

Question on Notice
No. 734
Asked on Wednesday 23 May 2007

MR WEIGHTMAN asked the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (MS SPENCE)-

QUESTION:

Will she outline how the Queensland Corrective Service's Throughcare initiative works to better prepare offenders for their release back into the general community?

ANSWER:

Queensland Corrective Services recognises that prisoners typically face a range of obstacles to successful re-settlement in the community and for many of them, a return to offending becomes the "easy way out."

Research has shown that planning for reintegration and successful re-settlement in the community is an ongoing process that requires an integrated approach across the various areas of correctional operations.

Since 2004 the central principle driving business operations and policy strategies within Queensland Corrective Services has been the provision of through-care for offenders.

Through-care is defined as offender management strategies which focus on achieving outcomes to support continuing rehabilitation from the start of an offender's sentence and supported by the community after correctional supervision ceases.

Under a through-care framework, management of offenders flows from detailed assessment of risk and need which is then used in all planning, service delivery and management of offenders while under correctional supervision.

The aim is to ensure that as much as possible is done with offenders by Queensland Corrective Services to support their rehabilitation and efforts not to re-offend.

The introduction of the Integrated Offender Management System in 2005 was the first strategic initiative to improve offender management through the integration of operational practices by providing a shared information system accesible by all staff within Queensland Corrective Services.

Current work to implement through-care principles within Queensland Corrective Services includes the introduction of a revised assessment tool to better target intervention with offenders, continued improvement of individual offender case management practice through provision of revised training manuals and guidelines, extension of the Post-Release Employment Assistance Program and the establishment of a new business model for Probation and Parole.

One of the key areas for the through-care initiative has been the complete revision of release planning and post-release support structures within Queensland Corrective Services.

Queensland Corrective Services introduced the Integrated Transitional Support Model in 2006 which provides a new strategic framework to guide operational processes assisting offenders with planning for release from custody, day of release assistance and post-release support.

The model incorporate a release preparation program that provides prisoners with an opportunity to address their practical re-settlement needs prior to release through the provision of accurate information, planning assistance, emotional support and linkages with appropriate community agencies.

In addition, new processes have been implemented to ensure that Probation and Parole staff now work with offenders prior to and on the day of release to better support offenders in their transition from custody to supervision in the community.

The model also operates in conjunction with other agency initiatives, such as the Post Release Employment Assistance Program (PREAP) and a new Offender Re-integration Support Service.

The Offender Re-integration Support Service will commence from 1 July 2007. This service is provided by non-Government organisations formally contracted by Queensland Corrective Services to provide assistance to offenders with addressing on-going re-integration needs such as accommodation, employment, addressing substance abuse, repairing relationships and reconnecting with family and communities.

In order to ensure through-care principles continue to be part of both the strategic and operational business of Queensland Corrective Services, a Through-care and Integrated Delivery Unit has now been established permanently within the Agency. This unit will specialise in promoting through-care and integration of Agency business processes and service delivery systems within Queensland Corrective Services.

Through-care is a smarter way of doing business that puts time and resources into initiatives that are going to produce the most effective outcomes.