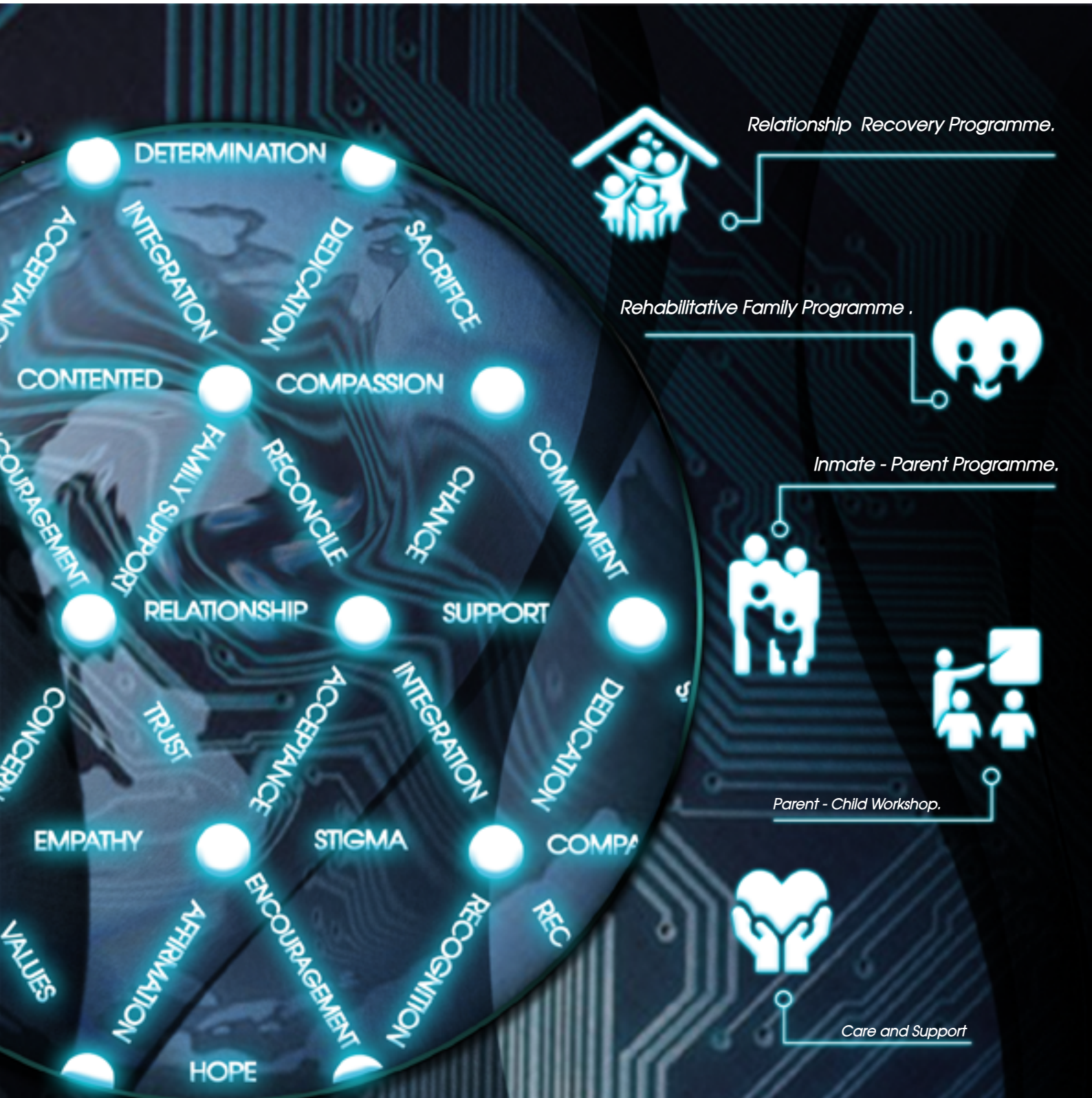


# APCCA

Newsletter of the Asian and Pacific Conference of Correctional Administrators



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editor's note

Greetings, fellow colleagues of Correctional Agencies.

The family is a cornerstone of society and a pillar of support for many. Numerous studies have pointed to strong family support as a key motivating factor for the inmates in their journey towards desistance. Inmates also often mention that they most look forward to receiving visits and correspondences from their family members. Rekindling and strengthening the relationships between our inmates and their families is thus integral to their emotional well-being and their reintegration back to society.

In this 48th edition of the Newsletter, we will read about the various programmes that APCCA members organise to help build, sustain, or mend family ties.

Importance of visits to inmate rehabilitation

Facilitating visits between inmates and their families is important to maintaining family relationships and crucial for their rehabilitation and reintegration.

In the Malaysian Prison Department, constant contact with their families through letters and visits helps inmates focus on their rehabilitation programmes such as external placements and community engagements. In New South Wales, Australia, technology is employed to make visitations more personal, impactful and accessible. Video-conferencing technology is also used by the Fiji Corrections Service to connect inmates and their families.

Strengthening Relationships through Family Programmes

Various correctional agencies have also put in place family programmes to improve relationships between parents and their children, and to better support inmates' children.

The "HERO" project in the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) imparts parenting skills to inmates. The Korea Correctional Service and Macao Correctional Services Bureau conduct the "Growing with you" parent-child workshop and "The Mother's voice" programme to help protect the relationships between inmates and their children from the effects of incarceration. Hong Kong Correctional Services' "Inmate-Parent" programme includes various family-focused initiatives such as inmate-parent groups and specialist talks for family members. The Philippines Jesuit Prison Service (PJPS) Scholarship Programme in the Philippines provides financial assistance for inmates' children to continue their education, and organises sessions to address their emotional challenges.

Critical Roles of Staff and Community Partners

Correctional staff and community partners are essential in the planning and implementation of effective family programmes to support inmates and their families.

In Mongolia, rehabilitation programmes for inmates are planned around the concept of family, and social workers meet the inmates' family members during visitations. Across prisons in Victoria, Australia, staff positions are dedicated to support prisoners to maintain and develop relationships with their children. Some examples of these positions include the Parenting Support Workers and the Family Engagement Workers. These staff work within various facilities to deliver a comprehensive suite of programs that includes the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program. As part of the Kimberley Offender Management Program in Western Australia, a group of eight Kimberley Aboriginal Elders support Corrective Services through providing advice on correctional practice, communication approaches and



strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal communities and service providers.

I hope APCCA members will enjoy reading these articles, and find them useful for your learning and practice. I thank members for your generous sharing in this edition so that others can learn and benefit from your good work. I look forward to your continued support in future editions of the APCCA newsletter.

Keep Well and Stay Safe.

SHIE Yong Lee  
Commissioner, Singapore Prison Service

# Helping Everyone Realize Opportunities (HERO) Project

## Correctional Services of Canada

In 2017, The Canadian Families and Corrections Network (CFCN) and The Movember Foundation collaborated to help incarcerated dads come back to their families and reintegrate successfully into the community.

The project, Dad HERO: **H**elping **E**veryone **R**ealize **O**pportunities, is designed to facilitate connections with families and children, to build resiliency for the journey of incarceration and reintegration, and to help decrease the risk of reoffending. The program has also been acknowledged as a Best Practice by Canada's Office of the Correctional Investigator.



For years, incarcerated men had been asking CFCN for help and resources concerning their parenting skills, how to talk to children about their incarceration, and how to co-parent from behind bars. This was why in 2015, CFCN applied for funding with The Movember Foundation. The first year of funding granted was to review social connectedness in prison and what effect a parenting program would have on the well-being and mental health of dads in prison. During this research period, the men in prison told CFCN they did not have positive male role models from which to learn who were dedicated and committed to their families, adding that they want to break the cycle but did not know how to move information into action. These points, coupled with research on the high rate of depression, anxiety, suicide, and life dissatisfaction in prison, convinced CFCN a group activity around parenting would be of value.

After researching available parenting projects and resources, CFCN realized that they needed a course that fit the needs of dads who were incarcerated in Canada's justice system and on September 1, 2017, Movember announced CFCN's Dad HERO Project as one of 13 projects in the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada to be part of their Social Innovators Challenge.

The passion and dedication of the project staff team have contributed to its success, which has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from the participants, their families, Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) staff, and the public. Louise Leonardi, the Executive Director for Canadian Families and Corrections Network says,

*"A lot of people don't think about men inside prisons as a hero. In fact, when we told the men what the name of the program was, some of them said, 'I don't really feel like a hero to my kids. But I want my children to look up to me, to think that I have value and worth, that I have information to give them, and can be a good parent that is aspiring to be a hero.'"*

In August 2018, the program launched at Correctional Service of Canada, into institutions in each of their 5 regions: Dorchester Penitentiary (New Brunswick), Archambault Institution (Quebec), Collins Bay Institution (Ontario), Saskatchewan Penitentiary (Saskatchewan), and Pacific Institution (British Columbia). Community Dad Groups in high-release cities near these federal institutions were set up for a continuum of care and in 2019, CFCN extended Dad HERO into the provincial correctional system as well.

One of the unique features of the project was that it worked to share the knowledge and funding, and build the community capacity of other organizations who worked together to assist dad's resilience and well-being in the justice system. CFCN involved Dad Central Ontario in the curriculum development, and asked the John Howard Society and Parkland Restorative Justice in different areas to assist with the facilitation in Canadian prisons and communities.

Dad HERO participants embark on an eight-week course which runs weekly within the institution. From the Parenting Course, participants move on to the Prison Dad Group. These dad groups are designed to provide new information which enables the members to continue to support one another as parents.

As Louise highlights, "this is a very positive thing inside a prison, as you can imagine. You have something to bond over that is not about your crime, and not about your criminogenic factors,

something positive to speak to other men about." These groups are found both within institutions and in our communities so that dads who have been in jail, federally or provincially, currently or in the past, have access to these groups. "The whole idea is to keep them connected to build resiliency. So, whether they're connecting with each other about parenting, or they're connecting with their families, that's what we want."

In the last two years, CFCN completed 23 eight-week Parenting Courses and nine continuous Dad Groups in medium and minimum-security environments all across Canada. Four continuous Dad Groups in Canadian communities were established as well.

Research has been conducted by The Propel Centre for Population Health Impact, in Waterloo Ontario, for The Movember Foundation. By August of 2019, it showed that dads in an isolating and stressful prison environment had a 27% increase in overall life satisfaction. It also pointed to an increase of self-awareness and reflection on life choices as a result of seeking support from other participants about their children and families.

Movember's evaluation of the program confirms that 'people who are satisfied with their relationships and social connections are more likely to experience good mental health and well-being in general, and the cultivation of healthy close relationships can increase individual resilience and act as a protective factor against suicide'.

Feedback from the men participating in the program showed



the tremendous progress and success of the project. There was a high retention rate, establishing that bonding over parenting is a valuable way to connect. In terms of social connectedness, 83% of the men recognized Dad HERO for helping them strengthen **existing** connections and 78% said it helped them develop **new** social connections (quite a feat in a fixed group of men in prison where trust is paramount).

Feedback from the program facilitators further confirmed and shined a light on the program, noting that as men shared their stories with similar realities, it made them feel closer and that the project helped them think like a dad and not just how to survive prison.

Moving forward with the program in years to come, Canadian Families and Corrections Network is thrilled to continue this work as they have just been awarded 3 more years of Movember funding to enhance the program and build their reach to include more correctional institutions, halfway houses, and provincial institutions across Canada. There is a possibility of taking this valuable program to Australia as well. The CFCN team, along with the many people involved in the project, continue to strive to improve the lives of incarcerated dads and their families, saying that:

*"Dad's don't have to be perfect to come into the course, it's to help them work towards being a hero... to look at the gifts and values they have within them and how to apply those as a good parent."*

## Digital Service Provide Prisoner with Access To Justice During The COVID-19 Pandemic

### Fiji Corrections Service

In Fiji, the government remains vigilant in its management of the pandemic to prevent and control spread as much as possible. To protect the prisoners, the Fiji Corrections Service has prevented visitors, including legal counsel, family and friends, from entering the prisons.

However, cutting off all contact with the outside world is not a sustainable or practical solution, and discontent with harsh measures have caused breakouts and riots in some countries. To address this challenge in Fiji, the Fiji Corrections Service (FCS) sought to establish a system through which inmates could use video conferencing facilities to have 'face-to-face' meetings with their lawyers and visitation time with their families.

The Fiji Access to Justice Project, funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), supported the FCS in setting up the remote conferencing facilities through the provision of laptops and data packages.

Prisoners have been able to meet their children, spouses, siblings and parents living in Fiji and overseas through the video conferencing facilities. For many of them, they have not been able to see their relatives in years, due to the travel distance required to come to the prison. Among the prisoners who benefitted from this remote visitation capability was a woman serving a life sentence, whose son is studying abroad. She had not seen her son in years, and could not withhold her tears of happiness when she saw his face on the monitor.

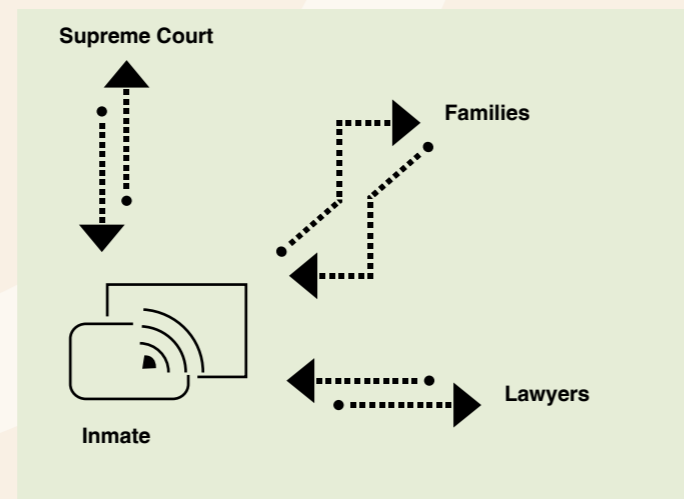
Commissioner of the FCS Commander Mr. Francis Kean said, "This is a historic moment for the Fiji Corrections Service. We are working hard to ensure that the minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners are upheld within our prisons. Ensuring that inmates are able to access legal counsel and continue their basic rights to visitation was important to us, particularly in the complex and uncertain situation presented by the global pandemic. With this technology, we have been able to protect the health and safety of the inmates and our officers, while upholding the basic rights of inmates. We are thankful for the generous support from the EU and the UNDP Access to Justice project, without which we would not have achieved this."

The video conferencing facilities were also linked to the existing Court system to allow for remote representation during the recent Supreme Court seating. Maximum and medium-security corrections centres in Naboro, Nasinu, Suva, Lautoka and Ba were connected to the Courts for the first time, which enabled inmates to attend trials from the facilities, reducing exposure of inmates, corrections officers, judges and court officials.

Acting Chief Justice, the Honourable Kamal Kumar said it was indeed a historic event.

**"Proceedings went quite well and it was great to see that FCS officers assisting the Court and the inmates during the course of the proceeding,"** Acting Chief Justice Kumar said. "We can continue to call all matters listed to fix hearing dates or give directions via Skype for Court of Appeal and Supreme Court matters. Our staff will work closely with FCS officers to ensure that matters dealt via skype are conducted without technical issues," he added.

Ambassador of the EU Delegation for the Pacific His Excellency Sujiro Seam said, "This pandemic has created extraordinary challenges for the justice sector and the corrections services. I am proud that we were able to support these remote video conferencing facilities for the FCS. This support, through the Fiji Access to Justice Project, is fully in line with the priority given to digital issues as part of the EU Agenda for the years to come."



## Inmate-Parent Programme and Rehabilitative Family Programme

### Hong Kong Correctional Services (HKCSD)

Research on the impact of incarceration suggests that the experience behind bars does not only create stress for those who are serving their sentences in prison but also takes a toll on their family. On top of the time consumed as well as the financial and emotional cost in supporting family members in jail, the strain of imprisonment causes profound damage to prisoners' partners and children. They are likely to develop aggressive behaviour, anxiety, depression, and display poor school performance. Increased risks of unemployment, mental illness, and substance abuse are also observed among those whose parents have a history of incarceration when they reach adulthood. Parents' imprisonment is, therefore, identified as a risk factor and predictor of "intergenerational offending".

Family bonding, in reverse, is considered effective in offsetting the negative influence of incarceration and is conducive to offenders' rehabilitation. A growing body of study reveals that family-related intervention has resulted in positive behaviour change among the recipients, including enhanced self-esteem, problem solving and social skills, and reduced drug abuse behaviour, significantly. Prisoners or persons in custody (PICs) receiving regular visits and support from their family have arguably fewer problems reintegrating to the society.

Hong Kong Correctional Services (HKCSD) started the Inmate-Parent Programme (IPP) for young offenders and their families

as early as four decades ago and introduced a similar initiative, namely Rehabilitative Family Programme (RFP), at correctional institutions accommodating adult PICs in recent years. Both programmes share the same purpose of enhancing family relationship between PICs and their family members with a variety of structured interactive activities which encourage the participants to foster mutual trust and understanding.

### I. Inmate-Parent Programme (IPP)

Since its conception in 1974, IPP, while ever evolving, has facilitated young offenders' rehabilitation by drawing active engagement and support from their family. In addition to promoting family cohesion and mutual understanding among the participants, IPP informs the participants of the crucial role that family plays throughout the course of their rehabilitation. Unlike usual visits by family members, IPP offers young offenders a chance to meet with their family and perform in front of them in an open setting within the correctional institution.

The target participants of IPP include all young PICs receiving training or treatment in Detention Centre (DC), Rehabilitation Centres (RCs), Training Centres (TCs), and Drug Addiction Treatment Centres (DATCs) as well as young offenders serving their sentences in prison and family members of the incarcerated participants.

The IPP is delivered through diverse activities which provide opportunities for the participants to deepen mutual rapport:

<sup>1</sup> Comfort, M. (2008) *Doing Time Together: Love and Family in the Shadow of the Prison*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; Condry, R. (2007) *Families Shamed: The Consequences of Crime for Relatives of Serious Offenders*. Cullompton, Devon: Willan; and Light, R. And Campbell, B. (2007) 'Prisoners' families: Still forgotten victims?' *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 28 (3 – 4): 297 – 308.

<sup>2</sup> Clancy, A. and Maguire, M. (2017) 'Prisoners and their children: an innovative model of 'whole family support'. *European Journal of Probation*, Vol 9, 3: 210–30.

<sup>3</sup> Jones, A. and Wainaina-Woźna, A. (Eds, 2013) *Children of Prisoners. Interventions and mitigations to strengthen mental health*. University of Huddersfield. [http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/18019/1/Children Of Prisoners Report-final.pdf](http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/18019/1/Children%20Of%20Prisoners%20Report-final.pdf); Barnardo's (2015) *The evaluate*

<sup>4</sup> Besemer, S. and Farrington, D. P. (2012) 'Intergenerational transmission of criminal behaviour: Conviction trajectories of fathers and their children', *European Journal of Criminology*, 9 120-41.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell, G. & Poland, F. (2008) *Developments in the HM Prison Service and Safe Ground 'Family Man Programme', and Safe Ground Network during 2007-8: An independent review*. Norwich: School of Allied Health Professions, University of East Anglia. <http://artsevidence.org.uk/media/uploads/evaluation-downloads/fm-review-2007-8.pdf>; Wilson, K., Gonzalez, P., Romero, T., Henry, K. and Cerbana, C. (2010) 'The effectiveness of parent education for incarcerated parents: An evaluation of parenting from prison'. *Journal of Correctional Education*, 61/2: 114–32; and Hunter, G., Skrine, O., Turnbull, P., Kazimirski, A., and Pritchard, D. (2013) *Interventions focusing on offenders' family and intimate relationships: A rapid evidence assessment*. London: National Offender Management Service.

<sup>6</sup> Savolainen, J. (2009) 'Work, Family and Criminal Desistance: Adult Social Bonds in a Nordic welfare State'. *British Journal of Criminology*, 49(3): 285.

### **Familiarisation Visits**

Familiarisation visits are for parents of newly-admitted young PICs to visit the institutions where their children are residing. Through briefings and guided tours, the visits inform the parent participants of the nature and benefits of the training regime, treatment, and programmes that their children will receive. Discussion and assistance offered by institutional rehabilitation staff also address the concern the parent participants may have in regard of their children's rehabilitation needs and wellbeing.

### **Birthday Treats**

During the young PICs' birthdays, they are able to celebrate with their family through games and sharing food. This allows the participants to enjoy quality time with their family and experience the inclusiveness they previously may have been deprived of. The presence and recognition of their loved ones as well as those of correctional staff on their birthdays proved to be instrumental in rebuilding the young PICs' self-esteem and confidence.

### **Inmate-Parent Groups**

A series of group sessions draws rehabilitation staff, young PICs, and their parents together to address the issues arising



from inmate-parent communication and brainstorm for solutions through open discussion. Apart from sitting side by side to discuss, the participants also engage each other to figure out the moral bearings that might help them navigate through their course of rehabilitation. The rehabilitative messages imparted in the group sessions have led to positive behaviour change among the participants.

### **Parents' Day**

Parents' Day usually takes the form of a performance

show or a certificate presentation ceremony for parents to show appreciation to their children for their progress and improvement. While the presentation and rundown of Parents' Day may vary across different institutions, most



*Adventure-based counselling in Inmate-Parent Group*

Parents' Day share the following elements in common:

- *Specialist talk given by a clinical psychologist on issues concerning inmate-parent communication with advice or knowledge of strengthening family ties;*
- *Performance of foot drill and physical training given by PICs that showcases their discipline and resilience;*
- *Demonstration of work skills acquired from vocational training, for examples, food and beverage and hair washing, with a chance for the parent participants to taste or try their children's works;*
- *Talent show in band music, drama, calligraphy that allows PICs to pay tribute to their family with their newly acquired skills from classes provided by HKCSD and non-governmental organizations (NGOs);*
- *Self-reflection sharing by PICs who talk about their struggles and change as well as read out their gratitude to their family;*
- *Certificate or award presentation ceremony that recognizes the PICs' efforts and achievement in learning; and*
- *Guided tour for the parent participants to familiarize with institutional facilities available for their children.*

### **Specialists' Talk for Young Offenders' Parents**

While usually delivered on Parents' Day or along with other IPP activities, Specialists' Talk, hosted by a clinical psychologist, takes place at regular intervals and covers a range of topics



*Sports Day cum Parents' Day*

from communication tips to anger management. Examples of the themes being gone through in Specialists' Talk include "Effective Emotion Handling", "Enhancing Children's Self-Efficacy", and "Effective Parenting". The previous events saw active engagement and feedback from the participants who gave a lot of inputs during the Q&A sessions before the end of each activity.

In addition to the core activities presented above, new approaches and initiatives have been introduced to the IPP from time to time to keep up with the pace of the ever changing social conditions. The latest review of the IPP initiated by HKCSD and released in January 2018 revealed that the overall efficacy of the IPP stood at 86% and 89% as reported by the family participants and the participating PICs respectively in a poll. The IPP was generally considered successful in enhancing relationships of the participants with their families and informing both the PICs and their family on how to reduce the stress posed by the incarceration, albeit integrated data has yet to be available to determine if the IPP may have led to the declining recidivism among the young offenders in Hong Kong. While the review showed that the overall satisfaction of the IPP rated by both the family participants (77%) and PICs (88%) is positive, a number of recommendations for refining the programme, including incorporating existing rehabilitative activities into the IPP, collaborating with NGOs to roll out new initiatives, and utilising new technology and equipment to conduct IPP activities, have been proposed and are being closely studied.



*Inmate-Parent Programme at Father's Day*

## **II. Rehabilitative Family Programme (RFP)**

In light of the success of the IPP, HKCSD adopted the same model and started the RFP for adult convicted PICs and their families in early 2019. The programme shares the same purpose of improving family relationship of the participants and many features as the IPP. Each event or activity of the RFP takes place in each correctional institution twice a year. By providing a variety of structured interactive activities including painting, card-design, storytelling, group games, and sharing, the RFP serves as a bridge between the participating PICs (who are serving a

<sup>7</sup> Hong Kong Correctional Services Department (2018), Task Group Report on Review of Inmate-Parent Programme

sentence of at least 12 months and going to be discharged in 6 months) and their family members. To ensure the quality and effectiveness of the programme, each RFP event targets 4 to 6 adult PICs who are allowed up to 3 immediate family members or significant others to participate with them.

Collaboration with NGOs and other social stakeholders to offer innovative activities for the participants is another feature of the RFP. An in-prison parallel group, "Be My Hero", delivered by The Society of Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention, Hong Kong (SRACP), in mid-2019 is one example. By hosting lectures, sharing and discussion, art work, storytelling, games, and letter writing, social workers of the SRACP helped the target participants, PICs (serving a sentence no more than 3 years) and their children aged between 3 to 10 years old, gain understanding of positive parenting, develop a sense of competence as a leader, reinforce their identity as a parent, and acquire positive perspective on the experience of incarceration among the child participants.



Family Day

As the RFP remains at its formative stage, there is considerable potential for refining the programme. Professional assessment and evaluation of the efficacy of the RFP will be conducted by local universities or academic bodies. Based on the experience of running the IPP, HKCSD is hopeful that participants of the RFP will benefit in a similar fashion.

### Conclusion

In spite of the undesirable impact of incarceration over PICs and their family, family support is one of the measures that could assist the offenders' reintegration into the society. With appreciation of the values of family ties on offenders' rehabilitation, HKCSD introduced the IPP to the institutions for young offenders for years with an ambition to draw PICs' family support to co-produce desistance and buffer the negative consequences of incarceration. Upon the foundation of the IPP, HKCSD has started a similar programme, the RFP, across institutions that accommodate adult PICs. Both the IPP and the RFP aim to enhance family relationships of the participants with an array of activities of different types and natures. To prevent the programmes from becoming fixated and falling behind the ever changing understanding of criminal behaviour as informed by the latest research, regular reviews and continued assessment will be carried out to refine the IPP and RFP to attain their objectives

## Operation Of The Child-friendly Family Reception Room

### Korea Correctional Service

To ensure the successful return of inmates to society, Korean correctional facilities implement various correction and edification programmes through the inmates' families. These programmes help to prevent the disconnection of inmates with their families and instead, help to maintain and develop the relationships. In particular, Korea Correctional Service has recently made efforts to prevent a vicious cycle of crime passing down to the next generation by providing systematic support to underage children of inmates who are suffering from their parents' incarceration.

#### I. Family Relationship Recovery Programme

Programmes operated by correctional facilities in Korea to highlight the importance of family and restore family relationships include the **Family Meeting Day**, the **Family Meeting House**, the **Family Reception**, and the **Family Love Camp**. The Family Meeting Day is a programme that allows inmates and their families to share refreshments and food in a correctional facility, while The Family Meeting House provides a chance for inmates and their families to stay together for two days and one night in a general housing-type building installed outside the correctional facility.

The Family Love Camp is a programme conducted by family relationship experts, which provides an opportunity for inmates and their families to know each other better and restore their relationship. The Family Reception allows inmates to spend for about two hours with their families in the reception room in the correctional facility without barriers, letting them to find psychological stability through sustainment of family ties.

Although these family relationship recovery programmes have different criteria in selecting recipients, all family relationship recovery programmes are implemented when it is deemed necessary for the inmates to participate in the programmes through the Prison Officers' Meeting.

The inmates and their families who participated in the family relationship recovery programmes were generally highly satisfied. Korea Correctional Service is also working to improve

facilities related to the programmes to enhance satisfaction of the programmes. The remodelling of child-friendly family reception rooms, which has been underway since 2017, is part of such efforts.

The family reception room is decorated in a similar manner to the day care centres operated in society, providing a comfortable and stable environment. The rooms contribute to the maintenance and recovery of family relationships when families, such as children and senior citizens visiting the correctional facilities, and inmates have family contact in a comfortable environment. The remodelling project of child-friendly family reception room, which is being carried out sequentially every year, will be completed by 2021.

In 2020, to enhance the effectiveness of the family relationship recovery programme, Korea Correctional Service is preparing to operate a furlough system that requires inmates' participation



The internal appearance of the child-friendly family reception room

in family problem solution programmes. During the furlough period, an institution managing private family problems will conduct preliminary interviews with inmates and family members, and offer professional care for the problems. In particular, it is expected to be an opportunity for children who have grown up during their parents' stay in prison to understand and accept their parents.

## II. Implementation of “Mother’s Voice” programme for emotional stability of inmates’ underage children

Korea Correctional Service has implemented various programmes to protect the children of inmates in order to ensure their healthy growth and prevent deviancy. However, some female inmates often do not participate in family programmes at correctional facilities because they do not want to let their children know that they have been accommodated in correctional facilities. To address this issue, the “Mother’s Voice” programme was introduced in 2019.

The “Mother’s Voice” programme promotes the emotional stability of inmates’ underage children. This programme was

adapted from the South Carolina prison in the U.S.A. “Mother’s Voice” involves female inmates recording their voices reading fairy tale books. These voice recordings are delivered along with fairy tale books to their children who are under 6 years of age. The purpose of this programme is to maintain the relationship between the mother and the child, as well as preserve the emotional stability of the child. Inmates are able to participate in the programme without informing the children of the mother’s status as an inmate.

Societies should protect the human rights of inmates’ children who may be alienated from society due to their parents’ incarceration. Korea Correctional Service will continue to implement protection policies for these children and supplement those policies



*The Mother’s Voice - A woman inmate reading a fairy tale book*

## Working with Families for Supporting Rehabilitation

### Macao Correctional Services Bureau

**W**ith socio-economic development and the impact of globalisation, families in modern times are facing increasing issues, stress and crises. A family experiences trauma when one of its members is sent to prison. Therefore, apart from inmates’ physical and mental wellbeing, Coloane Prison ascribes importance to maintaining inmates’ familial relationships.

Through counselling services, talks, workshops and group activities, Coloane Prison facilitates offender rehabilitation from three different but tightly connected aspects -- personal, familial and social. From the familial aspect, Coloane Prison helps inmates improve their familial relationship and rebuild their family and social functions. With access to social resources, inmates are given more opportunities of connecting with society, which helps with their rehabilitation and social reintegration.



*The “Parent-child workshop*

### I. “Growing with You” Parent-child Workshop

To maintain and restore inmates’ relationship with their families, the Prison has a parent-child workshop called “Growing with You”, which allows inmates to meet and play with their children aged under 16 on weekends.

To enhance the interaction between inmates and their children, the “Parent-child Picture Book and Interactive Theatre” programme was introduced in year 2018. Featuring mainly picture book-reading, role-playing, sharing and games, the programme aims to further the understanding, communication and relationship between participating inmates and their children. The programme not only promotes inmates’ relationship with their children, their mutual understanding and support, but also enables inmates to understand their roles as parents and the needs of children at different stages, improving family dynamics and assisting inmates in constructing a healthy and stable family support system that helps smoothen their reintegration into society.



*The “Parent-child Picture Book and Interactive Theatre program*

## II. Family Beyond the Wall Project

To better support the families of inmates, the Correctional Services Bureau, the Social Welfare Bureau and the YMCA jointly launched the “Family Beyond the Wall Project” in year 2019, aimed at providing assistance and support to inmates’ families in dealing with problems and providing relevant information and resources from time to time. The project also helps inmates mend their familial relationships, restore and reorganise their familial functions, concentrate on correcting their mistakes in prison, and build a family support system for their post-release life.



The three parties jointly launch the “Family Beyond the Wall Project”

## III. “Conveying My Heart” Family Activity

Coloane Prison also organises the annual “Conveying My Heart” family activity, with themes like Children’s Day, Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. The objectives include rebuilding inmates’ relationship with their family members, enhancing family cohesion, and empowering inmates to more actively embrace their true selves so as to adequately prepare them for reintegration into society. Conducted in the form of a reunion, the activity provides an opportunity of direct interaction between participating inmates and their family members, effectively alleviating their negative emotions, helping them discover the functions of family members, promoting family stability and family members’ physical and mental wellbeing and development. The activity also targeted the participating inmates’ mental adjustment, reducing the possibility of their recidivism and facilitating their successful social reintegration and the rebuilding of their families.

To protect the health of inmates and their family members due to COVID-19, the Prison is working with the Social Welfare Bureau and YMCA to substitute the usual reunion with a ‘non-contact’ form with the use of letters, voice messages and videos, so that both parties can continue to convey their care to each other during the outbreak and strengthen their familial relationships.



Inmates help their father massage at a Father’s Day reunion activity

## Working with Families to Buffer The Impact of Imprisonment

### Malaysian Prison Department

Inmates and their families are placed under duress during the incarceration period, due to their separation from one another.

The Malaysian Prison Department emphasizes the inmates’ social and physical well-being while in custody. During this period the inmates and families need social, financial, emotional, physical and psychological support. Malaysia Prison collaborates with NGOs, religious bodies, corporate entities and government agencies to facilitate necessary assistance to both inmates and families and ensure their needs are taken care of during the incarceration period.

### Impact of imprisonment

The impact of imprisonment may cause negative consequences on both families and inmates in the form of panic, anxiety, rage, depression etc. Family relationships are likely to be affected especially when the incarceration periods are long.

The removal of a resident family member, in particular a parent or primary care-giver from the family home alters the

operational structure of the family unit. It changes the roles and responsibilities of family members of the incarcerated person. The sudden removal of a care-giver from the family home in itself marks a significant change.

Negative consequences on children of an incarcerated mother or father are greater, due to reduced parental time and monetary support, increased family conflicts, stress, and the children are at higher risk for increased antisocial behaviours and psychological problems such as depression.

These various shifts in relational dynamics and roles can affect the role of the imprisoned person in the family after release.

### Malaysian Experience

#### In-house Programs

The Malaysian Prisons Department has taken pro-active steps to prepare the prisoners for participation in the country’s social and economic reforms once they are released. The prisoners are prepared for their release into the community with various programs during the imprisonment. They are taught and exposed



CSR Programme with the Malacca State Welfare Department

to various survival skills such as coping, technical and vocational skills. Most families need contact with their incarcerated family members and they need to know that their family member is doing fine while incarcerated. Letters, phone calls, visits and contact visits on certain occasions help remind the inmate and families that they are “held in mind” and not forgotten. This gives a positive state of mind for the families outside to go about their daily lives and the inmate to undergo rehabilitation while in custody. Counselling service is provided to inmates and families if the need arises.

#### External Programs

Malaysia Prison sees the importance of reintegrating inmates into the community. In order to achieve this, we have introduced several external programs and initiatives, such as Parole System, Community Reintegration Centers (CRC), Corporate Smart Internship (CSI), Resettlement Program, Licensed Release. These programs expose the inmates to the community and enhance the skills which they acquired while in prison. Relevant skill sets with corporate and industrial entities allows them to secure career opportunities and some monetary earnings while they are still serving their sentences. The inmates are allowed to contribute their earnings to their families during their incarceration.

#### Community Engagement

Besides the inmate and his/ her family, the community plays a great role in ensuring the successful rehabilitation and transition of the inmate into the real world.

The Malaysian Prisons Department engages and cooperates with various community entities such as NGOs, religious bodies, the corporate sector as well as federal and state bodies in facilitating the reintegration and transition of inmates into the society. The cooperation mainly involves corporate bodies, industry players and sectors such as banking, vocational/ skill training sectors and higher education centres. Inmates are put on Career Internship programs, Job placements before their release and this is important in creating a positive outlook for inmates.

In conclusion, family is an integral part of an inmate therefore it is important to include them during the rehabilitation process. Through strong and mutual cooperation between the two sides, it is our hope that the society knows the prison as the rehabilitation institution rather than an incarceration institution.



*Sungai Buloh Prison, Selangor CSR Program  
In-Conjunction with Malayan Banking Berhad*

## Family Based Rehabilitation

### Mongolia General Executive Agency of Court Decision

The purpose of the offender rehabilitation was defined in the Criminal Code of Mongolia as “the main purpose of criminal liability is to rehabilitate a person who has committed a crime”.

An offender remains a family member, even if the person was sentenced to imprisonment and remains apart from his or her family with the restriction of certain rights. Living apart from the family does not mean that the person is excluded from them.

In planning the rehabilitation of offenders, it is important to study and provide services that support the values of the “family”. It is an integral part of rehabilitation when providing offenders with systematic training for positive behavioural changes, vocational training and a variety of advocacy measures to turn them away from their criminal mindsets.

In Mongolia, the family system can be considered in the most classical sense. This is because Mongolians are not only family-oriented, but also value kinship and bloodline relationships, as well as the ideology of patriotism. In other words, it is common for parents, children, grandchildren, or grandparents to live together in the same familyhood. Therefore, in order to rehabilitate the Mongolian offenders and turn them away from criminal mindset, it is inevitable to focus on their support and assistance based on the value called “family”.

Offender rehabilitation is ‘efficient’ when based on one’s family and within the scope of relevant legislations and guidelines.

The treatment of offenders was detailed in the Law on Enforcement of Court Decision and other procedures and instructions related to imprisonment. The social worker must include a section on working with family members in the “offender rehabilitation” plan and arrange for meetings with family members when they have visitations at the correctional units.

Telephone calls, receiving parcels and communication are among the fundamental rights of offenders to maintain ties with their families. The offenders’ ability to communicate and exercise their rights within the time limits specified in applicable laws and regulations allows them to enjoy peace of mind. It is crucial that the correctional units provide opportunities for offenders to

exercise the above-mentioned fundamental rights.

The offenders who maintain good communication with his family, receives regular parcels, and communicates by telephone tend to participate in labor programmes, vocational training, and rehabilitation more actively during their imprisonment and is rewarded with a reward day (accomplishing the work at correctional unit allow them to decrease imprisonment and early release possibilities) and to be released as soon as possible.

Re-establishing the family relationships for offenders with their uncontacted families for a long period could positively impact their rehabilitation process. In order to further improve the effectiveness of family-based socialisation of prisoners, the Mongolian Prisons is taking various measures to improve the conditions of the meeting room, create playrooms for children in the meeting room, and to hold family days and open visits.

For offenders the Temporary (up to 3 hours) and Long (up to 72 hours) meeting time is the greatest opportunity to spend time with their families. Regular family visits for offenders during the imprisonment could impact positively on their psychological well-being and rehabilitation process.

The approval and introduction of the “e-Meeting Procedure” by the Chief of the General Executive Agency of Court Decision was a very progressive step that brought a positive impact on the community of offenders.



## Women offenders and their newborn babies

According to the relevant legislations, “a new born baby could stay with its incarcerated mother for 24 months after birth and if the mother’s remaining imprisonment term is no longer than 12 months, a baby can stay in correctional unit until her release”. The correctional units have to provide newborn infants a healthy environment according to the standard of international laws. Parcels from families of the new born infants are also allowed access according to the legal regulations.

There is only one female correctional unit in Mongolia, and in accordance with the law and regulations, offenders with infants are housed outside the correctional unit’s living areas, that comes with standard living conditions, including playgrounds and outdoor sunshades for infants.

In collaboration with doctors and medical staff, training on nurturing of young children and caring for pregnant women and mothers with newborns that are based on women’s characteristics, age, causes and circumstances of crimes, family and sexual health education are conducted. Childcare training will help mothers take care of themselves and their babies during and after imprisonment.

A variety of trainings are being organised to support the psychological stability and health of offenders, including rehabilitation, childcare training and prevention of children’s illnesses. It is crucial to focus on the prevention of reoffending for the offenders who have given birth during their imprisonment.



## Family Video Contact Program

### Corrective Services New South Wales

The introduction of video visits to Corrective Services New South Wales in response to the coronavirus has had a major, positive impact on inmates and their families who can go for years and even decades without seeing each other.

The connections made via the Family Video Contact program are producing many heart-warming reunions while adding to inmates’ sense of wellbeing, reducing the stress and anxiety of incarceration, and providing workplace satisfaction for staff.

Since the Australian jurisdiction launched the new technology in March, more than 56,000 visits have been facilitated via audio visual link and hand-held tablets, a rate that has exceeded in-person visits for the 2018/2019 financial year (the last 12-month period prior to COVID).

Peter Severin, CSNSW Commissioner and International Corrections and Prisons Association President, says that living in a vast continent like Australia – and indeed New South Wales - means many families are limited in their connections by geography and accessibility. However, video conferencing has literally opened the cell doors to the world.

“Some of our greatest wins have been in the state’s most remote prisons, where access is extremely limited. This includes Broken Hill Correctional Centre in the Australian Outback, which services a catchment area of 400km in radius and is a three-hour flight from Sydney,” Mr Severin said. “In June we connected a refugee at the centre with his Iranian family,

which is about as far as you can get in terms of distance and culture. This man had not seen his family for 10 years. It was a joyful time but also poignant as his father was gravely ill.

“Ingenuity shown by staff using a Zoom app and an Iranian translator resulted in the connection being made. The inmate was linked up twice more with his family before his father sadly passed.

“Other reunions have included a grandfather who saw his son for the first time in 30 years and a mother who saw her inmate son for first time in 20 years - and introduced him to his grandson!”

The feedback from inmates has been extremely positive and has contributed to their feelings of wellbeing. Mr Severin said that a recent survey of users of the AVL Family Visits attracted 2153 users, with **90 per cent being satisfied with the experience.**

“Of the total respondents, 85 per cent of families and friends said they wanted the family video visits to continue into the future,” Mr Severin said. “A total of 34 per cent said they would like to use video visits instead of face to face visits, with and 39 per cent wanted to replace half of face to face visits with video visits. Twenty per cent of the users were from interstate or overseas.”

Independent of the survey, one inmate said of his experience, “I much prefer these video visits because my family walks around home, I feel like I’m home and I feel a lot more relaxed.” Said another, “**I’m so used to not getting visits; it became normal to me. This has changed my life and my time in gaol.**”

The families and friends of inmates have been similarly impacted,



Broken Hill Correctional Centre

with one mother saying, "This has changed my life. Before this I was so isolated because my son was the only one I ever saw. Having these videos with my son makes me feel normal again."



"I felt like a piece of me has been missing since my son went to gaol. This has made a massive difference," said another. And this: "This has changed my world, it's like we get to be a family again, even if it's just for a little while."

The positive results for staff have also been great, with the expressions of gratitude and more relaxed



inmates leading to an improved work environment. Senior Correctional Officer Stephanie Danaher, who facilitated the visit between the Iranian inmate and his family, said she gained both professional and personal satisfaction from her ability to make such a difference.

"I cried with joy alongside the inmate and his family when they first connected. Just watching the family's faces and knowing how much it meant. You start to appreciate how lucky you are in your own life and that if we push for our humanity to shine through we start to see real changes in people," Ms Danaher said.

Broken Hill Manager of Security Damien Ward added that, as his centre was an 'Aboriginal identified' gaol, it was vital to provide any service possible that allows the Indigenous inmate population to maintain strong family connections.

"A large number of our inmates are of Aboriginal descent, whose family live quite far away. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, these offenders' families had great difficulty getting to the centre for normal visits due to the distance, cost of travel and other road blocks," Mr Ward said.

"Since the introduction of video visits, we have been able to reconnect these offenders, reducing the stress and anxiety of incarceration while safeguarding vital personal networks."

The developments have gone from strength to strength at Broken Hill. Shortly after, in a first for CSNSW, an offender "attended" his mother's wedding via a video call, also facilitated by Ms Danaher. "He couldn't stop talking about how beautiful his mother looked and how it blew his mind to see. The result has been massive. I have personally seen the immense change in him for the better," she said.

A roll-out in June of video conferencing equipment in inmate group rooms in many centres has allowed for even more inmates to attend funeral services from one location.

On 30 June, it was announced about 800 Local Court defended custody hearings that had been deferred due to COVID-19 would be conducted via video conferencing. This limited the movement of inmates between correctional centres and courts, thereby further reducing the potential for COVID infection.

### Social visits during the pandemic

One could never have foreseen such a positive development when CSNSW first closed its prison doors to social visits on 21 March, to protect inmates and staff from the spread of the deadly COVID-19.

With the potential for the decision to lead to prisoner unrest, as has occurred in other parts of the world,

staff worked swiftly to replace in-person visits with engagement via audio visual link and hand-held tablets.

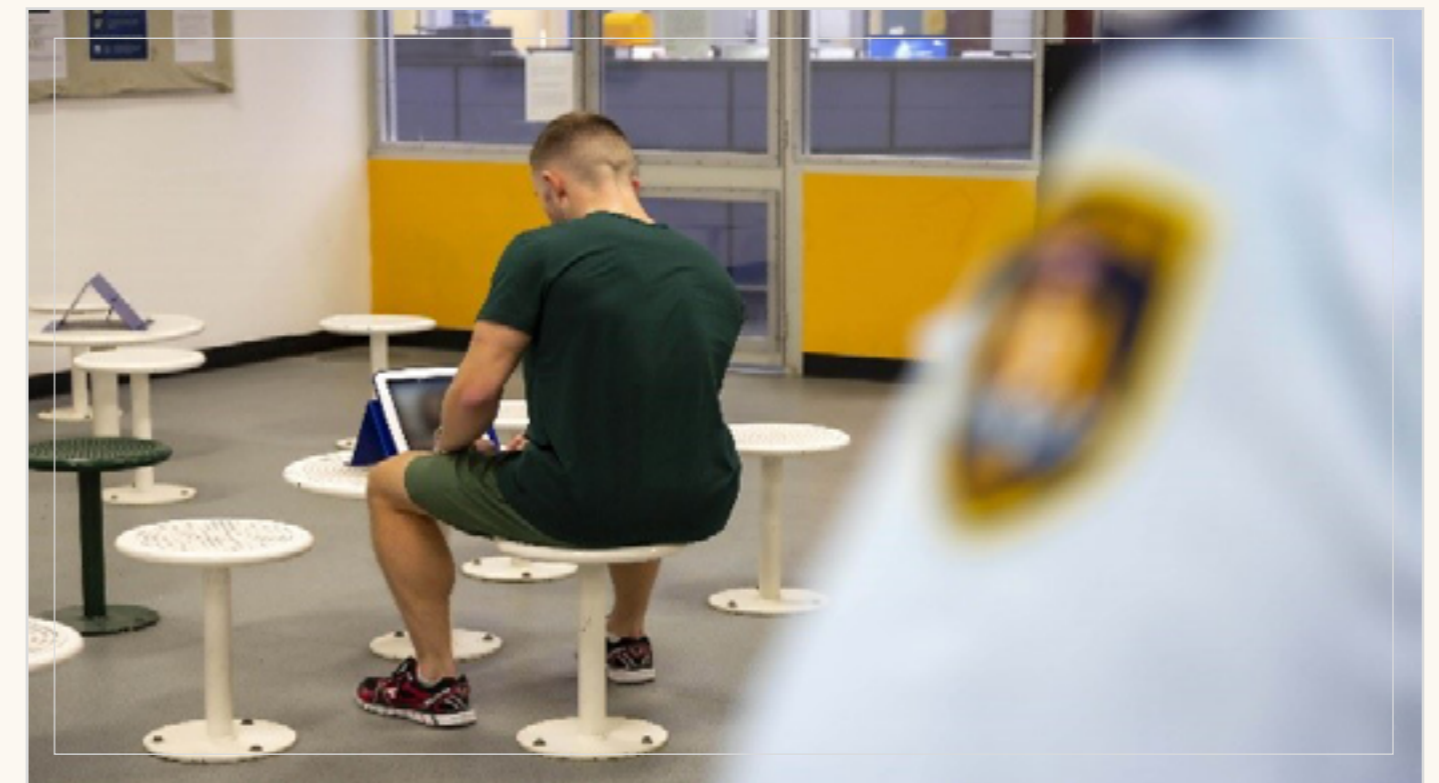
A nine-member AV Strategy and Business Links team collaborated to launch family visits using AVL. Such a process can take years to enact. The expanded AVL system, traditionally used for legal visits, was operational within five days; the tablets five days later.

A/Manager Peter Sharp and his team were extremely concerned about the implications for staff in their interaction with inmates. "Part of our mind was always asking, 'How can we make it better for our people working in the centres?'" Mr Sharp said.

The process involved reconfiguration of the system to conduct ID checks and ensure a secure link between CSNSW and family members. On 26 March the team launched their AVL pilot. It was not without hurdles but these issues were soon overcome.

Concurrently, attention was turned to 500 tablets that had been earmarked for inmate use under a separate project. The decision was made to repurpose them as dedicated video conferencing tablets. A feature of the tablets was that they enabled officers to monitor meetings between inmates and families.

Visiting sessions using video conferencing facilities commenced over the Easter long weekend of 10 April when 1400 visits were held across 10 centres. Today, the system is in place across all centres, (excluding 24-hour court/



police cells), with 30 minute sessions allowed per inmate.

Mr Severin says the link-up also involved a mammoth effort by staff on the ground, from the administration officers who learned a new system of bookings almost overnight, to correctional officers who helped facilitate the calls. He said one of the best outcomes of enabling families to video conference from home was also the most unexpected.

“We did not anticipate the gains that would come from introducing inmates back into the family environment. The emotional effect it’s having is way beyond what we thought it would be,” he said. “There’s a path for video conferencing to change the way social visits are structured in the future. However, in the here and now, the extraordinary effort undertaken by staff to not only respond and adapt—but to thrive and celebrate the wins, must be acknowledged.

“Despite the horrendous impact this deadly pandemic has had on the world, there have been some positive outcomes that have been adopted, ensuring we will never operate in quite the same way again.”

## Philippines Jesuit Prison Service Foundation, Inc (PJPS) Scholarship Program

### Bureau of Corrections, Philippines

A segment of society often neglected is the families of inmates. Through no fault of their own, the families of inmates have to deal with the pain of a family member convicted of a crime, to live with the absence of a jailed parent/spouse/child, and to handle the stigma of being judged because they have a family member who is a supposed “criminal.” The Chaplaincy Office of the Bureau of Corrections collaborates with the Philippine Jesuit Prison Service Foundation, Inc. (PJPS) in working with inmates’ families. PJPS is a non-government organisation which is non-stock and non-profit and is based in the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) Reservation in Muntinlupa City, Philippines. Aside from ministering to the prisoners, they also work with their families.



*Distribution of food packs to the beneficiaries*



*Food packs distribution*

### PJPS Scholarship Program

Although incarceration affects the whole family of the inmate, the effect is more pronounced for children, and particularly in terms of education. Whatever income received is usually used for food, rent (if applicable) and for lawyer and court fees. All other expenses like education are de-prioritised and this is where the PJPS Scholarship Programme comes in. The PJPS Scholarship Programme provides assistance for the children of inmates or Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) who are incarcerated in the NBP, the Correctional Institution for Women (CIW) or the Davao Penal Colony. Support comes in the form of financial aid as well as ‘formation’. The financial assistance is for the child’s educational fees and other disbursements for uniform, school projects, and transportation allowances. These children get to continue their education in the basic level (elementary or high school) or in the vocational or college course which would have been discontinued if not for the Scholarship Programme. The impact of incarceration on an inmate’s child is thus cushioned. However, financial assistance is not just what is offered in the Scholarship Program of PJPS. There is the ‘formation’ aspect of the program which is seen as an integral part in helping the family face the impact of the imprisonment of a family member. Since the family also experiences so much pain, hurt, humiliation, prejudice, bias, and judgements among others, they have to be taught how to deal with these issues. As many of them are from poor families, they really do not have



*Goods distribution to beneficiaries*

the means or the emotional tools to take on the challenges. This is what the Formation Sessions of PJPS aims to address.

Monthly sessions focus on value formation as well as addressing the myriad of concerns of the inmate's family. The session starts with the celebration of the Holy Mass and is followed by break out formation sessions for the scholars and their parents. The participants are separated according to year levels for scholars and a separate one for their parents. These are handled by PJPS staff and volunteers who prepare for the sessions beforehand. For the formation sessions to be effective, it is essential to provide participants a chance to listen to an input that they can relate to, and be given an opportunity to share their problems. They all have a parent or spouse in prison and this is a safe haven for them to open up about their concerns and ask questions. This is why attendance in the Formation Sessions is a must for the scholar and the parent or guardian living with the scholar, as this is where they are listened to, acknowledged, guided, healed and strengthened.

The Scholarship Program was initially only for the children of the inmates. However, there were some improvements for the program to be effective. Though the children were the focus of the program, it was recognised that for the formation to be more consistent and constant, the parents have to be part of it. Consequently, the parent(s) were included in the formation. Another improvement was when PJPS took in siblings of inmates who were breadwinners of the family before they were incarcerated. In this case, the parents of the inmates accompanied the sibling in the formation sessions.



*Goods distribution*

When these children leave PJPS after finishing their studies, one of the questions they are asked is what they have learned in their years under the Scholarship Program. A common theme is that they have learned acceptance, strength, resilience and gratitude. Despite the parent being the source of pain and suffering due to incarceration, there is genuine acceptance, strength, and gratitude. And with this, the impact of imprisonment on the child and the rest of the family is cushioned. There is hope for a better future not only for the child but also for the family and even for the inmate.



*Food packs for beneficiaries*



*Distribution of goods to beneficiaries*

## Working with Families Towards Rehabilitation and Reintegration

### Singapore Prison Service

Literature and stories shared by desistors tell us families can be a strong source of motivation for offenders in their journey towards change. Recognising this, Singapore Prison Service (SPS) adopts a multi-pronged approach and collaborates with fellow government agencies and community partners alike to enable offenders and families to work towards rehabilitation and reintegration together.

Where the offender is concerned, the key objective is in building his capacity to become a better member of the family post-incarceration. With the offenders' families, SPS's strategy lies in assisting them so they are better positioned to be involved in the rehabilitation of their incarcerated loved ones. At the same time, through interventions and providing support to the families, the risk of intergenerational offending is also mitigated.

### Building the capacity of the offender to play his/her role in the family



*The Family Reintegration Programme involves offenders and their families*

### Psycho-education programmes

While programmes teaching 'effective communications in the family' are readily available in the market, there is a need for these to be adapted to better meet the learning needs of offenders. In 2018, SPS worked with community partners to design and develop two experiential-learning programmes where the concepts and applications are contextualised to suit the learners' unique circumstances of being behind bars.

The Social Skills Training Programme (SSTP) focuses on helping offenders see the impact of their imprisonment on their loved ones, thereby encouraging offenders to identify how they want to improve communications with their families. The Family Reintegration Programme (FRP) builds on the offenders' knowledge of effective communications with their families to facilitate preparation of reintegration with their loved ones. Family members participate in selected components of the FRP and are encouraged to work towards a common goal of making concrete plans as a family to support the offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration.

SPS also collaborates widely and enlists the expertise of social service agencies specialising in the area of family work to provide programmes as well as services in some instances. This is to limit the impact of incarceration on the families, including on young children.



*Family Joint Session in SPS premises*

### Maintaining family ties from behind bars

Although visitations are a good way for offenders and their family members to maintain relationships, visitations sometimes hinge on the family's ability to juggle work, caregiving and visiting. Instead, offenders are encouraged to be proactive in keeping their relationship going by writing regularly to their family members. By maintaining good behaviours while serving time, offenders are also able to receive additional letters and visits that help them maintain the relationships with their families during incarceration.

Besides these, SPS also facilitates family joint sessions through various platforms where offenders and their families get to meet in-person. These sessions offer the time and space for them to practise skills learnt (for example, from FRP) to enhance family relations, to learn more about the rehabilitation regime (for example, as part of orientation to drug rehabilitation for drug offenders) or simply to bond and appreciate each other over family-friendly activities (for example, during Mothers' Day or Fathers' Day celebrations).

### Assisting and involving families in rehabilitation

The imprisonment of a member in the family often affects the stability of the family's situation. Stabilising these families before involving them in the rehabilitation of the offenders is therefore key to achieving the desired outcomes.

#### Various touchpoints to meet families' needs



Some of our community partners

SPS has established various touchpoints to enable assistance to reach offenders and families in need of such help. Within the prison institutions, the officers engage offenders under their charge via regular interviews to check in on their adjustment to imprisonment, progress in rehabilitation and assistance required for reintegration. Offenders are able to surface any requests to their officers and relevant ones are referred to Family Resource Centres (FRC). FRCs were established by SPS in the mid-2000s to help address the interim needs of offenders and their family members. This is especially useful for those who are not aware of the community resources available to them. Social workers at the FRCs help to

gather information on the offenders/ families' needs and make the necessary referrals to help them access services and support e.g., assistance on financial or accommodation matters. As such, this ensures that offenders and their families get adequate support during the offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration journey.

In addition, the Yellow Ribbon Community Project (YRCP) - an initiative driven by grassroots volunteers in the community - provides support to families who are impacted by their loved ones' incarceration. These volunteers conduct home visits to help affected family members and also link them up to agencies so that they can receive social assistance. On other occasions, the volunteers offer emotional and befriending support to the families in need.



#### Case management of families in need

In 2018, to help us understand the depth of problems and key issues faced by families impacted by incarceration, SPS embarked on a two-year trial involving 60 families. A team comprising SPS's own Correctional Rehabilitation Specialists was tasked to provide case management to strengthen dysfunctional families and increase the involvement of family in offenders' rehabilitation. Working closely with community partners and agencies such as Singapore's Ministry of Social and Family Development, efforts were channelled towards identifying and connecting the network around these families, to ensure needs were addressed holistically and that families were gradually being enabled towards playing a role in the rehabilitation of the offenders.

The lessons learnt through this trial validated the multi-pronged approach taken by SPS. Moving forward, SPS will work towards increasing collaborations with government and social service agencies to better assist more families impacted by incarceration and prepare them to journey with their loved ones through the process of change and reintegration.

## Nurturing Family Engagement

Corrections Victoria , Australia

Corrections Victoria (CV) has long understood that strong family connections play a pivotal role in promoting rehabilitation, reducing recidivism and supporting the reintegration of individuals released from prison. As such, CV policy initiatives have moved away from seeing parenting or family engagement initiatives as optional services, to ones that are critical for the effective operation of the system and that are vital in achieving its broader mission of reducing reoffending and increasing community safety.

Supported by the growing international body of research shining a spotlight onto the importance of family engagement programs and services, CV has embarked upon innovative and system wide responses to develop and strengthen parenting capacity and family engagement for men and women in prison.

### Commitment to reducing the impact of imprisonment

#### Guided by CV's Offender Management Framework, family connectedness is acknowledged as integral to

- Rehabilitation
- Successful transition into the community
- Reducing reoffending risk
- Reducing intergenerational offending

#### CV offers a range of programs and services that foster and promote family ties and assist the development of parenting skills.

Across Victoria's prisons, key staffing resources specifically support prisoners to maintain, strengthen and develop relationships with children. Dedicated positions including the Parenting Support Workers, Mother and Child Worker, Family Liaison Officer, Living with Mum Worker and most recently the Family Engagement Workers, who work within various facilities to provide prisoners the opportunity to connect in positive and meaningful ways with families and children.

### Family Engagement and Parenting Program Suite

CV has built a comprehensive suite of programs which contribute to rehabilitating, strengthening and developing family relationships. The range of programs and services available speaks of the importance CV places on family and parental connections, developing parenting skills, and pregnancy health and wellbeing.

#### Programs include:

- Living with Mum Program – approved children preschool age or younger can live with their mothers in prison. This program focuses on the child's best interests.
- Parenting Inside Out Program
- Inside Parenting Program
- Tuning Into Teens Program
- Bringing Up Great Kids Program
- Deadly Dads – Aboriginal specific Dads program
- Reading with Mum and Dad
- Tarrengower School Holiday Visit Program
- Shine for Kids – Parent and Child activity days and transport service
- VACRO's Parent and Family Program
- Family Engagement Service
- Triple P – Positive Parenting Program
- Family Ties Permit Program where prisoners are able to visit family in the community leading up to their release from prison

### Program snapshots Inside Parenting Program

The 14-week Inside Parenting Program has been delivered at the Marngoneet Correctional Centre since 2011. To date 309 men have participated in the program. A 2019 evaluation by Monash University presented clear data that program completion was having a positive impact on participants'

broader outcomes. Included in the findings was that those who completed the program had statistically significant lower return to prison rates (33%, as compared to those who did not complete the program at 51%). Men who completed the program in conjunction with additional components (Reading with Dad/Supported Play) were found to have even lower returns to prison at 23.1%. The evaluation also found, of those who completed the program, two thirds had not returned to prison at any point after their release at the time the evaluation was undertaken.

Monash's evaluation highlighted the strong and positive outcomes for participants, regarding parenting attitudes, criminal thinking, and returns to prison rates. An abridged version of the Inside Parenting Program is also delivered at the Ravenhall Correctional Centre, Parenting Inside Out, which opened in 2017.

### I. Triple P – Positive Parenting Program

In late 2019 CV commenced a trial of Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) in the Victorian prison system. This is the first of its kind in Australia. The delivery of an evidence-based parenting program across multiple sites has never been done before.

Triple P is backed by over 35 years of ongoing research carried out by more than 375 academic and research institutions around the world.

Triple P works to provide parents with practical tips to developing positive parenting skills and emphasises a strong self-regulatory framework. Comprising a suite of interventions, from group programs, to stand alone seminars, Triple P can be delivered in a range of ways including small and large groups, online or over the telephone and can be tailored to different cohorts.

In Victoria, partners of prisoners undertaking the Group Triple P Program are encouraged to participate in the program through a phone-based service facilitated by the Department of Health and Human Services, allowing both parents the opportunity to be exposed to the same learning and practical skills. Triple P Seminar topics have also made parenting skills programs available to the remand population which often face challenges on program accessibility due to time constraints.

By the end of 2020, Triple P will be rolled out across 11 Victorian prisons supported by 33 accredited CV staff.

### II. Read-Along Dads/Mums Program

The Read-Along Dads/Mums Program assists prisoners to stay in touch with their children in a meaningful way. Participants are recorded reading a book for their child, which is sent to the child

along with a copy of the book. The child can then listen to their parent's voice and read along, helping to maintain the family connection. The program is delivered by community organisations who attend to prison locations. One of these organisations is Friends of Castlemaine Library (FOCAL), who state:

"We make it possible for Dads in prison to show their love for their children. We'll record them reading a picture book and send the book and recording to their child."



### III. VACRO's Parent and Family Program

This program is eligible to men at the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre or women at Tarrengower Prison, who are parents or primary carers. It includes family therapy sessions, family meetings at the prisons, school term parenting education and a school holiday group program.

### IV. Fun with Mum

This program provides purposeful, positive, engaging activities for children visiting a parent in prison. In an informal,



non-intrusive, supportive manner children and women are supported to have fun and positive interactions during their visit. Transport assistance for children who would otherwise be unable to visit their parent in custody is provided.

### Establishing a Family Engagement Service in the Victorian Women's Prison System

Women involved in the criminal justice system present with a range of complex issues. These frequently include parenting and family responsibilities, homelessness and housing instability, substance use, family violence, trauma and victimisation, mental health concerns, and economic disadvantage. The complexity increases for Aboriginal women as a result of intergenerational trauma from a loss of culture and land and ongoing experiences of racism and social disadvantage.

Successive changes to bail and sentencing legislation and significant investment in additional front-line police has also played a role in driving growing demand across the justice system. The female prisoner population had grown significantly in recent years, with much of that growth attributable to increasing rates of remand. Between 2012 – 2017 there was an increase of 49% of women on remand in prison. Survey data from 2017 identified 88% of women entering prison were received on remand. Significantly, 51% of women reported

to have not applied for bail in a survey of 2015/2016; with Aboriginal women even less likely to apply for bail at 34%.

Amongst the most frequently cited difficulties for women prisoners who are mothers, being away from children is both by far the hardest part of being in prison and simultaneously the main motivation for desistance from offending. Of women remanded, 69% reported having children, with 21% reported being the primary care-giver for children.

In view of the additional difficulties women face upon imprisonment, the likelihood they leave children to be cared for by alternative carers, and the significant disruption to the lives of their family upon incarceration, CV commenced the pilot of Family Engagement Service in the women's prison system.

### The Family Engagement Service

In the 2019-20 State Budget, the Victorian Government allocated a \$4.5 million investment in reconnecting women with their families through a new family engagement service. Out of this, CV has established the Family Engagement Service intended as a holistic strategy. This includes the introduction of dedicated Family Engagement Workers with a family therapy program and brings a continued focus to the critical role that maintaining or re-establishing connections with children and family has in

supporting women offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration. CV's Family Engagement Service has been modelled on a similar initiative operating in the United Kingdom prison system since 2014. A review of this initiative by the University of Cambridge in 2016 found it was effective in contributing to relationships for prisoners and their families.

Commencing in January 2020, the Family Engagement Service provides individualised support for women prisoners to develop strong familial links and support and increase opportunities to strengthen the prisoner's social capital. The main elements that make up the Family Engagement Service are described below.

### Family Engagement Workers

Four dedicated Family Engagement Workers will deliver evidence-based services that enable women to maintain or develop strong family connections and gain parenting and relationship skills while in custody, including supporting reunification activities.

Family Engagement Workers support both remand and sentenced women and act as an important conduit between organisations such as the Department of Health and Human Services, Child Protection, the Department of Education and Training, Youth Justice, and other family services agencies, the prison and family members in the community. In addition to being the critical link coordinating services for women with complex needs, the Family Engagement Workers:

- support the growing number of women and children engaged in the Living with Mum program in prison
- deliver parenting programs to all mothers and primary carers in prison,
- facilitate family visits
- deliver staff training
- prepare women to transition back into their family units.

### Family Engagement Training

Family Engagement Workers are trained in evidence-based family interventions and receive appropriate support and supervision to enable them to effectively support women prisoners who are often involved with a broad range of child protection and other family law matters, including family violence and trauma.

### Family Therapy Service

An innovative and culturally responsive family therapy service

is a unique component of CV's Family Engagement Service. This service will be delivered by the Bouverie Centre and will include Aboriginal Family Therapists. This component will see family members engaging in therapy sessions with women from inside the prison and will work to heal fractured or problematic relationships; and in doing so, forge a path to positive family reintegration for women upon release.

The Family Engagement Service pilot will include a formal evaluation after four years.

### Maintaining connectedness during COVID-19 restrictions

As with prisons around the world, Victorian prisons have been required to respond to the increased risk to health and safety due to COVID-19. The changing nature of the global pandemic crisis has shown how quickly and effectively CV has acted to both maintain the health and safety of prisoners and staff, while finding new ways to continue to meet the needs of prisoners to remain connected with their loved ones in the community.

A range of programs and support services were implemented to support and maintain family engagement during this time:

- A technical phone support service was established by the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO), so that family members could get technical support downloading software and testing connectivity prior to video visit with family members located in prison
- Shine for Kids donated children's story books and card making kits
- The introduction of "Email a prisoner" system where families can connect with their loved ones via email
- Although group program delivery was suspended, Triple P program workbooks were distributed so that prisoners could still engage in parenting programs with support from program facilitators.

In keeping family engagement initiatives at the forefront, CV anticipates effects of imprisonment on children and families will be lessened as women and men in Victorian prisons are supported to develop parenting abilities and provided positive family engagement opportunities.

# The Kimberley Offender Management Program

Corrective Services Western Australia

The Kimberley Offender Management Program was initiated by the Department of Justice, Corrective Services in Western Australia in January 2020 to provide a culturally safe, competent and respectful approach to offender management while acknowledging the importance of relationships to family, community and Country.

The project has a key focus to deliver regional specific responses in order to assist offenders to remain 'on country'. The program includes the below four key focus areas.

### Community engagement and partnership –



Above, Elders Junie and Kathy with Director Kimberley Offender Management, Cassandra Gilbert

A group of eight Kimberley Aboriginal Elders support Corrective Services through providing advice on correctional practice, communication approaches and strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal communities and service providers.

The Elders have been provided free access to Corrective Services prisons and work camps. This has provided opportunity to increase understanding of the prison

environment. It has also been highly successful in providing opportunities for prisoners to reconnect with Elders.

### End-to-end offender management –

The pilot program is strengthening focus on engagement with the prisoner from induction through sentence period, ending with ensuring a dignified release process. This is being led by Community Corrections with the aim to streamline assessments between prisons and community corrections facilitation information exchange and reducing duplication of process.

### Promotion of culturally relevant education and training –



Map of the Kimberley Region

The goal is to implement a regional education and vocation training approach, rather than a centre by centre approach. This will facilitate culturally appropriate educational learning and skills based training to improve job readiness.

### Keeping Kimberley offenders on country –

The goal is to keep Kimberley people on country and address offending behaviour within their community, with their family

and local support networks. This includes making structural change to ensure individual treatment assessments and program participation is facilitated in the Kimberley Region.

### Prison Support Services – Aboriginal Visitors Scheme

In Western Australia, Prison Support Services and the Aboriginal Visitors Scheme at the Department of Justice, Corrective Services provide cultural support and assist prisoners who are at risk of self-harm and suicide and those vulnerable prisoners at risk of harm from others. The positions are Aboriginal staff positions with Aboriginal Visitors, including Elders, dedicated to working solely with the Aboriginal prisoner population with a strong focus on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal prisoners.

One of their roles is to provide the bridge with the community and one way is via telephone contact point available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. This service is available to prisoners as well as the general community and provides a point of contact for family members to call when they have concerns regarding the social and emotional wellbeing of their family members in custody.

The Prison Support Services also manage a Peer Support Program. This program includes a focus on prisoners assisting other prisoners to better identify those at risk of self-harm or suicide and provide mentoring, advice and referral to support services.

Mr Greg Little commenced work at Bunbury Regional Prison in July 2000. Greg is an Elder within the Bunbury region and has won numerous awards including the National Award for Elder for the year in 2019. Greg has played a key role in delivering training and cultural awareness to staff and peer support workers



and noted the following: “My time working within Bunbury Prison has been rewarding for me personally with a focus on support for the Prisoners in regards to their welfare and to be a better person on release”.

Mr Trevor Demmery is one of the Department’s longest servicing Prison Support Officers, commencing in this role in 1999 at Hakea Prison. During his time, Trevor has worked across a variety of metropolitan and regional prisons and has seen many changes. Trevor is currently located at Karnet Prison where he and his Peer Support Team provide offenders with support with their re-entry into the community. Trevor identified feeling encouraged by the good work undertaken at Karnet with Offenders having access to a number of employment and educational opportunities offered at this site; “he hopes to see more opportunities of this nature



available to Aboriginal offenders”.

## The Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy

### Corrective Services Western Australia

Despite only comprising approximately 3.9% of the Western Australia (WA) population, Aboriginal people are significantly overrepresented in the justice system. In 2019-20, based on average daily population, 38.3% of adults and 72.3% of young people in prison and detention, respectively, were Aboriginal.

Nowhere in WA is the magnitude of the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the justice system more evident than in the Kimberley region. The Kimberley is a remote and sparsely populated region which spans almost 420,000m<sup>2</sup>, and almost half (42%) of the population identifies as Aboriginal. The geographic remoteness of the Kimberley region compounds some of the contributors to offending behaviour in that area. These contributors include intergenerational poverty, social exclusion, lack of educational and employment opportunities, crowded housing, alcohol and substance misuse and the high prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). In 2018:

- The proportion of young people identified as offenders in some areas within the Kimberley was close to 30% which is almost triple other areas in WA.
- The rate of return to prison for Aboriginal young people from the Kimberley region was 70%. In comparison, the overall WA rate of return of young people was 53%.

Placing young people in detention has

been shown to be ineffective as a deterrent, making young people feel isolated and frustrated, increasing the chances of contact with the justice system. Other adverse consequences include separation from family and community, disruption to education and employment, association with sentenced young offenders which may have a criminogenic effect and a lack of access to therapeutic programs.

These issues were highlighted in Josie Farrer MLA, Member for Kimberley report titled ‘Kimberley Juvenile Justice – Improving the Current Juvenile Justice System: Framework 2014’ (Framework).

The Framework was tabled in Parliament and contained 19 recommendations aimed at making the justice system more suited to conditions in the Kimberley. Themes of the recommendations included:

- The use of station and on-country programs for young people;
- Better use of cautioning by police;
- Alternative bail, sentencing and remand options;
- Funding for the long-term security of capacity building programs in the region;
- Mandatory health assessments to diagnose issues such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder; and
- Alternative education programs for disengaged young people.

In response to these recommendations, the Department of Justice was tasked with leading the implementation of the Kimberley Juvenile Justice Strategy

(KJJS), a whole of government response to address the complex needs of the young people and their communities in this region.

### The co-design journey

A central tenet of the KJJS is the Government’s commitment to working with Aboriginal organisations and the community in the Kimberley to co-design youth programs that address community need. Co-design is increasingly becoming the preferred model for service design and delivery, especially in relation to the delivery of community services to Aboriginal communities. Co-design is considered as essential when working with Aboriginal communities as community-based initiatives have been found to be inherently responsive to the problems faced by the community and are culturally appropriate to that community.

In its first year of implementation, an important first step of the KJJS implementation was the engagement of the services of the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC) to undertake a consultation process across the Kimberley. In 2019, KALACC engaged with ninety-six (96) community agencies across both the East and West Kimberley and community members to identify solutions to reduce youth offending and the number of young people in prison and detention.

The consultation process identified a number of key priorities for the next phase of implementation, of which some included, a genuine commitment to co-design, long term investment in culturally

based, community led solutions and an effective partnership with Government.

The outcomes of the Kimberley consultation will inform a long term phased implementation approach that recognises that a combination of short, medium and long term programs will be required to address the underlying complexities that have led to the high level of offending by young people.

### Initial KJJS actions

Concurrently with the co-design process (as described above), the Department of Justice progressed a series of activities aimed at providing alternatives to detention in custody of Aboriginal people from the Kimberley region. These included:

- Service provision at bail houses in the Kimberley were increased from 146 to 365 days per year to accommodate young people as an alternative to sending them to detention in Perth.
- The commencement of a trial of joint Court reports of young people who appear before the Children's Court to improve information sharing and reduce time in custody.
- With the Department of Education, commencement of an alternative education program, with the aim of re-engaging young people who have become disengaged from mainstream education.
- A Youth Transition Coordinator was appointed for the Kimberley region, responsible for increasing engagement with young people who are released from detention, whether it be on remand or sentenced detention. They also assist in the development of a transitional plan to return young people to either mainstream education or the alternative education program.

One of the principles of juvenile justice in WA, as directed under legislation, is that detention in custody, whether that be for sentenced or unsentenced young persons, should only be used as a last resort.

### Early signs of success

The Kimberley Youth Justice staff have had great success working with the communities they serve, aligning with the KJJS to ensure Aboriginal young people remain on-country as an alternative option to custodial sentences where appropriate. Youth Justice comes under Corrective Services in WA and is the responsibility of the Commissioner Corrective Services. In collaboration with local Aboriginal elders/communities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO), Youth Justice staff have strengthened place-based initiatives such as cultural camps and alternative education engagement programs.

A key measure of success is that in 2019/20, there was a 58% decrease in the number of detention receptions of young people from the Kimberley region compared to 2018/19. Safe place activities

The concept of creating safe places for young people in the Kimberley is based on the premise that at risk young people, who have endured traumatic experiences, will benefit from being engaged in programs where they feel safe and supported. Safe place community-based projects ensure that young people are constructively engaged in meaningful structured activities so as to reduce the risk of offending behaviour.

The initiatives are predominantly available during periods that are outside normal business hours – on weekdays and weekends, and some specifically cater for school holiday periods. Safe

places also create an avenue from which service providers can refer young people to specialist support services to address issues such as mental health and drug and alcohol misuse.

In 2019, the KJJS funded a number of local governments in partnership with Aboriginal organisations to provide safe place activities including:

- The Kununurra Waringarri Aboriginal Corporation engaging young people aged seven to 18 through cultural healing camps.
- The Wunan Aboriginal Foundation in Halls Creek providing structured activities and supporting young people returning to education or training.
- Broome Youth and Families Hub and the LifeCycle Youth Connect Program engaging youth and parents with positive activities.

### The Journey Ahead

The Government recently announced a \$266.7 million funding package towards the Commitment to Aboriginal Wellbeing – the Government's strategy to address Aboriginal Youth Suicide. As part of this, \$6.2 million funding was announced for KJJS. The next phase of the KJJS will deliver a person-centred and culture focussed approach to juvenile justice issues in the Kimberley through a range of funded initiatives including: place-based activities, night patrols, youth-engagement program and an integrated-learning program across Kimberley towns.

### Night patrols

Night patrol services are aimed at providing suitable alternatives to young people who may otherwise be on the streets unsupervised late at night and potentially engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour. Whilst the model

has varied from place-to-place, the intention is the same; reduce the risk of young people offending by keeping them away from the streets at night through meaningful alternatives. The services are usually delivered by local members of the community who engage with young people and transport them to a safe place for the night, if required. Preliminary community consultation has indicated that night patrols should be carried out between the hours of 9:00 pm and 3:00 am. Night patrols have been found to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime. For example, in Halls Creek region in the Kimberley, the night patrol program led to lower levels of youth crime, where a 70% reduction in crime resulted over 3 months.

### Youth Engagement Program

This will be delivered by the Aboriginal Legal Service of WA at courts in the Kimberley Courts. The Youth Engagement

Program (YEP) will provide culturally competent, holistic, individualised support to young people to assist them to comply with the requirements of their court orders.

YEP support will include case management, mentoring, court support, advocacy, referrals to external programs and services, and practical assistance. Aboriginal diversion officers will support young people to re-engage in education and participate in therapeutic programs. By working closely with ALSWA lawyers and Court officers, YEP officers will support young people to achieve successful outcomes, including compliance with the requirements of the Court.

### Integrated Learning Program

An Integrated Learning Program will be co-designed to support the education and employment needs of young people. This program is an industry skills development program to provide young people

with access to training and education. The program will be tailored to meet individuals' literacy needs and provide pathways to employment and/or further education. It will build the skills of the young people chainsaw use, art, first aid, fencing, welding, fire management and farming.

### Next Steps

There is much more work to be done to support the wellbeing of young people in the Kimberley. In particular, the development of a co-designed juvenile justice model that will identify, develop and integrate youth interventions that provide services in the Kimberley to address the complex needs of young people.

The Department of Justice remains committed to working alongside the Kimberley community to develop community led long term solutions to reduce the number of young people being in the justice system.



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