

Provision of VET in correctional institutions: A recidivism study

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This ANTA-funded project examined the multiple disadvantages faced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders in correctional institutions. In the initial part of the project, interviews with over 100 prisoners and staff who work in corrections revealed several factors that prison staff and prisoners believed facilitated and acted as barriers to the provision of vocational education and related programs in centres. Indigenous prisoners were most likely to continue with VET courses where they had access to one-on-one support from trainers and tutors, and where there were other Indigenous prisoners training with them. The second part of the study showed that those prisoners who had greater chances of returning to the corrections system were more likely to have shorter initial sentences; to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; and to be convicted of property offences and offences against good order. Those offenders less likely to return were older, had higher levels of education (especially grade 12 or beyond), were convicted of robbery/extortion or drug offences, and had participated in VET programs before their initial release. Depending on the measure of recidivism used (i.e. two measures were used in this report), the analyses showed a drop of either 24% or 28% in the rate of recidivism associated with involvement by offenders in VET programs.

A full version of the paper is now available as the recently published report:

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