

A REVIEW OF THE 1998 DELIVERY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS IN QUEENSLAND CORRECTIONS

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Since 1995 structured, accredited Vocational Education and Training (VET) and literacy education has been delivered to prisoners in Queensland Correctional Centres. Prior to that time vocational training was offered to prisoners on an ad hoc basis and in most cases was neither structured or accredited. The accredited VET and literacy education being delivered was perceived by stake holders to be a valuable and an important part of the rehabilitation process for prisoners. In 1999 it was decided by Queensland Corrections to undertake a review of the 1998 VET and literacy education program in order to validate those perceptions. This paper reports on this review which was conducted between February and May 1999.

This paper discusses the background to the review, the identified terms of reference and describes the program offered to prisoners. The methodology adopted involved extensive consultation with all stakeholders in the program to ensure that reliable information was obtained and to make valid recommendations. The review document is soon to be tabled at a Queensland Department of Corrective Services Board of Management meeting for endorsement.

BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

Vocational educational and training has an important role to play within the correctional system as an integral part of the management and rehabilitation of prisoners. The national literacy study (ABS, 1996) conducted in Queensland correctional centres indicated that a substantially larger proportion of prisoners have serious literacy and numeracy needs than people in the wider community.

Vocational education and training for prisoners focuses on the acquisition of vocational skills which will lead to employment on release and accredited vocational education and training is delivered in all correctional centres in Queensland. This training includes the delivery of literacy education. A large proportion of this training is delivered in correctional centres with the financial support of the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations (DETIR). The extent and the curriculum requirements of the training delivered is determined through a central process negotiated between Queensland Corrections and DETIR.

The review was commissioned by Queensland Corrections which was a corporatised company owned by the Queensland government. Queensland Corrections provided correctional management for all but two custodial correctional centres and a number of community corrections centres in Queensland. To ensure the quality and the effectiveness of the training and education delivered and that the process of the delivery of the training is meeting the needs of the stakeholders, Queensland Corrections undertook to review both the vocational training and the literacy education that was delivered to prisoners in correctional centres in 1998. The major external stakeholder of the review was the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations (DETIR) which had requested a review to demonstrate the effectiveness (or otherwise) of the delivery of vocational education and training and literacy education in correctional centres.

The review assessed the value of the delivery of vocational education and training in meeting the needs of prisoners for rehabilitation and facilitating the acquisition of skills necessary for the integration of a prisoner into the community on release from prison. It was hoped, particularly by educational staff at the operational level, that the review may be valuable ensuring the maintenance of support by DETIR and perhaps also in facilitating an increase in the allocated hours to cater for the growing need for increased delivery of vocational education and training and literacy education resulting from the growth in prisoner numbers.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To determine the effectiveness of the process for the purchase and delivery of vocational education and training and literacy education within Queensland Corrections.
2. To determine the effectiveness of the delivery of vocational education and training and literacy education in meeting the needs of the prisoners in the rehabilitative process.
3. To determine the effectiveness of the delivery of vocational education and training and literacy education in meeting the needs of Queensland Corrections in the management of prisoners.
4. To identify the links between literacy programs and the ability of prisoners to effectively participate in VET and other programs delivered in correctional centres
5. To identify the links between the delivery of VET and literacy training to increase employment opportunities/potential for participating prisoners. This could also include the development of personal skills for work readiness in participating prisoners.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DELIVERY OF VET IN QUEENSLAND CORRECTIONS

1. Contracted Training

a) *Vocational Education and Training*

During 1998, 133 948 Annual Hours Curriculum (AHC) of Vocational Education and Training (VET) was delivered in the various correctional and community centres and the three youth detention centres operated by Queensland Corrections (QCORR). Training was delivered in the following vocational streams at various locations.

Business	Information Technology	Hospitality	Horticulture	Small Business
Construction	Sport and Recreation	Furnishing	First Aid	Construction
Engineering	Job Seeking/Interview skills	ATSI Studies	Furnishing	

Training was delivered by both public (TAFE) and private providers who gained contracts through a competitive tendering process jointly administered by Purchasing Branch, Program Development Centre, Department of Employment Training and Industrial Relations (DETIR) and Queensland Corrections. Training was provided on a dollar for dollar shared funding arrangement between QCORR and the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations.

The allocation of VET for corrections was identified on the 1998 Queensland Annual VET Plan (1998 State Training Profile). All VET delivered through this process is nationally accredited which enables participants to acquire nationally recognized and accredited vocational skills. Planning for training delivered under this arrangement is such that pathways have been established to enable participants to progress from low level VET skills to higher level whilst serving their time in the various QCORR Centres. Participants are able upon release to continue their training and to gain recognition for any training successfully completed.

b) *Literacy Education - CNL03: Certificate in Vocational Access*

During 1998, 100 000 Annual Hours Curriculum (AHC) of literacy education was allocated for delivery in Queensland Correctional Centres. 82 000 AHC was allocated to QCORR Centres. This training need, also identified on the 1998 Annual VET Plan was supported by the Queensland Adult English Language Literacy and Numeracy (QAELLN) Committee.

This training was allocated to enable prisoners to participate in literacy education to gain functional literacy skills to assist them to successfully undertake other programs conducted in the centres such as the core programs and VET. This training also assisted prisoners to gain personal literacy skills, skills which would equip participants with enhanced social skills enabling them to function more effectively, not only within the corrections environment but also in the community upon release.

All larger custodial centres had an allocation of 9 000 AHC/centre with a reduced amount at the farms., e.g. Sir David Longland Correctional Centre had an allocation of 9 000 AHC and Numinbah an allocation of 3 000 AHC. The privately operated centres, Borallon and Arthur Gorrie, also had an equal allocation.

It is to be noted that although 82 000 AHC of training was allocated the actual AHC generated through enrolments far exceeded that figure. This is a function of the way in which training was contracted and tends to exaggerate the AHC generated. This results from prisoners being enrolled and not completing the full hours allocated to the module. This raises the need for training of this type to be contracted in a more cost effective manner so as to maximise the access hours of literacy support for prisoners and consequently place less emphasis on AHC generation.

2. Centre Purchased Programs

As well as the contracted vocational education and training, centres also obtained VET negotiated and purchased from public and private providers. This training was delivered at low cost as part of profile training offered by public and private providers who delivered other contracted training to prisoners in the various correctional centres. These programs included pre employment, hospitality short courses, ATSI visual arts, horticultural, construction and other vocational programs.

The AHC delivered in this manner amounted to approximately **82 000** AHC during 1998. Accredited training delivered outside the contracted training included the following

Art/ATSI	3840	AHC
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander studies	20 620	AHC
Computer Studies	10 760	AHC
Construction/Landscaping	11 140	AHC
Engineering Studies	2 350	AHC
Furnishing Studies	12 432	AHC
Hospitality studies	18 385	AHC
Literacy ATSI & other	2 220	AHC
TOTAL	<u>81 747</u>	<u>AHC</u>

As well as providing training at low or no cost some training providers also made available resources either in the form of equipment eg computers and welding machines, hand tools and consumables etc. This support from these providers enabled centres to access much needed VET to meet the vocational training needs of prisoners in their care.

3. Traineeships/Apprenticeships

A number of prisoners also undertook traineeships and apprenticeships during this period. Traineeships/apprenticeships included furnishing/cabinet making, metal fabrication, hospitality etc. Although a relatively small number of prisoners were involved in these activities some prisoners employed in prison industries were able to gain important employment skills and also, most importantly, gain recognition for the skills gained and used whilst employed in those industries. The qualifications gained were valuable in improving employment prospects upon release for those prisoners who participated.

Sir .David. Longland Correctional Centre.:

6 apprentices	Joinery
7 trainees	Furnishing
8 trainees	Metal fabrication

Rockhampton Correctional Centre :

1 apprentice	Bread Baker/Pastry Cook
1 apprentice	Engineering Trades person (Mechanical)

Lotus Glen Correctional Centre:

1 Apprentice	Bread Baker/Pastry Cook
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METHODOLOGY - PROJECT PLAN

The project was conducted using the following procedures:-

Clarification of Project Brief and Project Plan

Initial activities carried out were :-

- Initial meetings to identify the reason and the goals for the review
- Clarification of the brief and the methodology to be used
- Endorsement of project plan

Collation of Base Information

- Access and collect existing documentation re delivery of training in Queensland Corrections
- Identification of stakeholders
 - Prisoners
 - Queensland Corrections
 - Management
 - Education Officers
 - Industry Managers
 - Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations
 - Providers of Training in Queensland Corrections
 - Trainers in Queensland correctional centres
- Access and collect information to assist in the design of surveys and structured interviews proforma

Design of Data Collection Instruments and Structured Interview Proforma

Based on information previously researched, questionnaires and structured interview proformas were developed to review the process and delivery of vocational education and training in correctional centres.

The following groups of people were surveyed or interviewed:-

- Education Officers
- Prisoners
- Training Providers and Trainers
- Managers of Offender Development
- Centre Accommodation Managers
- Prison Industry Managers

The data was collected using the following processes:-

- Structured interview proforma for prisoners filled in at interview.
- Questionnaires for:
 - Managers/Offender Development
 - Centre Accommodation Managers
 - Centre Industry Managers
 - Education Officers
 - Training Providers
 - Trainers

The data collection instruments included questions on all of the issues identified in the initial clarification of the project brief.

Collection of Data through surveys and interviews

- The data collection instruments were piloted in smaller centres in South- East Queensland
- Any refinements deemed necessary were made to the instruments.
- Project officers conducted interviews with prisoners using the interview proforma with provision for more detailed open-ended statements. The interviews were conducted in small groups and individual interviews depending on the number of prisoners involved and their availability and willingness to be involved in the project.
- Prisoners were randomly selected by Education Officers from each centre's nominal roll
- Three categories of prisoner were interviewed. They were:-
 - ◆ Prisoners who completed one or more VET or Literacy Programs in 1998
 - ◆ Prisoners who commenced a Vet or Literacy program and dropped out in 1998
 - ◆ Prisoners who did not undertake any VET or Literacy programs in 1998.
- Questionnaires were distributed to all Education Officers prior to collection of data. Education Officers were interviewed on a one-to one basis or in small groups
- Questionnaires were distributed to all training providers delivering training in correctional centres. Some training providers were also interviewed on a one-to one basis.
- Questionnaires were distributed to all Managers/ Offender Development in correctional centres prior to data collection. Where possible Managers of Offender Development were interviewed on

a one-to one basis.

- Questionnaires were distributed to a sample:-
 - ◆ trainers delivering in correctional centres
 - ◆ Industry Managers in correctional centres
 - ◆ Accommodation Managers in correctional centres

Where possible these stakeholders were interviewed on a one-to one basis or in small groups.

Analysis of Surveys/Structured Interviews

Procedures for the analysis of collected data as follows:-

- Information was processed from questionnaires and structured interviews
- Information from questionnaires and structured interviews was analysed in relationship to the objectives and goals of the review.
- Data was presented in relation to Terms of Reference
- A summary of conclusions was determined
- Recommendations were made for the continued delivery of vocational education and training in correctional centres.

Preparation of Final report

A detailed and extensive report of the findings of the review was prepared and will be disseminated to all interested stakeholders.

OUTCOMES OF THE REVIEW

During the course of this review the overall feedback from the stakeholders interviewed was of a very positive nature. The benefits of the delivery of vocational education and training to prisoners in correctional centres are very highly valued by prisoners, Education Officers, operational staff, industry staff, trainers and training providers. This is evident in the analysis of the quantitative data and qualitative information obtained from all of the stakeholders surveyed. This review demonstrate that the benefits of vocational education and training for prisoners are far wider than simply the acquisition of industry specific skills for employment. Many prisoners have been disadvantaged by their inability to access education, training and employment in the community prior to incarceration. For effective utilisation of vocational skills for employment on release, a majority of prisoners need to increase their feelings of self esteem, become confident in their ability to acquire new skills and knowledge and to develop a wider range of knowledge and understanding of themselves and their abilities.

Term of Reference 1 examined both the Competitive Tendering Process for the purchases of VET and literacy education for the contacted offer and also the administrative processes for delivery of VET within the centres. There is some substantial degree of dissatisfaction with the competitive tendering process with stakeholders feeling that the process is too long and complex and is not responsive or flexible enough to adequately meet the requirements for the delivery of training in correctional centres. There was generally a high degree of satisfaction with the administration and organisation for the delivery of training in correctional centres. While there is generally uniformity of process within individual centres it was stated by a number of stakeholders that these processes were not uniform in correctional centres throughout the state. This was however not seen as a serious problem which

effected the effectiveness of the delivery of training in centres.

Term of Reference 2 examined the role that the delivery of VET in correctional centres plays in meeting the needs of prisoners in the rehabilitative process. The information received from all stakeholders was extremely positive and consistent. It was articulated very strongly that prisoners who had the opportunity to undertake VET and literacy education successfully, benefited in many ways which linked directly to the rehabilitation of that prisoner. It was also stated very strongly by all parties surveyed that VET's role in the rehabilitation process of prisoners was not accorded enough recognition in the sentence management process.

The data collected through the addressing of **Term of Reference 3** indicated that a large percentage of Queensland Corrections staff and trainers have observed that some prisoners undertaking VET programs have shown attitudinal and behavioural improvements. This has a positive effect for the management of the prisoners within the correctional system. This improvement in behaviour and attitude was also recognised by prisoners surveyed.

Term of Reference 4 sought to identify whether prisoners undertaking literacy education were able to participate more effectively in other VET and core programs in the future. The data collected from all stakeholders interviewed clearly indicated that literacy education has a pivotal role to play in enhancing prisoners skills so they can successfully complete core and VET programs. The undertaking of these programs by prisoners is an integral part of the rehabilitative focus of the provision of Correctional Services.

In relation to **Term of Reference 5** all stakeholders surveyed, overwhelmingly supported the premise that the undertaking VET and literacy education had very positive effects in preparing for work. The undertaking of VET substantially increased prisoners' personal skills and also assisted in the acquisition of vocational skills that will enable them to obtain employment not only within the centre but also upon release.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The purchasing process should be completed and the contracts issued before the end of November of the year prior to delivery of training. This will allow time for providers to negotiate with correctional centres and trainers so delivery can commence at the beginning of the calendar year.
2. The purchasing process should be weighted to encourage local providers in regional areas, particularly in Central and Far North Queensland to tender successfully for the delivery of training in correctional centres.
3. Consideration should be given to increasing the contract time to a minimum of two years.
4. Investigations should be implemented to consider other processes for the purchase and delivery of accredited VET for Queensland Corrections. Consideration could be given to the following:-
 - Continuation of the current process - Purchasing of VET through a competitive purchasing process with DETIR. VET needs identified on the State Training Plan. (Shared cost) (*Queensland model*)
 - Establish a Corrections Industry Training Advisory Board (ITAB) for the identification of VET training needs for prisoners. VET needs to be identified on the State Training Plan. (*Victorian model*)

- The Department of Corrective Services becoming a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and the establishment of a Queensland Corrections Training Institute providing accredited VET to prisoners within Queensland correctional centres. This would include identifying training needs, developing and accrediting curriculum where suitable curriculum is not available and purchasing and delivering suitable accredited curriculum under licence. *(NSW model)*
 - Funding to be allocated directly to Queensland Department of Corrective Services to purchase VET from registered training providers (RTO) of choice, for delivery in Queensland correctional centres. *(Part current Queensland model)*
5. Purchase of the literacy should be based on hours of delivery i.e. teaching/tutoring hours delivered per week, and not based on Annual Hours Curriculum (AHC)
 6. Administration assistance is necessary to support Education Officers in the organisation and administration of the delivery of vocational education and training
 7. Greater acknowledgments should be accorded by the Department of Corrective Services for the role that VET plays as a vital partner in the rehabilitative process of prisoners. This includes greater recognition for VET in the Sentence Management process.
 8. A policy should be formulated to enable prisoners employed within correctional centres to be released from work to attend VET programs without financial disadvantage.
 9. Consideration should be given by the Department of Corrective Services to developing a process to provide prisoners with continuity of VET when moving through the corrections system
 10. Investigations should be implemented to consider the process for preparing prisoners for release. Specific consideration should be given to the establishment of a position to provide prisoners with adequate support, just prior to, or on release, to find employment or to continue with vocational education and training on release. The person occupying this position should have a high level of understanding of vocational education and training and accessing employment.
 11. Greater recognition should be accorded by the Department of Corrective Services for the role that VET plays as a vital partner in the management of prisoners
 12. There is a need for professional development for all staff on VET issues particularly as they pertain to prisoners and their management within the correctional system.
 13. Providers of literacy education should be encouraged to integrate the delivery of literacy education with core and vocational education and training programs undertaken by prisoners and reduce "stand alone" delivery where ever possible.
 14. Funding should be made available to create more employment positions within centres for Volunteer Literacy Tutors and to conduct the appropriate accredited training for those tutors.

15. The widespread benefits of vocational education and training as delivered in Queensland Correctional centres are clearly demonstrated by all stakeholder surveyed in:-

- obtaining significant vocational skills for employment on release
- playing a significant role in the rehabilitative process of prisoners
- increasing the personal development of prisoners

The delivery of VET should be maintained and supported within the correctional system.

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17. The amount of VET being delivered in Queensland Correctional centres should be increased substantially to meet the needs of prisoners in the system and to accommodate for the increased numbers of prisoners being incarcerated.

18. The amount of literacy education being delivered in Queensland Correctional centres should be increased substantially to meet the needs of prisoners in the system and to accommodate for the increased numbers of prisoners being incarcerated.

19. Where possible more emphasis should be placed by the Department of Corrective Services on providing a pathway for prisoners to be able to progress from entry level training to more advanced training when moving through the corrections system.

20. Consideration should be given by The Department of Corrective Services for the provision of the necessary resources to enable effective delivery of quality vocational education and training to prisoners.

21. Prisoners should have access to training from public and private providers, subsidised by the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations.

22. Because of the direct employment links between traineeships/apprenticeships and employment, prisoners working in industries in correctional centres should be able to access government funded New Apprenticeships training

23. There should be greater liaison and consultation between the Senior Program Officer- Vocational Education and Training and the Director, Prison Industries when planning for the delivery of vocational training in correctional centres

24. There should be greater liaison and consultation between education and industry staff in the selection and delivery of vocational training in correctional centres

25. As a matter of urgency, communication should be established by the Director General of the Department of Corrective services with the Director-General of the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations for the continuation of the delivery of vocational education and training for prisoners in Queensland correctional centres

During the course of the review there was a complete restructure of the delivery of corrective services in Queensland. The Queensland Corrective Services Commission, which was the accountable body to the government for the provision of corrective services, was abolished and replaced by the Department of Corrective Services. Queensland Corrections was de-corporatised and became a business unit of the new department. It appears that this re-structure may have a substantial effect on the acceptance of the findings of the review. The final report for the review was presented to the Director Queensland Corrections in June, to the Director-General of the Queensland Department of Corrective Services in July and in September the final report is being distributed to interested stakeholders with the proviso that no recommendations have yet been accepted.

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997, National Literacy Survey.

Queensland Corrections, 1999, Review into the Delivery of Vocational Education and Training in Queensland Corrections.