

Parliamentary Inquiry into strategies to prevent and reduce criminal activity in Queensland



Crime Inquiry 2014
Submission 039

Together Queensland Submission by Wolston Correctional Centre members

Background

Any review of strategies to reduce and prevent criminal activity must also consider the important role Queensland Corrective Services plays in this endeavour.

According to the Report on Government Services 2014, Corrective services “aim to provide a safe, secure and humane custodial environment and an effective community corrections environment in which prisoners and offenders are effectively managed, commensurate with their needs and the risks they pose to the community. Additionally, corrective services aim *to reduce the risk of re-offending by providing services and program interventions that address the causes of offending, maximise the chances of successful reintegration into the community and encourage offenders to adopt a law - abiding way of life.*”¹ (emphasis added)

This submission calls on the inquiry to consider the negative impacts recent changes in Correctional Centres have had on the ability to achieve these goals.

Centre Profile

The current profile of Wolston Correctional Centre is as follows:

Location: Wolston correctional centre

Current Centre Population: 724

Sections

Secure:

Build Capacity	300	Current Population	374
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¹ Queensland Government. *Report on Government Services 2014*. Released 29 January 2014. Vol C, Chap 8 at 8.1. http://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/132324/rogs-2014-volumec-chapter8.pdf

Conclusion

Together members employed at the Wolston Correctional Centre are of the opinion that the Queensland Government's strategy of the increasing incarceration of offenders and the overcrowding of the Centre has decreased the effectiveness of Prisoner rehabilitation and increased the likelihood reoffending.

This along with the reduction in programmes and employment has also significantly increased the level of serious incidents and assaults of prisoner on officer and prisoner on prisoner.

The impacts have serious and long-term implications for prisoners, staff and their families. The impacts also have significant and cost effectiveness implications for the State and the local community as follows but not limited to:

- cost of sick leave and Workcover QLD premiums to the taxpayer when Custodial Correctional Officers are injured at work
- Medical costs associated with prisoner injury due to increase in assaults
- Cost of lengthening incarceration due to charges arising from offences of prisoners
- Cost of increase reoffending and return to incarceration due to the lack of rehabilitation programmes preparing prisoners to re-enter the community
- Cost to local businesses who longer have prison industry supplying goods and knock on effect to local employment
- Cost and risk to safety of the community due to increase in escapes and perimeter breaches

Recommendations

The Together members of Wolston Correctional Centre recommend the following to the Committee for consideration:

- Increase unlock time to 11 hours a day
- Reintroduce programs and other activities design to rehabilitate prisoners.
- Review the issue of over-compliance within correctional centres
- Address the issue of over managed jails, with many managers with hardly any work load to do
- Ensure the same mandatory jail time for assaulting prison officers as police and emergency workers
- Build more prisons to avoid overcrowding and double up, better forward thinking by the department when it comes to prisoner numbers increasing.
- Remove court ordered parole as 80% of new receptions to a centre are court order patrol returns
- Provide Correctional Officers at the lowest level the necessary authority and tools to manage prisoner behaviour including increasing powers in in relation to breaches, offensive behaviour assaultive , drug & gang related activity.