'Inside Out' programme and thought it provides a useful non-institutional avenue for inmates to reduce/relieve the stresses associated with incarceration by providing someone to talk to and communicate with, and that it enabled them to better liaise with their families and loved ones. It also offered an avenue to release pent-up emotions;
- (2) that the prison authorities has mixed attitudes towards the programme, due to (a) problems in how it was introduced and implemented; (b) how funding was established and subsequently allocated for the programme; (c) differing perceptions among prison officials regarding the status and role of a 'lay' worker within a prison environment; and (d) the perceived lack of reporting and accountability of a prison-funded programme;
- (3) that, from a service provision point of view, while the Support Worker was highly committed and motivated to assist prisoners and their families, there were serious shortcomings in the support available to the worker – both from prison authorities (such as provision of adequate space, or suitable report-back mechanisms) and from the funded organisation (in the form of locally-based support networks and constructive supervision).
- (4) that the support worker himself was inevitably placed in an ambiguous position due to the nature of the work. On the one hand, to do the job requires certain personal qualities and task-related attributes; on the other hand, these very qualities and attributes may be seen as inappropriate in secure punishment facilities. This is a Catch-22 situation that can only be resolved by careful consideration of the philosophical rationale guiding prison management and prison programming.

In the end, no one service will be able to adequately address recidivism, suicidal behaviour and self-harm, prisoner and family support, post-release and so on, on its own. As demonstrated in this report, it is possible, however, to attribute positive benefits that may flow from service provision, that may incorporate a wide range of intended and unintended consequences. To put it differently, although the Inside Out programme did not explicitly orient toward reduction of recidivism as

a primary goal, for example, such a service will more than likely have an indirect impact on such by virtue of the fact that it assists people to maintain links or re-establish themselves in the community.

However, the likelihood of re-offending is not simply a matter of specific service provision in the sense of one particular service provider. The overall prison environment has a major bearing on the future prospects of inmates, whether that be in respect to recidivism or suicidal behaviour. How custodial staff and professional staff relate to each other, how outside agencies work with correctional officials, and the quantity and quality of resources within the prison environment will all have a major impact on the prison experience. So too, will the social environment to which the prisoner returns upon their release from custody.

In summary, it was found that while the 'Inside Out' programme provides an invaluable service to prisoners, there are aspects of the programme, particularly relating to reporting mechanisms and procedures, which require attention. Overall, however, the programme represents excellent value for money, given the time, energy and resources put into direct service provision by the key Support Worker, and the positive response from prisoners and their families to the service.

Recommendations

- That there be regular consultation between prison authorities and the Attorney General's office, and that no programme be approved or implemented without full analysis of costs and benefits, and assessment of the programme background and history.
- That for any prison programme, internal or externally run, that there be a comprehensive and detailed description of the program including aims, strategies and performance measures, and that this be circulated to all relevant parties (including inmates and prison staff).
- That for each prison support worker there be a Position Description, which provides an outline of key tasks and responsibilities, including reporting obligations and the responsibilities of prison authorities to each worker.
- That there should be clarification of specified target groups for particular programmes, and that performance indicators (e.g., specific tasks) and administrative protocols (e.g., information from prison authorities) be developed in relation to these target groups.

⁵ See New South Wales Ombudsman (1996) Report of the Inquiry into Juvenile Detention Centres, Office of the Ombudsman, Sydney; and M. Bower and M. Alessandrini (2000) Parenting and Contact from the Inside: A Good Beginnings Project, Hobart.

- That there be development of improved reporting mechanisms and procedures (for example, through the use of a reporting pro forma) that provide user-friendly mechanisms for reporting, and that there be structured opportunity for regular consultations between programme staff and prisoner support services.
- That tensions arising from diverse interpretations of prison programmes and prison priorities (e.g., security versus services) be addressed via pre-service and in-service training and education programmes that reflect 'best practice' contemporary penology.
- That issues of service provision as they relate to recidivism, suicidal behaviour and self-harm, prisoner and family support, post-release and so on, be evaluated in the context of an assessment of the 'whole of prison' environment and the constellation of services and programmes on offer. Such an evaluation could also consider diverse programmes' aims and goals, and the direct and indirect influences of each on any of the above concerns.

Appendices

Terms of reference

Description of the project

The project is for the University to undertake an evaluation of the 'Inside Out' program. The terms of reference for the evaluation are:

1. Appropriateness, Efficiency and Effectiveness
 - 1.1 Whether Inside Out has a relevant role in the Tasmanian prison system in reducing re-offending.
 - 1.2 Whether Inside Out has relevant roles to play other than in reducing re-offending.
 - 1.3 Whether Inside Out is an efficient means by which to achieve collaboration and progress both inside and outside the Tasmanian prison system in line with established core values and principles.
2. Processes
 - 2.1 Whether alternative mechanisms could have been adopted to better deliver on the aims of reducing stresses on prisoners and detainees as well as reducing recidivism when the program was initially being scoped.
 - 2.2 Whether it would be desirable to change any current practices to ensure alignment and consistency of process in order to better distinguish Inside Out from other prisoner support programs.
3. Management and Administration
 - 3.1 Whether allocation resources, including budgets, lines of accountability and authorisation are appropriate and effective and if not, what changes should be made to increase performance and better measure progress into the future.
 - 3.2 Whether the current administrative structure is adequate.

In order to undertake the evaluation, the Department of Justice and Industrial Relations will make available to the University confidential prison documents, and the University will undertake a literature review, interview relevant parties [including for example, prison staff, current and former prisoners and their families, current and former staff of Inside Out program], and prepare an interim and final evaluation report.

Interview Schedules

Interview topics for Support Worker [Mike Tamplin]

Typical week: Day by day, including:

Description of job:

- Activities/roles
- Clients and issues
- Outcomes from activities (what is achieved)

Obstacles to delivery:

- Structural (physical environment and regimen - rules)
- Social/cultural (attitudes – prisoners and prison staff)

Suggestions for improvement:

- Program (ways in which current program delivery could be improved)
- Structural (ways in which current prison environment could be improved)
- Social/cultural (ways in which people currently do things could be improved)

Questions for inmates about Inside Out programme

Do you know or have you heard of Mike Tamplin?

Do you know what he does in the Prison? Yes, what?

(No – end interview).

Has he ever done anything for you personally?

(If no, do you know someone he has done something for? Yes, what?)

What did he do for you?

In what way did it help you?

Were you happy with what he did for you?

What do you have to do to see Mike?

Is it easy to get to see him?

If not why not?

Are there other things you think Mike could do for you or others in the prison?

Can you think of anything that would improve what Mike does?

Interview topics for Prison Managers & Officials

Description of the program

- History
- Implementation
- Issues arising from implementation

Service Delivery

- Description of the program
- Aims and objectives

- Activities (support worker role)
- Reporting
- Effectiveness

Criticisms

- Problems with Support Worker
- Problems with program

Improvements

- Program (ways in which program delivery could be improved)
- Structural (way in which prison processes could be improved)

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NOTES

