The Management of Long-Term Prisoners in Australia

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Australian Institute of Criminology

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by

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"Due to a general lack of interest
Tomorrow has been cancelled
And in its place will be
A continuous repetition of today
Which may be very monotonous
But definitely seems to be
In response to public demand."

Tom G. (46)
Offence : fraud
Sentence: 7 years

Quoted in Tony Parker (Ed.) *The Man Inside: An Anthology of Writing and Conversational Comment by Men in Prison*
London: Michael Joseph, 1973

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PREFACE

The research reported in this monograph is the product of two separate, but related projects.

In 1976, the Criminology Research Council became aware of speculation that in recent years there have been significant changes in the composition of the prison population in Australia. It appeared to some observers of the prison scene that long-term prisoners and those convicted of crimes of violence were representing an increasingly significant proportion of the prison population. In a climate of unease, punctuated by serious disturbances in a number of prisons, some officials were apprehensive that changes in sentencing and the diversion into non-custodial measures of people who would, in the past, have gone to prison may result in a 'hard core' of tough, alienated individuals facing long periods of incarceration who may present unique problems of management. Others, with a more humanitarian concern, questioned the morality and utility of subjecting offenders to very long terms in prison and called for investigation of the effects of such an experience.

Aware that these concerns may well prompt researchers to apply to the Criminology Research Council for funds to enable them to examine the changing prison population, the Council requested the Australian Institute of Criminology to prepare a background paper on research issues concerning special problems of inmate management. The first author completed this paper in January 1977 and it was presented to the Council. Following discussion by the Council a revised paper was prepared containing a suggested research programme and in June 1977 this was presented to the Annual Conference of Ministers responsible for correctional services in Australia. The Ministers requested the Australian Institute of Criminology to conduct the research in cooperation with the States.

In May 1978, representatives of State correctional departments and the Institute met in Adelaide and planned a research programme to

examine long-term imprisonment in Australia. As a result of that meeting a number of research tasks were carried out by the first author with the cooperation of the States. These tasks resulted in three reports, which were presented to the Annual Conference of Ministers in 1978 and 1979:

1. Problems of Inmate Management: Results of a Survey of Officers-in-Charge of Australian Correctional Institutions

2. The Effects of Long-Term Imprisonment: A Summary of Major Research Findings

3. National Survey of Long-Term Prisoners in Australia

The findings contained in the three reports have been incorporated into the present publication. In addition, further relevant information has been obtained from prison administrators and the views of long-term prisoners were obtained from a lengthy interview with a group of such individuals at Pentridge Prison.

The second portion of the research reported here began when, in July 1977, the second author was requested by the Director-General of the Department of Community Welfare Services of Victoria (then the Social Welfare Department) Mr B.D. Bodna, to undertake a review of the classification system in use in Victorian prisons. The methods used to undertake this assignment included:

1. Perusal of all files dealing with classification in the Head Office of the Social Welfare Department.

2. Observation of the meetings of the Classification Committees at a number of Victorian prisons.

3. Discussions with senior officers of the Social Welfare Department and with Governors, Superintendents and others within institutions, and

4. Group interviews of a semi-structured nature, with prisoners who had been through the classification process in a number of institutions.

The review of classification in Victoria was completed in May 1978 with the presentation of a report to the Social Welfare Department. Because of the valuable information that emerged from the Victorian study it was decided to enlarge the study to encompass all Australian States and the Northern Territory. As classification procedures are central to the administrative decisions that play so important a part in the lives of long-term prisoners, it was also decided to investigate particularly the classification of this group. The results of this nationwide study comprise Chapter Two of this monograph.

We would like to thank the Criminology Research Council and the Victorian Department of Community Welfare Services for the interest which provided the impetus for the two projects, and the Ministers responsible for correctional services for their continuing interest in the long-term prisoner project.

Particular thanks are due to the Permanent Heads of Correctional services for their support and practical assistance. Without their cooperation and that of their staffs who collected data for us, the projects could not have been undertaken. These Permanent Heads are:

Mr M.J. Dawes (Director of Correctional Services, Victoria)

Mr R.J. Donnelly (Director of Correctional Services, Northern Territory)

Mr L.K. Downs (then Acting Commissioner of Corrective Services, New South Wales), and latterly

Dr T. Vinson (Chairman, Corrective Services Commission of New South Wales)

Mr L.B. Gard (Director of Correctional Services, South Australia)

Mr D. Hornibrook (Controller of Prisons, Tasmania)

Mr W. Kidston (Director, Department of Corrections, Western Australia)

Mr A.J. Whitney (Comptroller-General of Prisons, Queensland), and latterly

Mr E.J. Collins (the present Comptroller-General)

It should be noted, however, that the views expressed here are the authors' and should not be construed as the official position of any correctional service or its officers.

Finally, we would like to thank Marjorie Johnson and Annette Waters for their work on the manuscript and our colleague Dr Stephen Mugford for his most helpful critical comments.

CHAPTER ONE

AUSTRALIAN PRISON POPULATIONS

There are currently approximately 10,000 people in prison in Australia of whom nearly 30 per cent can be classified as long-term prisoners in that they have been sentenced to five years or more, regardless of minimum or non-parole periods, or have been sentenced to indefinite terms. A further 10 per cent are unconvicted prisoners remanded in custody while awaiting trial. There are great differences between the six States and two Territories in the proportions of the relevant populations in prison, and this chapter will briefly review these matters. The results of a survey of long-term prisoners in each of the States will be presented in more detail.

TRENDS IN THE USE OF IMPRISONMENT

The Australian Institute of Criminology has been collecting since May 1976 monthly statistics on the numbers of prisoners held in each Australian jurisdiction. These data include the daily average numbers of male and female prisoners held each month, and the actual numbers of convicted and remand prisoners held on the first day of the month. Data are also obtained on the operation of work release and attendance centre programmes.

The most recently available data from this source relates to September 1979 and the key statistics are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Australian Prison Populations, September 1979

State	Daily Average Prisoners Males	Females	Total	General Population* (in thousands)	Imprisonment Rates
N.S.W.	3544	130	3674	5092	72.2
VIC.	1681	54	1735	3866	44.9
QLD	1576	48	1624	2199	73.9
S.A.	791	28	819	1294	63.3
W.A.	1407	76	1483	1248	118.8
TAS.	267	4	271	418	64.8
N.T.	238	11	249**	117	212.8
A.C.T.	40	2	42***	224	18.8
AUST.	9544	353	9897	14458	68.5

* Estimated Population as at 30 September 1979 (subject to revision).
** 18 prisoners in this total were serving sentences in S.A. prisons and 3 (including 1 female) in N.S.W. prisons.
*** 34 prisoners (including 2 females) in this total were serving sentences in N.S.W. prisons.

A number of comments need to be made about this table. In the first place, it can be seen that the majority of prisoners in Australia are male, with female prisoners comprising only approximately three per cent of the total. Secondly, it can be seen that the total number of prisoners, 9897, yields a national imprisonment rate (daily average number of prisoners per 100,000 of the general population) of 68.5, a figure which is considerably lower than found for most other countries in the world. The most striking fact to emerge from this table, however, is the very great differences in the use of imprisonment between the eight jurisdictions. The imprisonment rates vary between 212.8 for the Northern Territory and 18.8 for the Australian Capital Territory, both low population areas and thus atypical of the remainder of the country. Even if the six States are considered alone, however, the rates vary between 118.8 (for Western Australia) and 44.9 (for Victoria), a factor of nearly three dividing the highest from the lowest.

A necessary but not sufficient factor in the explanation of the differential use of imprisonment between Australian jurisdictions is the proportion of each general population which is comprised of Aborigines. The data are sketchy but it has been claimed that Aborigines as compared with whites are more likely to be charged with offences, more likely to be arrested than proceeded against by summons, less likely to be granted bail, more likely to be found guilty, and more likely to be sentenced to imprisonment than given a non-custodial order.[1] The limited empirical data available tend strongly to support this claim. In Western Australia in 1977, for example, where Aborigines comprise 2.1 per cent of the total population, they comprised 36.2 per cent of the State's prison population.[2] Similarly, it was shown in South Australia in 1972 that Aborigines comprised 15.3 per cent of the daily average prison population, compared with 0.6 per cent of the total community.[3] In this latter State, it was also shown that the proportion of incarcerated female Aborigines was even greater than it was for males, relative to population figures.

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1. Eggleston, E., 'Fear, Favour or Affection - Aborigines and the Criminal Law in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia', *Aborigines in Australian Society*, Vol. 13, A.N.U. Press, Canberra, 1976, p.10.
2. Annual Report, Department of Corrections, Western Australia, 1978.
3. Biles D., 'Aborigines and Prisons: a South Australian Study', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 6, No. 4, December 1973.

The number of Aborigines in each jurisdiction does not, however, fully explain the differences in imprisonment rates shown in Table 1. The incompleteness of this explanation is demonstrated by the fact that if only non-Aboriginal prisoners were counted, significant differences in imprisonment rates would still remain. A number of other factors, such as geographic and social isolation, the availability of mental hospital accommodation, and the relative efficiency of police forces, have been hypothesised as possibly explaining the differences, but it is clear that those jurisdictions which have high imprisonment rates do not have lower rates of crime. An analysis of serious crime rates and imprisonment rates for Australian jurisdictions over 1973-74 has shown a low positive correlation between crime and imprisonment rates (r. = 0.438).[4] This suggests a slight tendency for imprisonment rates to be high where crime rates are also high, but, more importantly, this evidence categorically refutes any suggestion that communities which imprison high proportions of their populations thereby gain high levels of public safety. (Similar results have been found from analyses of comparable data for American States and Canadian Provinces.)

The material presented thus far strongly suggests that there is ample opportunity for further de-institutionalisation of corrections in Australia. Even if it were assumed that the low imprisonment jurisdictions of the Australian Capital Territory and Victoria had reached the lowest possible levels (a view not necessarily supported by anyone), there is clearly room for lowering of the rates in all other jurisdictions without unleashing a holocaust of criminal behaviour on the innocent and unprotected members of the community. Even if all Australian imprisonment rates were only reduced to a level equivalent to that of Victoria, the total number of prisoners would fall from 10,000 to approximately 5,500.

A further descriptive aspect of the monthly statistics collected by the Australian Institute of Criminology concerns the proportion of all prisoners who are on remand. The latest available data are again for September 1979 and are shown in Table 2.

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4. Biles, D., 'Crime and the Use of Prisons', *Federal Probation*, Vol. XXXXIII, No. 2, 1979, pp.39-43.

Table 2: Remand Prisoners as a Proportion of Total Prison Population and of the General Population, Australian States and Territories, September 1979

State	Total Prisoners	Prisoners on Remand	Percentage of Remandees	Remandees per 100,000 of General Population
N.S.W.	3656	525	14.4	10.3
VIC.	1745	126	7.2	3.3
QLD	1623	98	6.0	4.5
S.A.	819	140	17.1	10.8
W.A.	1477	119	8.1	9.5
TAS.	276	23	8.3	5.5
N.T.	252	49	19.4	41.9
A.C.T.	42	11	26.2	4.9
AUST.	9890	1091	11.0	7.5

In September 1979, 1091, or 11 per cent, of all Australian prisoners were remandees. However, there are considerable differences between jurisdictions in this rate. As a percentage of the total prison populations, the Australian Capital Territory is seen to have the highest proportion and Queensland the lowest. These percentages are obviously influenced by the absolute sizes of the relevent prison populations and therefore a more accurate picture is gained by reference to the final column in the table, remandees per 100,000 of the general population. From this column it can be seen that the Northern Territory, South Australia and New South Wales have the highest 'remanding rates'. These differences may be a reflection of delays in the hearing of cases in the higher courts, or a function of different policies with regard to the granting of bail.

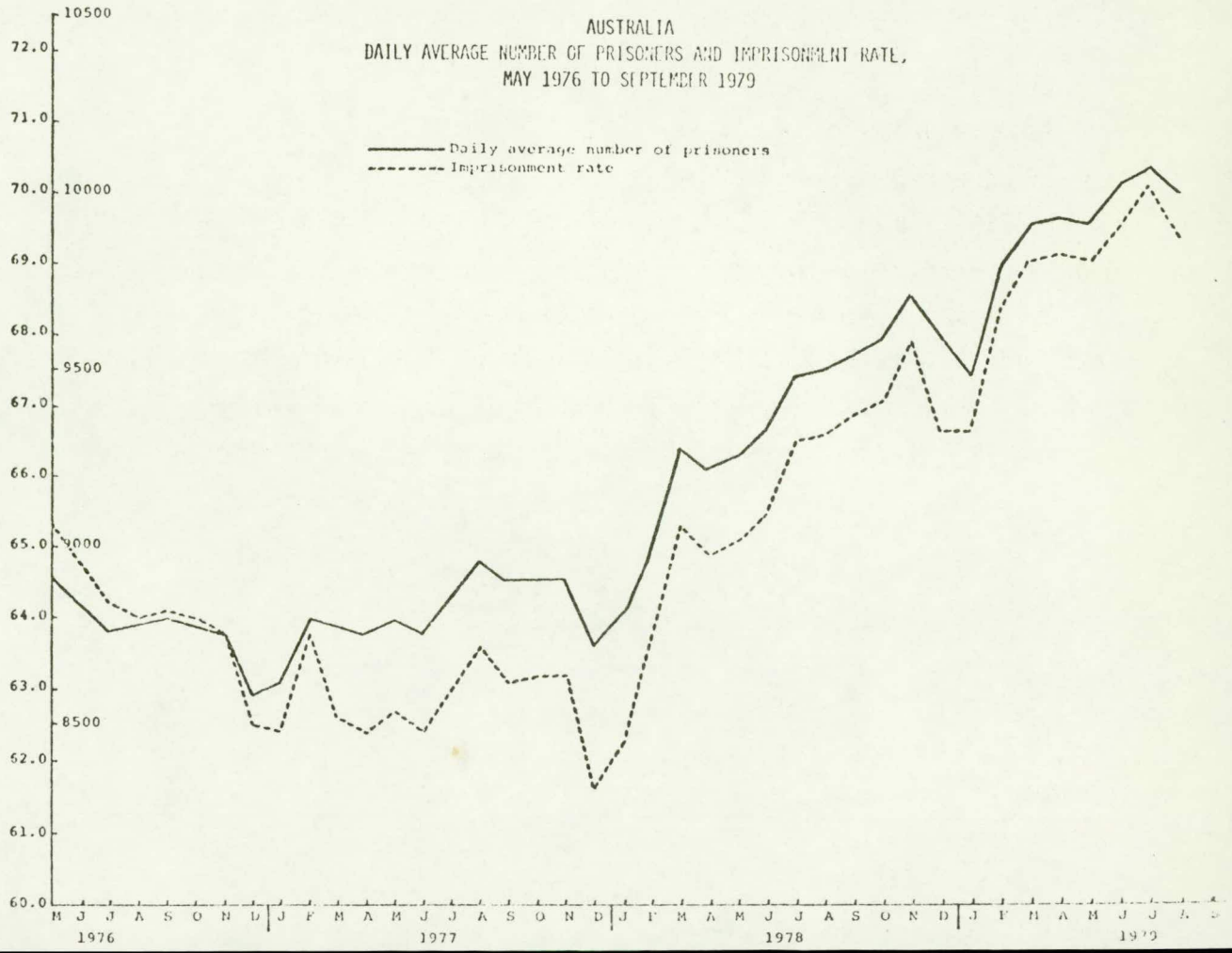
This relatively small group of prisoners in Australia are a cause of particular concern as in some jurisdictions the physical conditions of their incarceration would not meet the United Nations Minimum Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The persons concerned are frequently worse off than convicted prisoners in the same prison system, and it has been alleged that in some cases remand prisoners have been encouraged to plead guilty in order to expedite their change of status to that of convicted prisoners with the consequence of more congenial living conditions. The truth of this allegation is not known, but the fact that it has been made, and the fact that the

conditions in some remand sections are unsatisfactory, is a clear indication of the need for improvement.

Many commentators suggest that the only solution to the problem of remand prisoners is to provide special pre-trial detention institutions which are quite separate to any existing prisons. This proposal has been discussed in many parts of Australia, but at the time of writing it has only been put into effect in the Australian Capital Territory with the establishment of the Belconnen Remand Centre. It is understood that plans for similar institutions have been prepared for Melbourne and Adelaide.

Apart from the differences in the use of imprisonment between jurisdictions for both convicted and unconvicted offenders, there is considerable interest in Australia in the changes in the total prison population which occur over time. These data are especially needed if administrators are to be able to predict their future requirements for prison accommodation. Figure 1 shows the monthly (daily average) totals of prisoners in Australia and the national imprisonment rate since May 1976.

Figure 1



From this figure it can be seen that over a period of just over three years there has been considerable variation in the use of imprisonment. The lowest imprisonment rate was found for December 1977 when the total number of prisoners was 8718 and the rate 61.6, but since that time a fairly dramatic increase has been recorded.

The increase that occurred throughout 1978 and for most of 1979 has resulted in fairly severe overcrowding in some prison systems. A survey conducted by the Australian Institute of Criminology in March 1979 found that the most serious overcrowding occurred in Western Australian and New South Wales systems. The results of that survey for each State and Territory are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Prison Occupancy in Australia as at 1 March 1979

	Total Accommodation Available	Total Number of Prisoners	Percentage Occupancy
N.S.W.	4097	3918	95.6
VIC.	1877	1590	84.7
QLD	1812	1609	88.8
S.A.	1169	783	67.0
W.A.	1423	1472	103.4
TAS.	449	293	65.3
N.T.	266	214	80.5
A.C.T.	18	7	38.9
AUST.	11111	9882	88.9

Trends in imprisonment rates for each of the major jurisdictions have also been plotted over a longer period of time and these are reproduced in Table 4. From this table it can be seen that some jurisdictions have characteristically maintained high or low rates even though there are slow fluctuations over time.

Table 4: Australian Imprisonment Rates 1959-60/1978-79

Year	N.S.W.*	VIC.	QLD	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	N.T.
1959-60	82.1	60.7	62.9	72.3	88.7	65.8	
1960-61	79.3	64.9	59.6	73.0	89.7	61.2	
1961-62	81.6	67.5	60.4	78.8	95.8	68.7	
1962-63	78.9	66.0	59.9	77.9	106.7	68.4	
1963-64	80.7	68.0	56.9	80.1	109.2	65.4	
1964-65	74.6	64.3	55.9	77.2	107.2	64.3	
1965-66	78.3	61.0	61.5	81.9	103.0	64.6	
1966-67	80.5	65.0	64.6	81.0	117.8	78.1	
1967-68	81.8	67.6	62.4	88.2	133.0	85.0	
1968-69	81.1	69.0	61.2	88.8	145.3	86.3	
1969-70	82.1	66.8	63.1	84.5	134.7	91.8	
1970-71	83.0	68.6	68.3	78.2	143.9	97.5	
1971-72	86.9	67.0	71.0	77.8	144.8	94.9	
1972-73	85.5	58.8	79.9	72.7	121.5	93.8	
1973-74	66.6	51.7	76.9	62.9	103.8	86.2	
1974-75	66.7	44.3	72.6	59.8	88.6	84.0	
1975-76	71.8	42.6	67.5	59.3	84.1	75.6	
1976-77	69.5	39.7	74.0	55.2	90.0	64.0	185.0
1977-78	69.9	40.2	71.4	58.3	97.0	58.6	148.5
1978-79	73.3	41.5	73.6	61.5	110.5	73.6	163.3

* Including A.C.T.

Over the longer time scale data collected by Johnston and Fox[5] and Grabosky[6] for Victoria and New South Wales respectively tend to show high imprisonment rates in the latter part of the last century, with a steady decline until approximately 1920, after which time fluctuations have been less dramatic. It is notable, however, that in both of these jurisdictions there were noticeable increases in the use of imprisonment during the economic crises of the 1890s and 1930s.

THE LONG-TERM PRISON POPULATION

One of the most significant groups within the Australian prison population is that of prisoners serving long-term sentences. It is estimated that at the time of writing there are slightly under 3,000 persons in Australian prisons who meet the definition given earlier. Although detailed and comparable data are not available for all jurisdictions, the following tables give an indication of the distribution of the long-term population in State institutions. (For the purposes of this discussion, reference to the Australian Capital

5. Johnston, S.W. and Fox, R., *Correction Handbook of Victoria*, Melbourne, 1965.
6. Grabosky, P.N., *Sydney in Ferment: Crime, Dissent and Official Reaction 1788 to 1973*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1977.

Territory and the Northern Territory is omitted. Prisoners from the A.C.T. serve their sentences in New South Wales prisons. The Northern Territory has an expanding and evolving prison system which is now able to handle most persons sentenced there. However, in the past, most long-term prisoners have been accommodated in the South Australian system.)

Table 5 shows the number of long-term prisoners held in Australian prisons in 1978 as a percentage of total prisoners. Major differences are observable between States, with Tasmania having only 14.2 per cent of its prisoners serving long-term sentences and Queensland having 44.0 per cent. The fact that long-term prisoners are an increasingly important group is illustrated by Tables 6 and 7 which show for New South Wales and Victoria, respectively, the changes in the percentage of this group relative to total prison populations over a number of years. Table 8, however, shows that, at least in one State, Western Australia, although absolute numbers of long-termers have increased they have not increased relative to general prison increases.

Table 5: Distribution of Long-Term Prisoners in Australia

State	Total Prison Population	No. Long-Term Prisoners	Long-Term as % of Total
N.S.W.	3247	1406	43.3
VIC.	1454	385	26.5
QLD	1470	647	44.0
S.A.	Data not available		
W.A.	1121	250	22.3
TAS.	247	35	14.2
Total	7539	2723	36.1

Table 6: Changes in the Long-Term Prisoner Population in New South Wales 1969-1978

	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Total Prison Population	3327	3429	3493	3641	3399	2696	3009	3221	3152	3247
No. of Long-Term Prisoners	832	918	933	1026	1055	920	938	1055	1368	1406
Long-Term as % of Total	25.0	26.8	26.7	28.2	31.0	34.1	31.2	32.8	43.4	43.3

Table 7: Changes in the Long-Term Prisoner Population in Victoria 1970-1978

	1970	1973	1975	1977	1978
Total Prison Population	2124	1739	1449	1341	1454
No. of Long-Term Prisoners	335	356	357	342	385
Long-Term as % of Total	15.8	20.5	20.5	25.5	26.5

Table 8: Changes in the Long-Term Prisoner Population in Western Australia 1975-1978

	1975	1976	1977	1978
Total Prison Population	867	873	1032	1121
No. of Long-Term Prisoners	184	182	204	250
Long-Term as % of Total	21.2	20.8	19.8	22.3

Nationally, when the increases in the long-term prison population are viewed in the context of overall decreases in prison populations (until very recently when numbers have again started to increase), it is apparent that there has been a marked change in the structure of Australia's prison populations, with long-termers being much more significant than they were previously. This structural change has been noted with concern by prison administrators. Although, as will be shown, officers in charge of prisons and their uniformed staff tend not to see long-term prisoners as individually 'difficult', for directors of departments and for classification committees the problems of finding suitable accommodation are increasing significantly, and are likely to continue to do so in the future. These problems become more pressing where the number of life sentence prisoners increases steadily because, on average, these individuals will serve the longest terms.

Tables 9, 10 and 11 show for New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia, respectively, how various categories of sentence have contributed to the increase in long-term prisoners. Table 9 shows for the years 1976, 1977, and 1978, that the most significant group of long-termers to increase in New South Wales was that sentenced to five years or more. The number serving such sentences increased by 39 per cent between 1976 and 1978 (326 persons). The group subject to Governor's Pleasure orders decreased by 27 per cent (although this change involved a decrease of only six persons) and the number of individuals serving life sentences increased by 16 per cent (31 persons).

In Victoria a quite different picture emerges. Table 10 shows that the number of persons serving five years or more has remained fairly constant from 1970 to 1978 (in fact, a decrease of five persons). Governor's Pleasure cases increased 56 per cent (an increase of 20 individuals) in the same period. The most significant group to increase involved life sentence cases. Between 1970 and 1978 there was nearly a tenfold increase in this group (an increase from 4 to 39 persons). Given that Freiberg and Biles[7] found that the average term served by a life sentence prisoner in Victoria was about 13 years, this increase will have great significance for future planning if it continues at the same rate.

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7. Freiberg, A. and Biles, D., *The Meaning of 'Life': A Study of Life Sentences in Australia*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 1975.

The situation in Western Australia is shown in Table 11. This shows that between 1975 and 1978 the number of persons held under Governor's Pleasure orders decreased by 13 per cent (from 53 to 46) and life sentence prisoners held increased by 17 per cent (from 23 to 27). The major change took place in the five year plus group, which increased by 63 per cent (from 108 to 176).

Table 9: Categories of Long-Term Prisoners held in New South Wales 1976-1978

Sentence	1976	1977	1978
5 years or more	842	1134	1168
Governor's Pleasure	22	18	16
Life	191	216	222
Total	1055	1368	1406

Table 10: Categories of Long-Term Prisoners held in Victoria 1970-1978

Sentence	1970	1973	1975	1977	1978
5 years or more	295	316	295	268	290
Governor's Pleasure	36	37	47	49	56
Life	4	4	15	25	39
Total	335	357	357	342	385

Table 11: Categories of Long-Term Prisoners held in Western Australia 1975-1978

Sentence	1975	1976	1977	1978
5 years or more	108	133	151	176
Governor's Pleasure	53	19	23	46
Life	23	29	31	27
Total	184	181	205	249

The change in the composition of the prison population illustrated by the figures above prompted concern amongst correctional administrators that insufficient knowledge was possessed about the precise nature of the charges or the nature of the long-term population. Obviously, such information will be vital in order to plan to meet future needs (to the extent that they may be forecast from present trends). As a first step towards gathering the data, a national survey of a sample of long-term prisoners was conducted by the Australian Institute of Criminology and the relevant State authorities. A sample of persons meeting the criteria for long-term imprisonment was selected and the State Departments completed a questionnaire for each prisoner. The questionnaire (which is reproduced at Appendix 1) was designed to provide basic descriptive data about the long-term population and to elicit from supervisors of each person information relevant to their behaviour and problems in comparison with other (non long-term) prisoners. The findings of the first part of the survey are reported in the following pages. (The second part, which dealt with supervisor ratings, is discussed in Chapter Three.)

NATIONAL SURVEY OF LONG-TERM PRISONERS IN AUSTRALIA

Sample Selection

An initial sampling fraction of 20 per cent of the long-term population was chosen for study. Within the sample the number of cases allocated to each State was chosen in such a manner as to spread the work load and to prevent the data from smaller States being swamped by those from larger States. Due to difficulties encountered in completing all the questionnaires final data were not obtained for the total original sample. The final sample of 510 represents approximately 17 per cent of the long-term prisoner population in Australia. The distribution of the sample is shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Long-Term Prisoners in Australia, Sample Distribution by State, March 1979

State	Approximate Number of Long-Term Prisoners	Sample Fraction	Number of Subjects
N.S.W.	1415	8.41	119
VIC.	551	14.88	82
QLD	635	15.75	100
S.A.	100	56.00	56
W.A.	250	46.80	117
TAS.	36	100.00	36
Total	2987	17.00	510

Results

1. *Age of prisoners.* The distribution of ages within the sample is shown in Table 13. This shows that nationally 51.1 per cent of long-term prisoners are aged between 20 and 29 years. Western Australia has a significantly higher percentage of prisoners in this age range (68.3 per cent) than have the other States (an average of 45.3 per cent). Conversely, Western Australia has significantly fewer (6.8 per cent) long-term prisoners aged 40 years or more when compared with the other States (an average of 20.1 per cent).

A comparison of the Victorian figures with data from the 1977 census of the entire Victorian prison population shows that the age distribution of the long-term population parallels that of the total population. Table 14 shows this comparison.

Table 13: Age of Long-Term Prisoners in Australia

AGE IN YEARS	NSW[1]		VIC[1]		QLD		SA		WA		TAS[2]		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 18	1	0.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2.6	-	-	4	0.8
18	4	3.4	-	-	-	-	1	1.8	1	0.9	-	-	6	1.2
19	2	1.7	1	1.2	-	-	3	5.4	3	2.6	3	9.1	12	2.4
TOTAL UNDER 20	7	5.9	1	1.2	-	-	4	7.2	7	6.1	3	9.1	22	4.4
20-24	29	24.6	14	17.3	19	19.0	14	25.0	50	42.7	5	15.1	131	25.9
25-29	26	22.0	25	30.9	24	24.0	12	21.4	30	25.6	10	30.3	127	25.2
TOTAL 20-29	55	46.6	39	48.2	43	43.0	26	46.4	80	68.3	15	45.4	258	51.1
30-34	19	16.1	12	14.8	24	24.0	7	12.5	15	12.8	6	18.2	83	16.4
35-39	16	13.6	9	11.1	12	12.0	7	12.5	7	6.0	4	12.1	55	10.9
TOTAL 30-39	35	29.7	21	25.9	36	36.0	14	25.0	22	18.8	10	30.3	138	27.3
40-49	17	14.4	13	16.0	13	13.0	8	14.2	5	4.2	2	6.1	58	11.5
50-59	4	3.4	5	6.2	8	8.0	3	5.4	3	2.6	3	9.1	26	5.1
60 and over	-	-	2	2.5	-	-	1	1.8	-	-	-	-	3	0.6
TOTAL 40 AND OVER	21	17.8	20	24.7	21	21.0	12	21.4	8	6.8	5	15.2	87	17.2
	118	100.0	81	100.0	100	100.0	56	100.0	117	100.0	33	100.0	505	100.0

[1] Age unknown for one prisoner

[2] Age unknown for three prisoners

Table 14: A Comparison Between Age Data from the Long-Term Survey and the 1977 Prison Census in Victoria

Age	% of Population	
	Long-Term	Census
Under 20	1.2	12.3
20-29	48.2	50.4
30-39	25.9	20.6
40 and over	24.7	16.7
	100.0	100.0

As might be expected the only major differences between the two data sets are that there are more prisoners under 20 years and fewer prisoners over 40 years-old in the general prison population.

2. *Marital status.* Table 15 shows the marital status of prisoners in the sample. Single persons account for 58 per cent of the sample, while 27.3 per cent are married or have de facto relationships. There are no significant differences between the States. However, it is of some significance that there is a markedly greater proportion of unmarried males in this sample than occurs in this age group in the general population.

Table 15: Marital Status of Long-Term Prisoners in Australia

MARITAL STATUS	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Single	69	*58.0*	46	*56.0*	52	*52.0*	32	*57.2*	77	*65.8*	20	*55.6*	296	*58.0*
Married/De Facto	39	*32.7*	25	*30.5*	28	*28.0*	11	*19.6*	30	*25.6*	6	*16.7*	139	*27.3*
Divorced	2	*1.7*	3	*3.7*	11	*11.0*	4	*7.1*	5	*4.3*	6	*16.7*	31	*6.1*
Separated	5	*4.2*	4	*4.9*	4	*4.0*	1	*1.8*	3	*2.6*	3	*8.3*	20	*3.9*
Widowed	2	*1.7*	3	*3.7*	4	*4.0*	7	*12.5*	-	-	1	*2.8*	17	*3.3*
Not Known	2	*1.7*	1	*1.2*	1	*1.0*	1	*1.8*	2	*1.7*	-	-	7	*1.4*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

3. *Country of origin.* Table 16 shows the country of origin of prisoners in the sample. Nationally, 80.3 per cent of the sample were born in Australia. This is approximately the same proportion as found in the general population.

Table 16: Country of Origin of Long-Term Prisoners in Australia

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Australia	99	*83.2*	66	*80.5*	82	*82.0*	41	*73.2*	87	*74.3*	35	*97.2*	410	*80.3*
British Isles	5	*4.2*	4	*4.9*	5	*5.0*	3	*5.3*	10	*8.5*	1	*2.7*	28	*5.5*
New Zealand	4	*3.4*	-	-	4	*4.0*	2	*3.6*	4	*3.4*	-	-	14	*2.7*
Yugoslavia	1	*0.8*	2	*2.4*	1	*1.0*	1	*1.8*	3	*2.6*	-	-	8	*1.6*
Italy	2	*1.7*	3	*3.7*	-	-	-	-	3	*2.6*	-	-	8	*1.6*
Germany	1	*0.8*	2	*2.4*	-	-	2	*3.6*	3	*2.6*	-	-	8	*1.6*
Greece	1	*0.8*	1	*1.2*	2	*2.0*	1	*1.8*	2	*1.7*	-	-	7	*1.4*
Other	6[1]	*5.1*	4[2]	*4.9*	6[3]	*6.0*	6[4]	*10.7*	5[5]	*4.3*	-	-	27	*5.3*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

[1] Egypt, Hungary, Lebanon, Malta, Singapore, Turkey

[2] Albania, Malta (2), Netherlands

[3] Albania, Canada (2), Hungary, Lebanon, U.S.S.R.

[4] Bulgaria, Hungary (3), Indonesia, Poland

[5] Egypt, Malaysia, Netherlands, Switzerland, United States of America

4. *Likelihood of extradition/deportation.* Of the total sample, only 11 persons are known to be possible extradition or deportation cases.

5. *Offence.* The most serious offence for which each prisoner is being held in custody is shown in Table 17. Homicides account for the largest percentage (35.1 per cent), followed by robbery (18.8 per cent), and rape (14.5 per cent). Serious property offences account for 9.4 per cent of the total.

Table 17: Offence for which Long-Term Prisoners in Australia were Convicted

OFFENCE	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Homicides (incl. attempted)	33	*27.7*	32	*39.0*	36	*36.0*	36	*64.3*	20	*17.1*	22	*61.1*	179	*35.1*
Assault	9	*7.6*	3	*3.7*	3	*3.0*	4	*7.1*	5	*4.3*	-	-	24	*4.7*
Robbery	28	*23.5*	14	*17.1*	20	*20.0*	6	*10.7*	23	*19.6*	5	*13.9*	96	*18.8*
Rape	8	*6.7*	9	*11.0*	21	*21.0*	6	*10.7*	22	*18.8*	8	*22.2*	74	*14.5*
Sex Offences (excl. rape)	6	*5.1*	10	*12.2*	3	*3.0*	2	*3.6*	2	*1.7*	-	-	23	*4.5*
Habitual Criminal/Recall Parole	1	*0.8*	-	-	-	-	1	*1.8*	2	*1.7*	-	-	4	*0.8*
Property	24	*20.2*	1	*1.2*	11	*11.0*	-	-	12	*10.3*	-	-	48	*9.4*
Drug	8	*6.7*	1	*1.2*	2	*2.0*	-	-	20	*17.1*	-	-	31	*6.1*
Other/Not Known	2	*1.7*	12	*14.6*	4	*4.0*	1	*1.8*	11	*9.4*	1	*2.8*	31	*6.1*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

There are some significant differences between the States on this measure. For example, in Tasmania and South Australia persons convicted of homicides account for over 60 per cent of the long-term population (61.1 per cent and 64.3 per cent, respectively). In Western Australia, however, only 17.1 per cent are convicted of homicides. The figures would suggest that Western Australia uses long terms of imprisonment for a wider range of offences than do some other jurisdictions. For example, 17.1 per cent of the Western Australian sample were convicted of drug offences whereas no drug offenders were represented in the South Australian sample (which was, in fact, about half of their long-term population). New South Wales has a significantly greater percentage of property offenders serving long sentences (20.2 per cent versus an average of 6.1 per cent for all other States).

6. *Length of sentence imposed.* Table 18 shows the length of sentence imposed on persons in the sample. The bulk of sentences (46.1 per cent) fall within the 5 years and under 10 years range, with a further 13.3 per cent being sentenced to the range 10 years and under 15 years. Life sentences are being served by 22.2 per cent

of the sample, and 7.4 per cent are confined under Governor's Pleasure or other indefinite orders.

Because of their larger proportions of homicide offenders, Tasmania and South Australia have proportionately more life sentence prisoners than other States (50.0 per cent and 44.6 per cent respectively, versus an average of 16.8 per cent for the rest of Australia).

Table 18: Length of Sentence being Served by Long-Term Prisoners in Australia

SENTENCE	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than 5 years	9	*7.6*	3	*3.7*	1	*1.0*	-	-	19	*16.2*	3	*8.3*	35	*6.9*
5 years and under 10 years	55	*46.2*	33	*40.3*	47	*47.0*	22	*39.3*	65	*55.6*	13	*36.1*	235	*46.1*
10 years and under 15 years	26	*21.8*	16	*19.5*	20	*20.0*	1	*1.8*	5	*4.3*	-	-	68	*13.3*
15 years and under 20 years	4	*3.4*	2	*2.4*	1	*1.0*	1	*1.8*	-	-	-	-	8	*1.6*
20 years and over	1	*0.8*	11	*13.4*	-	-	1	*1.8*	-	-	-	-	13	*2.5*
Life (incl. death commuted to life)	22	*18.5*	6	*7.3*	29	*29.0*	25	*44.6*	13	*11.1*	18	*50.0*	113	*22.2*
Governor's Pleasure and other indefinite orders	2	*1.7*	11	*13.4*	2	*2.0*	6	*10.7*	15	*12.8*	2	*5.6*	38	*7.4*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

7. *Length of time served.* The actual time served by each prisoner as at 30 June 1978 is shown in Table 19. Only a very small percentage (3.8 per cent) had served in excess of 10 years. Persons held for less than a year accounted for 19.2 per cent of the sample, while 22.5 per cent had served 1 year and less than 2 years, 37.8 per cent had served 2 years and less than 5 years, and 15.1 per cent had served 5 years and less than 10 years.

Again some interesting inter-State differences are observable. Western Australia has a high percentage (30.8 per cent) of long-termers who have recently been sentenced and have consequently served less than a year of their sentence. Queensland has a higher percentage

(6 per cent versus an average of 1.2 per cent) of persons who have served 10 years and less than 15 years.

Table 19: Time Served to Date of Sentences Imposed on Long-Term Prisoners in Australia

TIME SERVED	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than 1 year	15	*12.6*	9	*11.0*	17	*17.0*	14	*25.0*	36	*30.8*	7	*19.4*	98	*19.2*
1 yr. and less than 2 yrs.	28	*23.6*	15	*18.3*	18	*18.0*	15	*26.8*	34	*29.1*	5	*13.9*	115	*22.5*
2 yrs. and less than 5 yrs.	53	*44.6*	29	*35.4*	36	*36.0*	19	*33.9*	42	*35.9*	14	*38.9*	193	*37.8*
5 yrs. and less than 10 yrs.	18	*15.1*	17	*20.7*	20	*20.0*	8	*14.3*	4	*3.4*	10	*27.8*	77	*15.1*
10 yrs. and less than 15 yrs.	3	*2.5*	2	*2.4*	6	*6.0*	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	*2.2*
15 yrs. and less than 20 yrs.	1	*0.8*	2	*2.4*	1	*1.0*	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	*0.8*
More than 20 years	1	*0.8*	-	-	2	*2.0*	-	-	1	*0.8*	-	-	4	*0.8*
Not Known	-	-	8	*9.8*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	*1.6*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

8. *Previous custodial sentences.* Table 20 records any juvenile or adult custodial sentences served by persons in the sample prior to their present sentence. Nationally, 25.3 per cent of the sample had served at least one juvenile custodial sentence, and 59.2 per cent had been incarcerated in an adult institution at least once previously. Two or more juvenile sentences had been served by 17.9 per cent of the sample, and 44.7 per cent had served two or more adult sentences (with 12.7 per cent having served 5-10 previous sentences, 7.1 per cent having served 11-20 previous sentences, and 2.2 per cent having served 21 or more previous adult sentences).

Table 20: Number of Previous Custodial Sentences Served by Long-Term Prisoners in Australia

NUMBER OF PREVIOUS CUSTODIAL SENTENCES	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
(a) Juvenile														
0	87	73.1	54	65.9	81	81.0	39	69.6	39	33.3	25	69.4	325	63.7
1	11	9.2	3	3.7	6	6.0	4	7.1	9	7.7	5	13.9	38	7.4
2-4	14	11.8	6	7.3	8	8.0	10	17.9	19	16.3	5	13.9	62	12.2
5-10	7	5.9	1	1.2	4	4.0	3	5.4	9	7.7	1	2.8	25	4.9
11-20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.7	-	-	2	0.4
21 or more	-	-	1	1.2	1	1.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.4
Not Known	-	-	17	20.7	-	-	-	-	39	33.3	-	-	56	11.0
TOTAL	119	100.0	82	100.0	100	100.0	56	100.0	117	100.0	36	100.0	510	100.0
(b) Adult														
0	48	40.4	45	54.9	25	25.0	20	35.7	45	38.5	11	30.5	194	38.0
1	28	23.5	8	9.9	12	12.0	8	14.3	13	11.1	5	13.9	74	14.5
2-4	28	23.5	11	13.4	23	23.0	9	16.0	37	31.6	8	22.2	116	22.7
5-10	12	10.1	7	8.5	17	17.0	10	17.9	10	8.5	9	25.0	65	12.7
11-20	3	2.5	2	2.4	18	18.0	6	10.7	5	4.3	2	5.6	36	7.1
21 or more	-	-	-	-	5	5.0	3	5.4	2	1.7	1	2.8	11	2.2
Not Known	-	-	9	11.0	-	-	-	-	5	4.3	-	-	14	2.8
TOTAL	119	100.0	82	100.0	100	100.0	56	100.0	117	100.0	36	100.0	510	100.0

9. *Security rating.* The degree of security under which it is deemed necessary to hold prisoners in the sample is shown in Table 21. Of the sample, 54.5 per cent are held in maximum security conditions, 23.9 per cent in medium security, and 20.6 per cent in minimum security.

Differences in security policies are apparent between States. For example, Queensland, Tasmania, and South Australia hold high percentages of long-termers in maximum security conditions (an average of 71.9 per cent compared with an average of 44.0 per cent for the other States). By way of comparison, 35.9 per cent of the Western Australian sample are held in minimum security, whereas only 7.0 per cent of the Queensland sample are so held.

Table 21: Degree of Security under which Long-Term Prisoners in Australia are held

SECURITY RATING	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Minimum	28	*23.5*	12	*14.6*	7	*7.0*	12	*21.4*	42	*35.9*	4	*11.1*	105	*20.6*
Medium	27	*22.7*	42	*51.2*	18	*18.0*	6	*10.7*	22	*18.8*	7	*19.4*	122	*23.9*
Maximum	59	*49.6*	28	*34.2*	75	*75.0*	38	*67.9*	53	*45.3*	25	*69.5*	278	*54.5*
Not Known	5	*4.2*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	*1.0*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

10. *Escapes from previous custody.* Table 22 shows the number of escapes from previous juvenile and adult sentences made by persons in the sample. Nationally, 17.1 per cent of the sample had escaped from juvenile custody and 12.7 per cent from adult custody.

In Tasmania, 52.8 per cent of the sample had escaped from juvenile custody, and in Western Australia 24.8 per cent had done so. In Victoria, 34.1 per cent of the sample had escaped from adult institutions.

Table 22: Frequency of Escapes from Previous Custody by Long-Term Prisoners in Australia

ESCAPES FROM PREVIOUS CUSTODY	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
(a) Juvenile														
Yes	12	*10.1*	11	*13.4*	10	*10.0*	6	*10.7*	29	*24.8*	19	*52.8*	87	*17.1*
No	107	*89.9*	54	*65.9*	90	*90.0*	50	*89.3*	83	*70.9*	17	*47.2*	401	*78.6*
Not Known	-	-	17	*20.7*	-	-	-	-	5	*4.3*	-	-	22	*4.3*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*
(b) Adult														
Yes	13	*10.9*	28	*34.1*	4	*4.0*	4	*7.1*	15	*12.8*	1	*2.8*	65	*12.7*
No	106	*89.1*	45	*54.9*	96	*96.0*	52	*92.9*	101	*86.3*	35	*97.2*	435	*85.3*
Not Known	-	-	9	*11.0*	-	-	-	-	1	*0.9*	-	-	10	*2.0*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

11. *Prison offences.* The number of prison offences committed in previous and present sentences by persons in the sample is shown in Table 23. The majority of prisoners (77.1 per cent) had not been charged with any offences against prison regulations in previous sentences, but almost exactly half (49.6 per cent) had been charged at least once during the present sentence. The trend shown in the table is that more prisoners commit more prison offences when sentenced to long terms of imprisonment than when they served previous sentences.

Many commentators have referred to the difficulty of coming to terms with the reality of a long sentence, and often the initial period is marked by confrontation with the authorities. It may well be that the increase in prison offences amongst long-termers is attributable to the uneasiness of the so-called 'settling-in' period.

Table 23: Frequency of Offences against Prison Regulations Committed by Long-Term Prisoners in Australia

PRISON OFFENCES	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
(a) Previous Sentences														
0	99	83.2	60	73.2	89	89.0	48	85.7	80	68.4	17	47.2	393	77.1
1	9	7.6	1	1.2	5	5.0	2	3.6	3	2.6	8	22.2	28	5.5
2-4	9	7.6	2	2.4	2	2.0	2	3.6	5	4.3	5	13.8	25	4.9
5-10	1	0.8	-	-	3	3.0	4	7.1	2	1.7	3	8.4	13	2.5
More than 10	1	0.8	-	-	1	1.0	-	-	-	-	3	8.4	5	1.0
Not Known	-	-	19	23.2	-	-	-	-	27	23.0	-	-	46	9.0
TOTAL	119	100.0	82	100.0	100	100.0	56	100.0	117	100.0	36	100.0	510	100.0
(b) This Sentence														
0	70	58.8	52	63.4	34	34.0	21	37.5	74	63.2	6	16.7	257	50.4
1	24	20.2	14	17.1	24	24.0	5	8.9	14	11.9	4	11.1	85	16.7
2-4	19	16.0	7	8.6	29	29.0	10	17.9	23	19.7	12	33.3	100	19.6
5-10	6	5.0	1	1.2	9	9.0	12	21.4	3	2.6	13	36.1	44	8.6
More than 10	-	-	2	2.4	4	4.0	3	5.4	3	2.6	1	2.8	13	2.5
Not Known	-	-	6	7.3	-	-	5	8.9	-	-	-	-	11	2.2
TOTAL	119	100.0	82	100.0	100	100.0	56	100.0	117	100.0	36	100.0	510	100.0

SUMMARY

The data reported here cannot be compared with data from a control group of short-sentence prisoners because time and resources precluded

arranging such a group. However, the data may in part be compared with available prison census information and in some cases may be evaluated in their own right.

On measures such as age, marital status, and country of origin, the long-term population is roughly comparable to the total prison population. As regards sentence, the bulk are sentenced to terms between 5 and 10 years (46.1 per cent) or to life imprisonment (22.2 per cent). Most long-termers have currently served less than 5 years (79.5 per cent) with 41.7 per cent having served less than 2 years. The majority of prisoners sampled were incarcerated for homicides, robberies, or rapes. Juvenile custodial sentences had been served by 36.3 per cent of the sample, and 62 per cent had served previous aduly custodial sentences. Of the total sample 22.9 per cent had committed offences while in previous custody, and 49.6 per cent had been found guilty of offences against prison regulations during the present sentence. It is possible that this increase is due to the problems associated with accepting and settling into a long term of imprisonment. Maximum security was thought necessary for 54.5 per cent of the sample. Long-termers appear to have a fairly high escape rate, with 17.1 per cent having escaped from juvenile detention and 12.7 per cent from adult detention.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CLASSIFICATION PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

All prison systems make use of formal or informal procedures for the classification of prisoners in their custody. At its simplest level classification is the decision-making process that determines, within the options available, the conditions under which each sentence of imprisonment will be served. In large systems the decision-making involves the selection of the appropriate institution, the level of security required, the type of treatment or training to be offered and the work requirements to be assigned. In small systems the range of options may be so limited that little conscious decision-making occurs, but nevertheless each prisoner must be assigned to a cell or dormitory and how he or she will spend the time must be decided. In the latter case, the decision-making would rarely be referred to as 'classification', but it has the same impact on the lives of individual prisoners as do the more formal systems which are described in this chapter.

The seven prison systems operating in Australia, in each of the States and in the Northern Territory, have all developed classification systems of a more or less formal kind. They vary greatly between each other, however, in their procedures, style, and legislative or administrative authority, and there are also differences in the size, structure and titles of the decision-making bodies. Furthermore, they differ in the extent to which they use the services of professional staff such as psychologists, social workers and psychiatrists. These matters are reviewed in the pages that follow, with particular emphasis on the classification of long-term prisoners, but, as a preamble a more formal statement of the purposes of classification is necessary.

The criminological literature, especially in Australia, contains very little material on the classification of offenders in correctional institutions. This deficiency is illustrated by the fact that a search request submitted to CINCH, the computerised bibliographical service provided by the Australian Institute of Criminology, yielded only three references to classification and only one of these had appeared in an Australian journal. As might be expected, more material

is available from the United States[1] and the Committee on Classification and Treatment of the American Correctional Association has published two books on the subject.[2] One is a mixed collection of individual essays and the other is a statement of principles expressed at a high level of generality. This latter book, the *Handbook on Classification in Correctional Institutions*, defines classification as 'a method that will assure coordination of diagnosis, training and treatment throughout the correctional process'. This handbook lists eleven advantages of classification. These are:

(1) proper segregation of different types of offenders;
(2) more adequate custodial supervision and control;
(3) better discipline;
(4) increased productivity;
(5) more effective organisation of all training and treatment facilities;
(6) greater continuity in training and treatment programs;
(7) higher staff morale;
(8) better inmate attitudes;
(9) reduced failures of men released;
(10) better guides to building requirements; and
(11) reports used for parole, etc.

In our view, the *Handbook* grossly overstates the gains to be obtained from a classification system. Classification is certainly vitally important to institutional management, but it will not of itself replace management nor will it solve all administrative problems that arise.

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1. Copies of a number of reports dealing with the classification of prisoners in the United States have recently been received by the writers and these are available for study in the library of the Australian Institute of Criminology. Most of these reports deal with classification at the County jail level, but nevertheless have some relevance to the Australian situation.
2. Hippchen, Leonard J. (Ed.), *Correctional Classification and Treatment: A Reader*. Compiled by The Committee on Classification and Treatment of The American Correctional Association, published for The American Correctional Association, Washington, D.C. by The W.H. Anderson Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1975.

   Handbook on Classification in Correctional Institutions. Prepared by The Committee on Classification and Case Work of The American Prison Association, New York, 1947, revised and reprinted by The American Foundation Studies in Corrections, Philadelphia, 1965.

Another American writer, Frank Loveland,[3] has described three different types of classification systems. These are:

(1) a classification clinic or bureau. This is a diagnostic unit within an institution that makes recommendations to the administration;

(2) an integrated classification system. In such a system professional and academic personnel with the executive head as chairman make decisions which are binding and official. This is the usual type;

(3) reception centre system. Using this approach, a separate institution studies new offenders and decides upon the institution to which they will be sent and the program that they will follow. A secondary level of classification will be followed in the normal institutions.

These approaches to the classification of prisoners have been recently severely criticised by Norval Morris who has written:

> Experienced administrators and scholars of the prison system have concluded that the reception and diagnostic centers to which most felons are first sent for what is called 'classification' are largely a waste of resources. At most such centers the prisoner spends the first four to six weeks of his incarceration being subjected to physical, psychological, and sociological study and casework analysis; he is then sent on to one of the very few prison placements that are in any event available to him; and the painstaking records prepared in the reception and diagnostic center thereafter rest undisturbed in files, either in that same center or in the institution to which he is assigned. Further, any experienced prison administrator, posted at the front office of the reception and diagnostic center, can, within two days of the prisoner's arrival, predict with high accuracy to which institution he will be sent and which programs will be available to him. Not only can the administrator do this with more than 90 percent accuracy, but he will know which are the 10 percent he is uncertain about. There is, therefore, a steady movement toward the abandonment of such centers for purposes of classification within state prison systems.[4]

Whatever system of classification is used, it is submitted that classification is not simply a matter of segregating different types of offenders. The naivety of this view of classification is illustrated by the fact that if one segregated males from females, convicted from unconvicted, adults from juveniles, violent from non-violent and

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3. Loveland, F., 'Classification in the Prison System', in Tappen, P.W. (Ed.), *Contemporary Correction*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1951, pp.91-106.
4. Morris, Norval, *The Future of Imprisonment*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1974, p.38.

heterosexual from homosexual, and one followed this segregation strictly, no fewer than 32 separate institutions or divisions would be required. If another dimension were added, for example those in need of psychiatric treatment and those not needing it, 64 divisions would be needed, although many would be empty for much of the time.

Classification is seen by the writers as a central part of prison management which uses segregation of different types of offenders where necessary but also coordinates the placement of offenders and the treatment they receive. It can also provide invaluable information for the future planning of any correctional system. An adequate classification system would show, for example, changes that take place in the size and structure of prison populations, the balance needed between maximum, medium and minimum security institutions, deficiencies in educational and training programmes and medical and psychiatric services and the need for new prison industries. A classification system which is geared not only to day-to-day management but also to future planning would always be more advanced and sophisticated than the system it serves. Thus the classification process is able to identify the particular needs of the correctional system as a whole.

Viewed as a management and planning tool, it is clear that classification is an on-going process, even though the initial allocation of a prisoner to a particular institution is probably the most dramatic and memorable step in the process.

All Australian prison classification systems were developed as a matter of administrative discretion, but there has been the tendency in recent years for these systems to be given legislative recognition. Thus in Victoria, for example, under the *Community Welfare Services Act*, 1978, Regulation 108 provided 'In determining classification the (Classification) Committee shall have regard to (the prisoner's) age, social history, criminal record, aptitude and suitability for training and employment, nature of current offence, length of sentence and the need for security', and Regulation 109 provided that: 'The Classification Committee shall review classifications and may alter them when appropriate to do so.'. Similarly in New South Wales, Regulation 10 under the *Prisoners Act*, 1952-78, provides for the classification of

prisoners as: convicted, appellants, debtors, or unconvicted, and Regulation 11 specifies three security categories and also provides for the establishment of a prisoner classification committee.

More formal legislative recognition of the classification process is given in the South Australian draft *Correctional Services Bill*, 1979, which provides for the establishment of a Prisoners Assessment Committee. At the time of writing this draft has not been fully considered, but as it may well be of interest in other jurisdictions the relevant part of the draft is quoted in full:

21. (1) The Minister shall establish a committee entitled the 'Prisoners Assessment Committee'.

(2) The Assessment Committee shall consist of three persons who shall be appointed by the Minister upon such terms and conditions as he thinks fit, two of whom shall be persons nominated by the Director.

(3) On any matter arising at a meeting of the Assessment Committee, a decision carried by any two members of the Committee shall be a decision of the Committee.

(4) The functions of the Assessment Committee shall be -

(a) as soon as practicable after the detention of any person who has been sentenced to a term of imprisonment exceeding three months, to recommend to the Director the prison in which the person should be imprisoned;

and

(b) at regular intervals, and at any time upon the application of the superintendent of a prison, to review the circumstances of any prisoner who is serving a sentence of imprisonment exceeding three months and, if the Assessment Committee thinks fit, to recommend to the Director the transfer of the prisoner to the prison in which the Committee believes he should serve the remainder of his sentence.

(5) The Director shall carry out any recommendation of the Assessment Committee unless he is of the opinion that special reasons exist for not doing so.

(6) The prisoner under assessment or review is not entitled to appear before the Assessment Committee except upon a request of the Committee.

(7) In carrying out its functions under this section the Assessment Committee shall have regard to the best interests of the prisoner under assessment or review and shall consider -

(a) any pre-sentence reports on the prisoner;

(b) the security of, and availability of accommodation at, any prison in question;

(c) the suitability to the prisoner of the facilities at any prison in question;

(d) whether any prison in question is situated so that members of the prisoner's family who may wish to visit him might conveniently do so;

(e) any comments that may have been made by the court sentencing the prisoner;

and

(f) such other matters as the Committee thinks relevant.

This draft legislation is indicative of the fact that prison classification procedures are currently under close scrutiny in Australia, with many jurisdictions reviewing or reorganising the procedures that have been used in the past. The importance of the subject is shown by the fact that the New South Wales Royal Commission Report[5] devoted a whole chapter to classification. While such reviews are being undertaken it is impossible to be sure that the descriptions which follow are up to date, but at the same time they may be of direct assistance to those officials who are conducting the reviews.

CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

As indicated earlier, all prisoners are classified at one level or another, but greater attention is paid to prisoners sentenced to relatively long terms. In each jurisdiction therefore the full classification process is reserved for prisoners serving more than an arbitrarily determined period. Less intensive procedures are followed for prisoners sentenced to shorter terms.

In New South Wales prisoners included in the formal process are those serving a sentence of penal servitude for life; being detained in a prison pursuant to Section 23(3) of the *Mental Health Act*, 1958; or serving a sentence or aggregate sentences of imprisonment or penal servitude in excess of 12 months and in respect of whom a

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5. *Report of Royal Commission into New South Wales Prisons*, Government Printer, New South Wales, April 1978.

non-parole period has not been specified or in respect of whom a non-parole period in excess of 12 months has been specified. In Victoria the criteria are: for prisoners over 21 years any sentence of 12 months or more; for prisoners under 21 years any sentence of six months or more; any indeterminate sentence; and any other sentence incorporating a minimum term not included above. In Queensland, prisoners sentenced to an effective 12 months or more in the southeast region of the State are considered by the Classification Committee, but those received in the northern prisons of Townsville and Rockhampton are not subjected to a detailed classification procedure whatever the length of sentence. South Australian prisoners sentenced to nine months or more are fully assessed or classified by a central committee, and in Western Australia reports are considered by a central committee, the Review Board, on all prisoners serving fixed terms of eight months or more or with minimum terms of over six months. By contrast, in Tasmania there are no cut-off points for inclusion in the classification process and all convicted prisoners received are assessed by a central committee. In the Northern Territory the classification system is under review at the time of writing, but it is understood that a cut-off point of three months will probably be established for the inclusion of prisoners in the full classification process.

In considering the above criteria for each jurisdiction, it is of some interest to note that the cut-off points are generally more stringent for the larger prison systems. The smaller systems are able to establish criteria which include all, or relatively high proportions of, prisoners in the formal classification process, but as the systems increase in size the proportions of prisoners included seem to decrease. Notwithstanding the fact that systems with high numbers of prisoners have roughly the same staff:prisoner ratios as smaller systems,[6] it seems that the sheer pressure of numbers dictates the proportion of prisoners who will be fully classified.

This is illustrated by the fact that in 1976-77 only 7.0 per cent of convicted prisoners received in New South Wales were classified,

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6. See Biles, D., *Crime and Justice in Australia*, Sun Books, 1977, p.92 for statistics of staff:prisoner ratios.

and the equivalent figure for Victoria was approximately 9.0 per cent. In Queensland in the same year 10.5 per cent were classified, and in Western Australia the proportion was 46.2 per cent. As indicated above, in Tasmania 100 per cent of convicted prisoners received were subjected to the classification process. There certainly seems to be no consensus among Australian prison administrators as to what proportion of prisoners should come under the formal scrutiny of a committee (even granted that to a certain degree the proportion classified at present depends on pressure of work, resources allocated to classification, etc.).

CLASSIFICATION COMMITTEES

In this section the structure and function of the central decision-making body, whether called a classification committee or not, will be described, and brief reference will also be made to other committees which are relevant to the classification process. As there is no uniformity in these matters each jurisdiction will be considered in turn.

New South Wales

Following publication of the *Report of the Royal Commission into New South Wales Prisons* in April 1978 the classification procedures used have been the subject of extensive review. A Director of Prisoner Classification has been appointed and he is assisted by a staff of 10 experienced custodial and clerical officers. On 6 April 1979 amendments to the *Prisons Regulations*, 1968 were published which, among other things, established the Prisoner Classification Committee. This Committee has six members and is chaired by the Director of Prisoner Classification or his deputy. The other members are the Assistant Superintendent (Classification), an industrial officer, a programmes officer, a psychologist, and a probation and parole officer. A prison chaplain who was a member of the former committee also attends the meetings of the new Prisoner Classification Committee even though he is not a member.

The Committee, with the assistance of a stenographer, meets weekly in the Psychological Services Section of the Central Industrial

Prison of the Malabar Complex to interview and make initial classifications of all long-term male prisoners. The meetings, which consider from 15 to 25 cases, last for at least half a day and sometimes occupy a full day. A committee similar in structure to the main committee meets as required, usually once each 6 to 8 weeks, at Mulawa Training and Detention Centre to interview and make initial classifications of all long-term female prisoners.

Short-term prisoners are interviewed as soon as possible after reception and suitable placements are recommended to the Director of Prisoner Classification by Reception Committees at all reception gaols. The Malabar Reception Committee, comprising an assistant superintendent, a chief prison officer and a principal industries officer, meets daily in the Central Industrial Prison of the Malabar Complex to interview and place all short-term prisoners received into custody at Malabar. A similar local Reception Committee operates at the Silverwater Detention Centre to interview and place selected first-time, short-term prisoners who are being sentenced in the Sydney metropolitan area to be sent directly to Silverwater rather than to Malabar. Reception Committees also operate at Parramatta, Goulburn, Maitland, Grafton, Bathurst, Narrabri and Broken Hill gaols to interview and place short-term male prisoners delivered to those institutions from the courts, and at the Mulawa Detention and Training Centre for Women.

In each of the prisons in the New South Wales system, a Programme Review Committee is responsible for the implementation of the decisions of the Prisoner Classification Committee. Programme Review Committees are required to report each six months on the progress of all long-term prisoners, and may recommend changes to the security classification and programme decided for particular prisoners. To consider recommendations from Programme Review Committees, the central Prisoner Classification Committee meets for a second time each week and accepts, rejects or amends these recommendations subject to the approval of the Director of Prisoner Classification acting by delegation of the Corrective Services Commission.

For some years in New South Wales a Life Sentence Committee advised on the classification, movement and suitability for parole

of prisoners serving life sentences. This Committee has recently been disbanded and life sentence prisoners are now considered in the same way as other long-term prisoners.

Victoria

Victorian prisons are administered by the Correctional Services Division of the Department of Community Welfare Services, and a two-tier classification system has been developed within that Division. A Divisional Classification Committee, which meets weekly in Pentridge and considers all cases which meet the criteria outlined above, is supplemented by Review and Assessment Panels which operate in the Pentridge sub-prisons, the larger country prisons and across regional groups of smaller prisons. In addition, short-term prisoners, the vast majority of all convicted prisoners received, are classified in Pentridge by an officer of the Classification Centre or by the Governor of the receiving prison.

The Divisional Classification Committee is nominally chaired by the Director of Correctional Services, but in practice the chair is taken by the Deputy Director (Programmes). Other members are the Supervisor of Classification (in practice the Deputy Chairman), Governor of Classification, the Superintendent of Pentridge or his nominee (usually the Deputy Superintendent), a senior parole officer, the Governor of the Southern Prison or his deputy, a psychiatrist and the Superintendent of Prison Medical Services. The secretary of the Committee is the principal prison officer of the Classification Centre, and a senior prison officer, a prison officer and a stenographer to take minutes are also present at meetings to assist the Committee. At every meeting a number of other people are also present by invitation and these include a welfare officer, Governors and senior staff from country prisons and education officers, all of whom may be asked to contribute to the discussion.

The Divisional Classification Committee meets every Monday morning and classifies all convicted prisoners received during the previous week who are included in the criteria outlined above. In the week preceding each meeting each prisoner to be classified is interviewed by several members of the Committee and a social history

questionnaire is completed for inclusion in the prisoner's file. No psychological testing or interviewing is undertaken, except as when seen as necessary by the Committee or a psychiatrist. For prisoners who have been classified previously, the relevant files are brought up to date.

At the meetings the members of the Committee are each provided with a file for every prisoner under consideration. Each case is discussed before the prisoner appears before the Committee. At this stage, the prisoner is generally informed of the Committee's decision and asked to comment. (His preferences with regard to institutional placement and work allocation would have been recorded previously.) Some discussion with the prisoner may occur at this time, but in most cases the actual appearance before the Committee is very brief. The average time taken on each case is indicated by the fact that usually from 18 to 28 prisoners are considered and interviewed each Monday morning and a similar number of cases are reclassified without the prisoners being present.

The physical conditions for both prisoners and staff in the Pentridge Classification Centre are totally unsatisfactory and a number of recommendations for change have recently been made in an independent report.[7]

The Review and Assessment Panels have slightly different functions according to their location, but their primary purpose is to bring the classification process closer to the prisoners by being more accessible. Generally, the Panels, comprising Governors and senior staff at the relevant locations, consider applications for reclassification or transfer and make recommendations to the central committee. They may also initiate transfers and comment on applications for work release, temporary leave or transfer to attendance centres. The regional Panels may also arrange transfers between the prisons in the region, subject to the confirmation of the central committee. All Panels also review all long-term prisoners annually.

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7. Biles, D., *The Classification of Convicted Offenders in Victoria*, Australian Institute of Criminology, 1978.

There is a special Review and Assessment Panel for H Division which meets once a week. The other Pentridge Panels also meet weekly, but those in country prisons or regions usually meet monthly. In addition there is a special Classification Committee for the Fairlea Women's Prison which meets weekly. The meetings of this Committee take the form of case conferences and are attended by the Supervisor of Classification and Treatment, the Governor of Fairlea, Deputy Governor, school teachers and a social worker. The relatively small numbers at Fairlea and the lack of options for transfer elsewhere allows this Committee to discuss individual cases and plan programmes in a more intensive manner than is possible in any other part of the system.

Queensland

The main Classification Committee in Queensland is responsible for prisons in the southeast region of the State, namely Brisbane, Woodfood and Wacol. This Committee is chaired by the Deputy Comptroller-General of Prisons and the other members are the Deputy Chief Probation and Parole Officer, a medical officer, a senior psychologist and a welfare officer. The Committee, with a secretary, meets weekly in the Brisbane Prison and approximately once each month in Woodfood and Wacol. In Townsville Prison the Superintendent is assisted in classification matters by a welfare officer and a senior probation officer, and in Rockhampton Prison the Superintendent meets with an administration officer and a senior probation officer.

The bulk of the work of these committees is devoted to interviewing and reporting on applicants for parole, with classification interviews comprising approximately one-quarter of the work. The main Classification Committee makes recommendations to the Comptroller-General with regard to security, education and work of prisoners sentenced to one year or more, and for prisoners sentenced to lesser terms movements are decided by the Comptroller-General on the advice of the relevant Superintendent.

Apart from the bodies described above there are no subsidiary panels or committees which assist the classification process in Queensland. It is understood that a comprehensive review of

classification procedures is currently being undertaken in Queensland.

South Australia

The central body in South Australia responsible for the classification of prisoners is the Assessment Panel which meets weekly in the Adelaide Gaol and comprises nine members. The Panel is chaired by the Assistant Director (Treatment) and the other members are the Keeper of Adelaide Gaol or his deputy, a chief prison officer, a prison officer (representing the Australian Government Workers' Association), two probation and parole officers, a psychologist, an education officer and the Industries Manager or his deputy. The Secretary to the Panel is also present at meetings. Each meeting considers from eight to 10 recently sentenced prisoners and lasts approximately two hours. The Assistant Director (Treatment) has the delegated authority of the Director of the Department of Correctional Services, and he exercises this authority on the advice of the Panel. (The legal basis for classification and movement decisions will be changed under the proposed legislation, as outlined earlier.)

Within each of the larger prisons in South Australia, namely, Yatala, Adelaide Gaol, Cadell and Port Lincoln, there is a Classification Committee with similar functions to the Programme Review Committees in New South Wales. These committees comprise the relevant senior staff and are chaired by the officer in charge of the institution. In Yatala the Classification Committee comprises the Superintendent, a chief prison officer, an industries officer, a probation and parole officer, an education officer, a psychologist and a prison officer representing the Government Workers' Association. Only assessed prisoners are seen by the Classification Committees and they are responsible for the implementation of Assessment Panel decisions. Classification Committees may also recommend to the Assistant Director (Treatment) changes that are considered necessary in prisoner's programmes.

Also in each prison there is a Security Committee comprising the Deputy Superintendent, Chief Prison Officer and a prison officer

which recommends the security level (maximum, medium or minimum) needed for each prisoner. In Yatala, five security levels are used with two sub-divisions in maximum and medium. Prisoners sentenced to less than nine months are classified by the Chief Prison Officer of the receiving prison and any movements recommended are authorised by the Director.

For female prisoners an Assessment Panel similar to that used at the Adelaide Gaol is constituted. This Panel meets monthly, or as required, at the Women's Rehabilitation Centre and considers all female offenders sentenced to three months or more.

Western Australia

Classification procedures in Western Australia have been the subject of intensive review in recent years culminating with the publication of the 'Assessment and Orientation Manual' in February 1976. Since then some further refinements have been made to the procedures. In essence, the new approach aims to decentralise assessment and to increase the participation of uniformed officers in the assessment process. It is perhaps significant that the word 'classification' is not used in the very substantial manual of instructions and guidelines.

The central body, roughly equivalent to the Classification Committee in other jurisdictions, is the Review Board. This Board comprises seven persons and is chaired by the Assistant Director responsible for Treatment and Training. The Deputy Chairman is the Assistant Director, Establishments, and the other members are the Superintendent of Fremantle Prison, the Senior Clinical Psychologist, the Chief Officer responsible for assessment and orientation, a representative of the Western Australian Prison Officers' Union and a probation and parole supervisor. The Board meets weekly and considers reports on all 'long-term' prisoners received into custody and also deals with matters referred to it by the Case Conferences which are conducted in each prison. The Review Board is required to overview the whole correctional system and to act as an appeal body. Where the Board is unable to agree on a case a split decision is recorded and the matter is referred to the Director for resolution. In some cases the Director may refer the matter to the Minister for a final decision.

In Fremantle Prison there is a short-term Placement Committee chaired by the Deputy Superintendent and with a principal prison officer and a representative of the Treatment and Training Branch as members. This Committee makes recommendations to the Superintendent of Fremantle Prison with regard to the placement of all 'short-term' prisoners (i.e. those sentenced to three to eight months fixed sentences, or with minimum terms of six months or less). This Committee meets every day on which short-term prisoners have been received. Special cases requiring more detailed consideration, including all juvenile prisoners, are referred by this Committee to the Review Board.

In each of the prisons in the Western Australian system a Case Conference has been established which meets weekly and is chaired by the Superintendent of the relevant prison. The other members are a representative of the Treatment and Training Branch and the Prison Officers' Union. Other staff members and probation and parole officers may attend Case Conferences, but only the three members are entitled to vote. Case Conferences in effect classify all locally received prisoners and they also consider applications for review, including requests for work release and temporary leave. In the latter cases recommendations are forwarded to the Review Board, as are all cases in which there is a split decision.

The Western Australian classification procedures can be seen to bear some similarities to the Victorian arrangements, but there are marked differences between these two States in the methods of information, storage and retrieval. These differences are outlined in a later section.

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Classification Committee comprises five persons: the Superintendent of Risdon Prison, who is the Chairman, the Deputy Superintendent, the Industrial Officer, the Principal Prison Officer and the Welfare Officer. This Committee acts under the authority given to it by the *Prisons Act* 1977, and meets twice each week, on Monday and Thursday afternoons. Each meeting deals with from one or two to 14 or 15 cases and lasts from 15 minutes to two hours. Prisoners being classified stand in front of the Committee while the

Chairman conducts the interview and, in consultation with the other members, decides the security rating and placement that is considered appropriate.

As the Tasmanian prison system is relatively small and geographically compact no subsidiary committees or panels have been found necessary.

Northern Territory

With the official opening of the new Darwin Prison in May 1979, and the subsequent transfer of prisoners from the old Fannie Bay Prison, the classification system at the time of writing is in a state of flux. When the new prison is fully operational, very few prisoners will be transferred to South Australia and the need for a more sophisticated classification system will then become apparent.

Classification at Fannie Bay Prison at the time of writing is primarily concerned with the question of whether or not individual prisoners are suitable for transfer to the prison farm at Gunn Point. Prisoners who apply for transfer are interviewed by a Classification Committee comprising the Deputy Superintendent of Fannie Bay and available senior custodial staff, together with the Superintendent of Gunn Point and a representative of the Northern Territory Prison Officers' Association. This Committee meets fortnightly and makes recommendations to the Superintendent who in turn recommends to the Deputy Director (Institutions).

It is proposed that under the new system prisoners sentenced to three months or less will be classified by the Superintendent on the advice of an internal committee, but that a more formal procedure will be established for prisoners sentenced to longer terms. Officers of the Field Services Branch (probation and parole officers) and industrial officers will play an active role in this process.

The Alice Springs Prison virtually constitutes a separate system from that at the 'top end' of the Northern Territory, and only very rarely are prisoners transferred between Darwin and Alice Springs. No formal classification system has been established at Alice Springs but the Superintendent calls meetings of relevant staff to consider

prisoners' applications for transfers and then forwards recommendations to the Deputy Director (Institutions) in Darwin. It is understood that a more formal classification system is being considered for Alice Springs.

SECURITY RATING

Most prison systems in Australia sub-divide prisoners into three categories, maximum, medium and minimum, according to their perceived escape risk and this is decided by reference to the type of offence committed, length of sentence, prior criminal record, prior escapes, etc. In New South Wales the three security categories are defined as follows:

Category A - Those prisoners whose escape would be highly dangerous to members of the public or to the security of the State;

Category B - Those prisoners who cannot be trusted in conditions where there is no barrier to their escape;

Category C - Those prisoners who can be trusted in open conditions.

These categories are further sub-divided into six such that A1 are those prisoners requiring the highest level of security and A2 are the others in this class. There are three categories for sub-classes. Those classified as C1 are not yet assessed as to be trusted in completely open conditions, while C2s are assessed as eligible for placement in afforestation camps. The lowest level of security, C3, is required before a prisoner is eligible for work release or unescorted attendance at an external studies programme.

Victoria has the most sophisticated system of security rating in Australia, and a modified version of this system is currently in use in New South Wales. For all classified prisoners received in Victoria the Governor of Classification determines a points score using the following table as a guide:

Escapes and attempted escapes from walled prisons in Victoria or elsewhere	
1. Within last five years	40
2. Earlier than five years ago	20

Escapes and attempted escapes from Youth Training Centres and open camps

1.	Within last five years	20
2.	Earlier than five years ago	10

Present Offence

1.	Violence (all types including violent sexual offences)	40
2.	Non Violence	0
3.	Intentional homicide	40

Prior Offences

1.	Violence (including violent sexual offences)	25
2.	Non Violence	10
3.	Homicide	30

Other Factors

1.	Mental history or history of gross instability	35
2.	Poor response to former imprisonment	10
3.	Drug use	25
4.	Wanted for extradition	40
5.	Wanted for deportation	25
6.	No fixed place of abode or from interstate	20
7.	Unsettled employment history	20

This table, which was devised by a former Supervisor of Classification and Treatment, has not been established by empirical research and the points score for a particular prisoner is not necessarily an arithmetical addition of the various sub-categories. A points score, or escape index, may be reduced by up to 60 points per year (5 points per month) if the prisoner's conduct is satisfactory.

The security ratings determined by this method provide a guide to the placement of prisoners at each institution in Victoria, and each Division in Pentridge also has a security rating and prisoners may not be placed in an institution with a lower rating than that assigned to them. The security rating of prisons is as follows:

Pentridge				
Divisions	-	A	-	80
		B	-	90
		D	-	80
		E	-	80
		F	-	70
		G	-	80
		H	-	100
		J	-	70

Ararat	Inside	-	60
		-	40
Beechworth	Inside	-	70
		-	45
Bendigo		-	70
Castlemaine	Inside	-	60
		-	30
Dhurringile		-	15
Geelong		-	80
Morwell River		-	10
Sale		-	30
Won Wron		-	15

This security rating system has much to commend it but it has been suggested that some modification is required, particularly to take into account the length of sentence that the prisoner has to serve.[8]

An important factor that should be considered in the determination of a prisoner's security rating is whether or not he was remanded in custody while awaiting trial. If he had been granted bail during this period, and had reported to the court without coercion, it would seem reasonable to suggest that his escape risk would be relatively low. As far as we are aware this factor is seldom considered by classification committees in Australia.

INFORMATION COLLECTED

In all Australian classification systems prisoners to be classified are interviewed by one or more staff members in order to collect information that is considered necessary to assist the decision-making process. There are considerable differences between systems, however, in the quality, quantity and relevance of this information. In some cases it seems that insufficient time and effort is devoted to collecting information, but in others so much information is sought from prisoners that it is regarded by some as being unnecessarily intrusive. The latter tendency is illustrated by the practice in one jurisdiction of requiring prisoners to supply the names, addresses and telephone numbers of their parents, siblings, spouses and children.

Rather than describing in detail the precise nature of the information that is collected on classified prisoners in each juris-

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8. Biles, D., *The Classification of Convicted Offenders in Victoria*, Australian Institute of Criminology, 1978, p.36.

diction, the writers have decided to list the areas that, in their view, should be covered in an ideal classification system for long-term prisoners. If the classification process is to be both efficient and effective there is no point in collecting and recording information for its own sake. We take the view that classification or case history files used in Australian prisons are generally too detailed and bulky, and therefore hinder rather than assist decision-making. Very few people would be capable of absorbing all of the information contained in 25 or 30 files each 20 or more pages long, and yet this is the volume of material considered in a typical half-day meeting of a classification or assessment committee. We would argue for greater precision and brevity in the compilation of classification files to the extent that single pages are prepared (to be increased only in exceptional circumstances) covering the following areas:

1. Social History - to include name (and aliases), photographs, date and place of birth, next-of-kin, current family, education and outline of work history.

2. Current Sentence - to include reasonably full details of the offence(s) which led to the sentence of imprisonment, together with any relevant remarks that the judge or magistrate may have made in passing sentence.

3. Prior Criminal History - a copy of the police record on the offender.

4. Medical and Psychological Reports - summaries of medical, psychological and social work reports that may have been prepared. These matters are discussed more fully below.

5. Prisoner Preferences - as a result of interviews an outline of the prisoner's preference for location (institution), education and vocational training, work assignment and recreational interests.

6. Progress Reports - to indicate initial security rating, location, work assignment, etc., and subsequent significant changes and results of disciplinary hearings.

(Extra sentences imposed would be shown on page two.) This section of the file would not include routine monthly or weekly reports of conduct and industry.

We recognise that more information than indicated in these six sub-headings is likely to come into the hands of correctional authorities, particularly with regard to long-term prisoners, but we submit that the above list represents the optimum that is needed for efficient decision-making in the vast majority of cases. In essence we are suggesting that summaries rather than complete documents are more appropriate for inclusion in classification files. Newspaper clippings, full medical, psychiatric, psychological and social work reports, pre-sentence reports, depositions and sentencing remarks, if they are to be retained at all in the prison, should be stored separately from the working files used for assessing progress and applications for changes of location and work. It seems to us to be counter-productive to give all members of a committee copies of complete files, perhaps up to one inch thick, for every case where a prisoner seeks a transfer from one work assignment to another.

On the question of what should be included in medical and psychological reports, we take the view that all prisoners received should be routinely examined by a medical officer, and that long-term prisoners should receive regular medical checkups. This is particularly important if there is any reason to suspect physical deterioration as a result of prolonged incarceration. The more controversial issue is whether or not psychological testing should be routinely used. We can see little value in all prisoners being subjected to batteries of psychological tests and we are particularly sceptical about the widespread use of personality tests in a prison environment. We do, however, support the use of vocational aptitude tests (which can be quickly administered in group situations) for all prisoners serving relatively long terms of two years or more actual time. In our view such measures of mechanical aptitude, tool knowledge, special ability and number and word checking skill can provide a valuable basis for both work placement and educational and vocational training. Testing of this type would in our view be more appropriately carried out after the initial period of adjustment to prison as there is some evidence to suggest that the results of tests given very early in a sentence

may not reflect the true level of ability.[9] As indicated above, we stress the need to only collect information which is realistically related to the options available.

MAINTAINING RECORDS

Most prison systems in Australia at one time or another have been confronted with the problems of how to store the mass of documentary information collected on prisoners, how to keep the records up to date, and how to maintain their confidentiality. To a large extent these problems would be minimised if our proposals for reducing and streamlining the information collected were implemented, but a number of issues would remain to be resolved.

The New South Wales authorities seem to have had little difficulty in finding storage space for records in the Long Bay Complex, but this problem has become acute in the Pentridge Classification Centre in Victoria. Most other jurisdictions have handled the storage problem by maintaining single copies of files at a central point with duplicates in the institutions where the prisoners are held. Photocopies are then made for use by Committees, Boards and Panels. This is, of course, a relatively expensive process.

Clearly the most innovative system of maintaining records is to be found in Western Australia where a single master file of each prisoner is kept at the departmental head office and microfiche copies are made when required for meetings of the Inmate Review Board. Using this method a file of up to 60 pages is reduced to a single transparent sheet, approximately 6" x 4" (15cm x 10cm) in size. Each member of the Board receives a small envelope of 'files' a few days before the meeting which he can study at his leisure using a microfiche reader. Small microfiche readers are also used during the meetings. Microfiche 'files' are returned and destroyed after each meeting.

This system is certainly effective in reducing storage problems, but it is relatively expensive to maintain and some difficulties have been experienced with lack of clarity with the reproductions. Prolonged use of microfiche readers has also been found to produce more fatigue than an equivalent period of reading traditional documentation.

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9. Biles, D., 'Test Performance and Imprisonment', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 1, 1968, pp.46-58.

In addition to this innovation in record-keeping the Western Australian Department of Corrections is experimenting with the computerisation of summaries of prisoners' records, and the New South Wales Corrective Services Commission is also considering the installation of a computer facility. We believe that within the next decade all large prison systems in Australia will find computers to be essential management tools. If programmed to automatically adjust security ratings with the passage of time a computer could constantly monitor the options for transferring prisoners to lower levels of security and hence help to avoid 'log jams' which seem to develop in particular parts of all systems.

Effective management of total systems as well as the sentences of individual long-term prisoners depends on the availability of adequate records, and all Australian systems have room for improvement in this regard.

On the question of maintaining the confidentiality of records we consider it to be totally unacceptable for prisoners to be used as typists or clerks and therefore to have access to the files of their fellow prisoners. This situation only exists in one major jurisdiction. We have no difficulty, on the other hand, in accepting the proposition that, with limited exceptions, prisoners should have the right to peruse their own files as is recommended in the *Minimum Standard Guidelines for Australian Prisons*.[10] An additional difficulty arises where professional staff take the view that the non-professional custodial staff should not have access to their reports. In our view this problem should be resolved by the use of summaries as outlined above.

A further issue with regard to the maintenance of records is the extent to which files compiled for classification purposes should be used by other authorities such as parole boards. In some jurisdictions the same files are used but in others summaries of prison records plus special reports prepared by parole officers provide the documentation available to parole authorities. We submit that if the modified classification record-keeping system that we have proposed were

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10. Bevan, C.R. (Ed.), *Minimum Standard Guidelines for Australian Prisons*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 1978, p.13.

accepted it would also be suitable for use by parole boards with the addition of special pre-parole reports. In those situations where the complete files are given to parole board members the same problem of over-supply of information occurs as it does in classification committees.

INFORMATION PROVIDED TO PRISONERS

In all Australian prison systems prisoners undergoing classification are interviewed by one or more custodial or professional officers and in these interviews information about institutional and programme options may be given. In most systems prisoners may also be given booklets which contain basic information on rules and regulations, visits, letters and the options that are available to long-termers. In our review of current practices, however, we have found that all of these booklets were either out of date or out of print. We cannot therefore avoid the conclusion that prisoners probably gain more information about the options available to them from conversations with other prisoners than they do from official sources. To the extent that this view is correct, it is obviously unsatisfactory as prison lore may itself be out of date and distorted.

In recent years some classification systems have changed their orientation from one in which the primary purpose is to gain information *from* prisoners to the opposite situation in which the supply of accurate information *to* prisoners is now seen as paramount. This new stance enables the prisoner to participate more actively and knowledgably in the decision-making process, but to be effective improvements in the information available are needed. Ideally, attractively printed material would be widely available to all prisoners as well as ample time for discussions with staff. This would enable prisoners to decide their preferences for location, training, work, etc. in a more realistic, and therefore useful, manner than would otherwise be the case. We are not in any way suggesting that long-term prisoners should have the right to decide their own classification, but we take the position that management would be more effective if the prisoners' point of view were fully considered and discussed.

SPECIAL CASES

All prison systems are confronted from time to time with the responsibility for handling cases which can only be described as 'special'. A particular prisoner may be well known to the public or be regarded as especially dangerous, and in these cases political pressure (even if unstated) ensures that more time and consideration are devoted to the relevant decision-making. In these situations the final decisions are sometimes made by the Director of the Department, or even by the Minister, rather than by the Classification Committee appointed for the purpose.

A category of special cases causing increasing concern in recent years in Australia are prisoners needing protection. Prison authorities have a duty not only to protect the community by keeping escapes to a minimum but also to protect prisoners from harm while they are serving their sentences. Those who need protection include informers, child molesters and those who have become the enemies of other offenders during the course of their criminal careers. If a prisoner informs the authorities that he is fearful that another prisoner intends to kill or seriously injure him the simplest solution is to ensure that the two prisoners are kept apart from each other. This can be handled by classification, and in the smaller systems the danger can be avoided by the relevant staff making a mental note (and perhaps recording it in the files) to ensure that the two prisoners are separated. This is most frequently achieved by assigning the protection cases to separate yards or divisions, if not to separate prisons.

In the larger systems of New South Wales and Victoria the numbers of prisoners claiming to be in need of protection run into hundreds and a more sophisticated approach is therefore needed. In both of these jurisdictions prisoners are not accepted as needing protection unless they reveal the names of their enemies or 'ghosts'. If a prisoner refuses to name the source(s) of potential danger to him, his claim to be in need of protection is rejected. In New South Wales the prisoners' files would be marked 'Never to be in the same prison as ...', and in high risk cases the prisoner may be transferred to Grafton in the section formally reserved for 'intractables'. In Victoria as well, some extreme protection cases may be located in

H Division of Pentridge, a section normally reserved for prisoners who have committed serious offences in prison or who are escapees.

A confidential protection register has been maintained for some years in the Pentridge Classification Centre. This contains the names of nearly 10 per cent of the total prison system population. Some prisoners named in the register are in danger from other prisoners as well as being named as a danger to others. A similar proportion of the total prison population are thought to be protection cases in New South Wales and, if the planned computer facility is installed, it will be used to record the numerous relationships which could be a source of danger. This difficult and sensitive area of prison administration is therefore seen by the writers as a further justification for the use of sophisticated information retrieval systems.

A less controversial category of special cases which requires consideration are prisoners sentenced to periods long enough for inclusion in the classification process, who are received into prisons other than the metropolitan prison where classification normally takes place. These cases are frequently referred to as 'country receptions'. Obviously the full resources of a classification centre are not available in remote and relatively small prisons, and therefore it may be argued that all such cases should be transferred to the metropolitan prison for classification. Against this is the argument that such transfers cause unnecessary hardship and expense if it is likely that the prisoner would serve most of his sentence in the prison where he was received. This is especially likely if that prison is close to the prisoner's home and relatives.

In Western Australia some prisons are more than a thousand miles from Perth and modified classification procedures have been developed for country receptions. In Queensland, as indicated earlier, the northern prisons of Townsville and Rockhampton operate with a great deal of independence and have local classification arrangements for all types of prisoners, including those sentenced to life imprisonment or long fixed terms. In other States considerable autonomy is given to remote prisons, but confirmation of classification decisions by

the central authority is generally required. This would seem to be desirable if uniform standards and policies are to be applied.

CONCLUSIONS

As can be seen from the brief descriptions and comments given above, there are significant differences, as well as some similarities, between the various prison classification systems operating in Australia. These differences relate not only to staffing, legislative authority, duration, documentation and physical facilities, but also to style. In South Australia and Western Australia, for example, prisoners being classified are invited to sit with the relevant committees and are addressed as 'Mr'. In Tasmania, by contrast, the prisoner stands before the committee and is addressed by his surname. In other jurisdictions the style of conducting the meetings falls between these extremes. Another area of great difference is the extent to which professional staff (psychologists, social workers, medical officers) are used in the classification process. In some jurisdictions no professional staff are involved, but at the other extreme, Western Australia and New South Wales probably have more professionalised systems than the others.

These and other differences are inherently interesting and probably reflect different philosophies and the approaches of administrators and/or governments in the past, but in one respect all Australian prison classification systems are similar. This is with regard to the relevance of classification to future correctional planning. No Australian system has adequately established this link. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, classification can provide a range of information that would enable planning to be more systematic and purposeful than it is at present. We express the hope that this dimension of prison classification will be developed in Australia in the near future.

CHAPTER THREE

PRISON STAFF ASSESSMENTS OF LONG-TERM PRISONERS

In recent years, widespread concern has been expressed about the effects of long-term imprisonment. This concern takes two forms. First there is the fear that any imprisonment is harmful to the incarcerated individual, and that long terms of imprisonment, in particular, produce irreversible psychological deterioration. Second, many prison administrators fear that an increase in the number of long-term prisoners will result in new or increased management problems. A number of national and international conferences have been held to discuss the effects of long-term imprisonment on both prisoners and administrators.[1] Academic research focussing on the effects on individual prisoners has resulted in an increasing number of books and journal articles (see Bibliography at the end of this monograph).

The increasing proportion of long-term prisoners in Australia, discussed in Chapter One, has prompted similar concerns here. Since one aspect of the long-term prisoner problem is that of management, the Australian Institute of Criminology conducted a nationwide survey of officers-in-charge of State prisons to ascertain whether or not long-term prisoners are presently perceived as presenting any outstanding management problems. The results of this survey are reported below.

PROBLEMS OF INMATE MANAGEMENT - A SURVEY OF OFFICERS-IN-CHARGE OF AUSTRALIAN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

A questionnaire (reproduced in Appendix 2) was sent to the officers-in-charge of all State correctional institutions (adult) soliciting information about problems faced in the daily management of prisons, the identification of any group(s) of prisoners that

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1. For example, the Canadian Ministry of the Solicitor General sponsored the International Seminar on the Effects of Long-Term Imprisonment and Programmes for Long-Term Inmates, Montreal, 1977; the Minnesota Department of Corrections sponsored the International Conference on Institutions of Last Resort for Long-Term Incarceration, Spring Hill, 1978; the British Home Office has held a number of conferences on the treatment of long-term prisoners; and the Council of Europe has published a comprehensive report entitled *Treatment of Long Term Prisoners* as a result of two years of deliberations.

present(s) special management problems, and a comparison of long-term prisoners as a group with other types of prisoners.

Each State Correctional department was responsible for administering the questionnaires and returning them to the Australian Institute of Criminology for analysis. The number of questionnaires returned and the security rating of the institutions is shown in Table 24. (The questionnaires returned represent approximately 88 per cent of prisons in Australia.)

Table 24: Number of Questionnaires Returned and Security Rating of Institutions

State	Number Returned	Security Rating*		
		Maximum	Medium	Minimum
N.S.W.	24	7	7	10
VIC.	8	1	4	3
QLD	8	4	1	3
S.A.	7	2	4	1
W.A.	15	1	5	9
TAS.	2	1	0	1
Total	64	16	21	27

* Note. Where an institution had divisions of various security ratings, the highest rating was used.

All replies were collated and the results for each part of the questionnaire are reported below.

Question 1: List the main problems you face in the daily management of inmates in your prison

In order of decreasing frequency of citation, the five major problem areas facing officers-in-charge in the day-to-day management of their prisons were as follows:

1. The fact that there are insufficient satisfactory employment/educational opportunities for prisoners.

2. Partly as a consequence of (1) above, administrators must deal with problems engendered by boredom, lack of hobby/recreational opportunities, and a lack of incentives to participation in the programme of the institution.

3. Shortage of both uniformed and specialist staff.

4. Problems resulting from inadequate and/or overcrowded buildings.

5. Problems caused by making application for and awaiting decisions concerning parole, work release, etc.

In addition to these areas, which were repeatedly listed in the replies, a wide range of other problems were also mentioned. In the main, they involved such things as dealing with drug trafficking, maintaining staff morale, preventing manipulation of treatment staff, resolving the personal problems of prisoners, and complaints about the increasing amount of paperwork required by the system. In no case were long-term prisoners seen as a cause, themselves, of day-to-day management problems. By way of contrast, young prisoners (particularly those serving short sentences) were often singled out as frequent causes of management problems.

Question 2: Are there any special groups of prisoners who cause you more problems than average? (If so, please specify in what way they are particularly difficult)

In order of decreasing frequency of citation, the five major problem groups of prisoners identified by the respondents were as follows:

1. Young prisoners (especially with short sentences and/or experience in juvenile institutions). These are seen as rebellious, anti-authority, and unwilling to work or be subject to discipline.

2. Drug offenders and drug users. The former are seen as problems because they are often more articulate and better educated than many other prisoners and many consider that society does not have the right to impose sanctions against drug use. They may be, as a consequence, difficult to control and disruptive to institutional programmes. Drug users (whether or not imprisoned for a drug offence) are a problem because it is alleged that they continue to traffic in and use drugs whilst in prison.

3. The psychologically disturbed and mentally retarded. This group is seen as either unpredictable or subject to pressure or victimisation by other inmates.

4. Aboriginal and ethnic groups. Problems of culture-conflict and language.

5. Prisoners in need of protection, e.g. some types of sex offenders.

Other types of problem inmates listed less frequently were those on remand or awaiting the results of an appeal, homosexuals, those associated with outside pressure groups, those with medical problems (particularly older prisoners), and short-term prisoners who know they will soon be out and are unwilling to conform to the institutional regime.

For the purposes of this discussion the most important finding was the complete absence of long-term prisoners on this list. While some inmates who fall into the categories listed above may, in fact, be serving five years or more, administrators do not perceive length of sentence as contributing to their problems. Rather it is the type of prisoner, regardless of length of sentence, that is seen as the cause of management difficulties.

Question 3: In your institution there are prisoners sentenced to five years or more (including those with indeterminate sentences). As a generalisation, do these long-termers cause more or less difficulty than other prisoners? (Please support your view with examples)

Of the 57 officers-in-charge who answered this question, 55 (96 per cent) considered that long-term prisoners caused less difficulty than others, one (2 per cent) thought them to be more difficult, and one (2 per cent) would not differentiate between the groups. Many mentioned the fact that long-termers may have difficulty settling in to their sentence but did not consider this phase to present particular problems of management. Rather they are just part of day-to-day handling of prisoner problems. Most officers-in-charge noted that long-termers are more involved in education, sports, and hobbies and that they tend to occupy important and trusted positions in the prison.

Question 4: In your view, how do long-termers compare with other prisoners with regard to: (a) conformity to rules; (b) work performance; (c) general behaviour and attitudes; and (d) participation in recreation, education, etc.?

Table 25 summarises the results obtained in answer to this question. Again it is apparent that long-term prisoners are not seen as problem inmates but, on the contrary, are viewed by the majority of respondents as better-than-average prisoners who pose no serious management problems.

Table 25: Responses to Questions Comparing the Behaviour of Long-Term Prisoners with Other Prisoners

	% of Respondents		
	Long-termers Better	Long-termers Same	Long-termers Worse
Conformity to rules	91.8	8.2	0
Work performance	80.3	19.7	0
General behaviour & attitudes	83.6	14.8	1.6
Participation in recreation, education, etc.	85.2	14.8	0

This preliminary survey of officers-in-charge of Australian prisons was designed to discover:

(a) if respondents would mention problems associated with long terms of imprisonment as part of their day-to-day management concerns;

(b) if respondents would include long-term prisoners on a list of specific problem groups; and

(c) how the behaviour of long-term prisoners was regarded by respondents in comparison with other types of prisoner.

The replies of 64 officers-in-charge were analysed and showed overwhelmingly that, as a group, long-term prisoners are not a management problem and are, in fact, often a stabilising influence in the institution. While some long-termers are difficult prisoners the length of their sentence *per se* is not seen as contributing to their difficulty.

In some ways this outcome is not unexpected as long-termers have traditionally been known as 'good' prisoners. However, in view of the concern which has been expressed about the changing composition of the prison population, with relatively larger proportions of long-term prisoners being held, one might have expected some problems to have started to arise to which senior administrators would draw attention. This survey shows, however, that Australian officials are much more concerned with young, short-sentence prisoners than with long-termers. This is an interesting finding because much of the concern about long-term prisoner management problems expressed overseas has come from the same group as responded to this questionnaire.

Of course, even though administrators do not at present perceive long-term prisoners as a management problem the experience of long terms of imprisonment may still be particularly debilitating to the individuals involved. This possibility will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

SUPERVISORS' RATINGS OF THE BEHAVIOUR OF LONG-TERM PRISONERS

As mentioned in Chapter One, part of the National Survey of Long-Term Prisoners comprised the assessments of supervising officers of each prisoner's conduct and industry, as well as data about their employment in the prison, the number of visits and letters they received, and the extent of any personal problems. The precise questions asked are given in Appendix 1, and the results are summarised below.

1. *Current work assignments.* All but one person in the sample were employed in some work or education at the time of the survey. As the range of positions encompassed almost every opportunity available in a prison there is no value in enumerating them here. The only point that might be made is that relatively few inmates were employed in the extremely mundane jobs which characterise some prison employment.

2. *Standard of work.* A supervisor with personal knowledge of each inmate was asked to rate how well the prisoner's work compared with that of a hypothetical 'average' prisoner. The results are given in Table 26. This shows that 44.9 per cent of the sample were rated as better or much better in their standard of work than the 'average' prisoner. Only 5.1 per cent were rated as worse or much worse.

Table 26: Supervisors' Ratings of the Standard of Work of Long-Term Prisoners

WORK STANDARD	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Much better	32	*26.9*	11	*13.4*	3	*3.0*	11	*19.7*	14	*12.0*	5	*13.9*	76	*14.9*
Better	40	*33.6*	31	*37.8*	11	*11.0*	19	*33.9*	38	*32.5*	19	*52.8*	158	*31.0*
Same	41	*34.5*	37	*45.2*	68	*68.0*	21	*37.5*	52	*44.4*	10	*27.8*	229	*44.9*
Worse	5	*4.2*	2	*2.4*	1	*1.0*	4	*7.1*	9	*7.7*	-	-	21	*4.1*
Much Worse	1	*0.8*	1	*1.2*	-	-	1	*1.8*	-	-	2	*5.5*	5	*1.0*
Not Rated	-	-	-	-	17	*17.0*	-	-	4	*3.4*	-	-	21	*4.1*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

3. *Behaviour toward prison staff.* Table 27 gives the supervisors' ratings of how the behaviour of persons in the sample towards prison staff compared with that of the 'average' prisoner. Of the total sample 9.4 per cent were rated as being worse or much worse than the 'average' prisoner. Significantly greater numbers of prisoners were rated as worse in Tasmania and South Australia (22.2 per cent and 19.7 per cent compared with an average of 4.8 per cent in the other States).

Table 27: Supervisors' Ratings of the Behaviour of Long-Term Prisoners Toward Prison Staff

BEHAVIOUR TO PRISON STAFF	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Much Better	35	*29.4*	11	*13.4*	2	*2.0*	11	*19.7*	16	*13.7*	5	*13.9*	80	*15.7*
Better	36	*30.3*	26	*31.7*	32	*32.0*	20	*35.6*	24	*20.5*	8	*22.2*	146	*28.6*
Same	44	*37.0*	43	*52.5*	59	*59.0*	14	*25.0*	64	*54.7*	12	*33.3*	236	*46.3*
Worse	1	*0.8*	1	*1.2*	7	*7.0*	11	*19.7*	11	*9.4*	8	*22.2*	39	*7.6*
Much Worse	3	*2.5*	1	*1.2*	-	-	-	-	2	*1.7*	3	*8.4*	9	*1.8*
Not Rated	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

4. *Behaviour toward other prisoners.* The supervisors' ratings of how the sample's behaviour toward other prisoners compared with that of the 'average' prisoner are given in Table 28. Again, only a small number (5.9 per cent) were judged to be worse or much worse than the 'average' prisoner. Most (67.2 per cent) were judged to be the same as the 'average' prisoner in their behaviour toward other inmates.

Table 28: Supervisors' Ratings of the Behaviour of Long-Term Prisoners Toward Other Prisoners

BEHAVIOUR TO OTHER PRISONERS	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Much Better	15	*12.6*	5	*6.1*	2	*2.0*	2	*3.6*	8	*6.8*	1	*2.8*	33	*6.5*
Better	36	*30.3*	16	*19.5*	10	*10.0*	22	*39.3*	14	*12.0*	6	*16.6*	104	*20.4*
Same	65	*54.6*	55	*67.1*	82	*82.0*	28	*50.0*	88	*75.2*	25	*69.4*	343	*67.2*
Worse	3	*2.5*	6	*7.3*	6	*6.0*	4	*7.1*	6	*5.1*	3	*8.4*	28	*5.5*
Much Worse	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	*0.9*	1	*2.8*	2	*0.4*
Not Rated	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

5. *Personal problems.* Supervisors were asked whether or not the long-termers in their charge appeared to them to have more personal problems than a hypothetical 'average' prisoner. The results are given in Table 29. Of the total sample, only 14.3 per cent were judged to have more personal problems.

Table 29: Supervisors' Ratings of the Extent to which Long-Term Prisoners Exhibit Personal Problems

PERSONAL PROBLEMS	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	16	*13.4*	11	*13.4*	21	*21.0*	6	*10.7*	18	*15.4*	1	*2.8*	73	*14.3*
No	98	*82.4*	71	*86.6*	79	*79.0*	50	*89.3*	99	*84.6*	35	*97.2*	432	*84.7*
Not Known	5	*4.2*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	*1.0*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

6. *Frequency of letters.* Table 30 shows the frequency with which long-termers in the sample received letters. A majority (63 per cent) received letters either weekly (46.1 per cent) or fortnightly (16.9 per cent). Of the national sample, 12.3 per cent received letters at intervals greater than one month, and 6.1 per cent never received mail.

Table 30: Supervisors' Estimates of the Frequency with which Long-Term Prisoners Receive Letters

LETTERS	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Weekly	52	*43.7*	53	*64.6*	40	*40.0*	31	*55.4*	54	*46.2*	5	*13.9*	235	*46.1*
Fortnightly	11	*9.2*	14	*17.1*	32	*32.0*	3	*5.3*	12	*10.3*	14	*38.9*	86	*16.9*
Monthly	11	*9.2*	6	*7.3*	8	*8.0*	14	*25.0*	15	*12.8*	11	*30.5*	65	*12.7*
More Than Monthly	13	*11.0*	6	*7.3*	17	*17.0*	6	*10.7*	15	*12.8*	6	*16.7*	63	*12.3*
Never	5	*4.2*	3	*3.7*	3	*3.0*	2	*3.6*	18	*15.4*	-	-	31	*6.1*
Not Known	27	*22.7*	-	-	-		-	-	3	*2.5*	-	-	30	*5.9*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

7. *Frequency of visits.* Table 31 shows the frequency with which persons in the sample received visits. Of the total sample, 15.5 per cent never received visits, and 18.2 per cent were visited less frequently than once a month. Weekly visits were received by 26.9 per cent of the sample.

There were some interesting inter-State comparisons. For example, in South Australia and Western Australia greater percentages than elsewhere (21.4 per cent and 27.3 per cent, respectively) never received visits. In contrast, 50 per cent of the Victorian sample received weekly visits.

Table 31: Supervisors' Estimates of the Frequency of Visits Received by Long-Term Prisoners

VISITS	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Weekly	22	*18.5*	41	*50.0*	27	*27.0*	10	*17.9*	37	*31.6*	-	-	137	*26.9*
Fortnightly	30	*25.2*	22	*26.8*	17	*17.0*	12	*21.4*	14	*12.0*	11	*30.5*	106	*20.8*
Monthly	20	*16.8*	6	*7.3*	20	*20.0*	9	*16.1*	15	*12.8*	16	*44.4*	86	*16.8*
More Than Monthly	24	*20.2*	9	*11.0*	21	*21.0*	13	*23.2*	18	*15.4*	8	*22.3*	93	*18.2*
Never	15	*12.6*	4	*4.9*	15	*15.0*	12	*21.4*	32	*27.3*	1	*2.8*	79	*15.5*
Not Known	8	*6.7*	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	*0.9*	-	-	9	*1.8*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

8. *Drug involvement.* The degree of known or suspected drug involvement within the prisons for persons in the sample is shown in Table 32. A mere 3.9 per cent of the sample were thought to be involved.

Table 32: Supervisors' Estimates of the Extent of Drug Involvement Among Long-Term Prisoners Within the Prison Situation

INVOLVED IN DRUGS	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	1	*0.8*	1	*1.2*	1	*1.0*	10	*17.9*	5	*4.3*	2	*5.6*	20	*3.9*
No	117	*98.4*	81	*98.8*	99	*99.0*	46	*82.1*	109	*93.2*	34	*94.4*	486	*95.3*
Not Known	1	*0.8*	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	*2.5*	-	-	4	*0.8*
TOTAL	119	*100.0*	82	*100.0*	100	*100.0*	56	*100.0*	117	*100.0*	36	*100.0*	510	*100.0*

9. *Involvement in prison violence.* The extent to which persons in the sample were known or suspected to be involved in prison violence is shown in Table 33. This table shows that 12.2 per cent of the sample were thought to be involved.

Again differences between the States are apparent. For example, in New South Wales only 2.5 per cent of the sample were regarded as being involved in violence, whereas in South Australia 23.2 per cent and in Tasmania 22.2 per cent were implicated.

Table 33: Supervisors' Estimates of the Extent to which Long-Term Prisoners are Involved in Prison Violence

INVOLVED IN VIOLENCE	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	3	2.5	4	4.9	15	15.0	13	23.2	19	16.2	8	22.2	62	12.2
No	114	95.8	77	93.9	85	85.0	43	76.8	96	82.1	28	77.8	443	86.8
Not Known	2	1.7	1	1.2	-	-	-	-	2	1.7	-	-	5	1.0
TOTAL	119	100.0	82	100.0	100	100.0	56	100.0	117	100.0	36	100.0	510	100.0

10. *Need for protection.* Table 34 shows how many long-term prisoners in the sample were thought to be in need of protection. Protection was judged necessary for 5.3 per cent of the sample. In Victoria 12.2 per cent were given needing protection status while none of the Queensland sample were so judged.

Table 34: Supervisors' Ratings of the Necessity for Special Protection among Long-Term Prisoners

PROTECTION REQUIRED	NSW		VIC		QLD		SA		WA		TAS		AUST.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	6	5.0	10	12.2	-	-	1	1.8	7	6.0	3	8.3	27	5.3
No	111	93.3	72	87.8	100	100.0	55	98.2	110	94.0	33	91.7	481	94.3
Not Known	2	1.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.4
TOTAL	119	100.0	82	100.0	100	100.0	56	100.0	117	100.0	36	100.0	510	100.0

SUMMARY

In terms of behaviour, long-termers showed no evidence of particular problems. Only 14.3 per cent were judged to have more personal problems than a hypothetical 'average' prisoner. Frequency of letters and visits received seems to be within the range found in the general prison population. However, it should be noted that the consequences of not receiving letters or visits may be vastly more damaging for the long-term prisoner.

When rated by a supervisor with personal knowledge of the prisoners, long-term prisoners are generally thought to work better, and behave better toward prison staff and other prisoners than the 'average' prisoner. Very few (3.9 per cent) of the sample were thought to be involved in drugs within the prisons, and only one in eight (12.2 per cent) were implicated in prison violence. Protection was required for 5.3 per cent of the sample. On the measures included in this survey, therefore, long-term prisoners do not appear to be a distinct problem group set apart from the general prison population. This finding accords with the opinions expressed by more senior prison staff which were discussed earlier in this chapter. As pointed out there, however, it may well be (and almost certainly is) the case that the experience of long-term imprisonment creates particular suffering for the individual which is not reflected in the measures included here. This issue will be addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EFFECTS OF LONG-TERM IMPRISONMENT

> How could you describe monotony except by saying its the same thing repeated over and over again until you're sick of it going on being repeated over and over again until you're no longer even sick of it you're not anything only that doesn't stop it being repeated over and over again whether you're anything or you're not anything and it still goes on being repeated over and over again ... or something like that.
>
> Paul M. (28)
> Offence: grievous bodily harm
> Sentence: 6 years

Quoted in Tony Parker (Ed.) *The Man Inside: An Anthology of Writing and Conversational Comment by Men in Prison.* London: Michael Joseph, 1973

In attempting to assess the effects of long-term imprisonment it is important to distinguish between two types of effects which have often been confused in the literature. First, the conditions of imprisonment must be identified (for example, deprivation in the social, sexual, intellectual, cognitive, physical, and sensory areas of human experience). These conditions are often themselves looked upon as the effects of long-term imprisonment but they are, in fact, only the conditions under which people are forced to experience long periods of imprisonment. They are the limitations imposed by our organisation of prisons not by the inherent nature of long sentences.[1]

The real consequences of incarceration within the parameters set above might include such things as changes in time perception, boredom, anxiety, institutionalisation, intellectual and personality changes, and psychophysiological reactions. Some effects within these groups may be a consequence of long-term imprisonment *per se*, regardless of the particular way in which a long sentence is organised.

Research to date has generally failed to make sufficient distinction between these two classes of 'effect'. It is suggested

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1. This point is well articulated in H.B. McKay, C.H.S. Jayewardene, and P.B. Reedie *The Effects of Long-Term Incarceration and a Proposed Strategy for Future Research*, Ottawa, Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada, 1979. This publication is the most comprehensive review of research currently available in this area.

that this is important because the tendency is to examine the effects of the obviously manipulable aspects of the long-term environment. For example, lessening some of the deprivations might be expected to attenuate some effects of long-term imprisonment but may divert attention from those effects which are an inevitable consequence of such incarceration. It is these latter effects that should really be monitored and, if possible, measured if we are seriously concerned to discover what the experience of long-term imprisonment does to individuals.

With these comments in mind, a brief summary of relevant research may be attempted. A number of studies have focussed on 'institutionalisation' and its effect of reducing a person's ability to cope with conditions in the outside world upon release. Institutionalisation is characterised chiefly by 'apathy and reduced motivation coupled with extreme dependency on routine and the support of the institution'.[2] The majority of research on this phenomenon has come from mental hospitals[3] and suggests that much of the observed effect is due to drab and unstimulating environments characterised by a range of choices that produce drab, dependent and unstimulated patients. Since prisons are typically drab and over-controlled environments, one might expect similar processes to be operating there. However, what evidence there is for institutionalisation is vague and contradictory. Most observational studies[4] offer strong evidence of institutionalisation. The landmark study of this nature was that of Stan Cohen and Laurie Taylor who spent a number of years closely involved with long-term prisoners in Durham Prison, England. Their book was an attempt to move away from what they saw as a 'sterile' empirical approach to trying to assess effects of long-term imprisonment. Rather, they attempted to get to know the prisoners on a personal and intimate level and to record their subjective experiences, fears, aspirations and despair and to observe how they modified their behaviour to cope with their changed circumstances. The publication

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2. Sapsford, R.J., *Effects of Imprisonment on Lifers*. Paper presented to DCLP Conference, Kings College, London, 26 May 1978.
3. Wing, J.K. and Brown, G.W., *Institutionalism and Schizophrenia*, Cambridge University Press, 1970.
4. For example, Cohen, S. and Taylor, L., *Psychological Survival: The Experience of Long-Term Imprisonment*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972; Morris, T. and Morris, P., 'The Experience of Imprisonment', *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 2, 1961, pp.337-360.

of their findings sparked off considerable controversy concerning the appropriateness of the application of 'scientific' versus 'phenomenological' approaches to the sorts of problems surrounding long-term imprisonment. On the one hand, the British Home Office argued that selective interviewing of long-term prisoners would produce biased and unrepresentative results which could not be subjected to satisfactory scrutiny. They preferred instead to support the work of a group of Durham University researchers who proposed to use an extensive array of psychological tests with a wider range of prisoners in an attempt to provide empirical data on the reactions of people to long terms of imprisonment.

Cohen and Taylor, on the other hand, argued that tests of the type used by the Durham University team (or any other tests which could conceivably have been employed) measured things which were at best only marginally related to the experience of long-term imprisonment and more likely were totally irrelevant. Apart from methodological criticisms they also differed fundamentally about the ideological implications of various types of prison research. They suggested that the 'traditional' approach to social research is committed to providing reassuring answers to problems which do not fundamentally change the status quo. By way of contrast, they see their research as seeking to answer basic questions whose answers may well in turn seriously question the morality or practicality of the procedures under study. Thus while many empirical studies are unable to document important effects of long-term imprisonment, Cohen and Taylor claim that merely observing long-termers and asking them how *they* experience their sentences reveals devastating effects. They claim that long-termers greatly fear psychological deterioration and that such deterioration does in fact affect a great many long-termers in a significant manner. They describe their sample in Durham Prison as follows:

> These men felt that all around them were examples of people who had turned to cabbages because they had not been sufficiently vigilant. Every day they encountered an old sex offender who spent hours merely cleaning and filling the tea-pot, a mindless activity which the old man appeared to be contented with. And this was their problem: at what price would they achieve peace of mind and contentment? Would they start behaving like the old man ... would the

> cumulative results of years of working at something which looked like adaptation, in fact really be a process of learning how to deteriorate?
> (Cohen and Taylor, 1972).

Cohen and Taylor's book attempts to describe many of the personal strategies evolved by prisoners to help them pass the time and deal with a world which is arbitrary, out of their own control, and isolated from events outside. Many of these strategies appear on the surface to be maladaptive, and would certainly be considered so upon release from prison, but closer examination reveals them to be quite reasonable responses to the prison environment. A specific example will illustrate this point. A characteristic noted by many observers of long-term prisoners is a tendency towards self-isolation and withdrawal from social contact, even within the prison. In some cases this withdrawal is sufficiently extreme so as to result in complete social isolation. However, as interviews with long-term prisoners conducted by the present authors revealed, most people affected in this way have sound and rational reasons for trying to avoid significant relationships with other prisoners. Because of the time they spend together and the environmental deprivation of prisons, those who do develop friendships tend to develop very intense bonds. The breaking of such a bond by a transfer to another prison is thus a very serious matter which often leads to severe depression. For this reason, many prisoners would rather not form close relationships in the first place.

Apart from the observational studies exemplified by Cohen and Taylor's work, a number of empirical and quasi-empirical studies claim to have demonstrated the effects of institutionalisation on long-term prisoners. Sluga[5] claims that there are significant personality changes in long-term prisoners which lead to chronic damage to the person and eventually to changes in the central nervous system. Sluga believes these personality changes are characteristic enough to form a recognisable syndrome which he calls the 'functional psychosyndrome'. The characteristics of the syndrome begin to become evident after four to six years of imprisonment and are as follows:

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5. Sluga, W., 'Treatment of Long-Term Prisoners Considered from the Medical and Psychiatric Point of View', in Council of Europe, *Treatment of Long-Term Prisoners*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1977.

(a) emotional disturbances - reduced affectivity; stereotyped, seemingly inadequate emotions with outbursts frequently involving relapses.

(b) disturbances in comprehension and ability to think.

(c) changes in psychological mode of life - infantile and regressive behaviour;

(d) social contact trouble - growing insecurity in relations with people and the contents of life outside prison; sexual deviations; increased isolation due to introversion.

Sluga based this description on clinical interviews, however he has also provided more systematic, cross-sectional test data on 79 long-term prisoners in Austria. In a motoricity test, performances deteriorated with length of time served. A further test showed corresponding deficits in ability to concentrate. Extensive testing with the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) suggests that so-called neurotic personality defences decrease with time in prison and are replaced with defences more characteristic of schizoid personalities (primarily involving an apparent 'loss of reality'). Similar results have been reported in other clinical studies.[6] Moreover, such results seem to have worldwide applicability. For example, Taylor[7] reports some heavily deteriorated cases in New Zealand prisons, and Tokuyama, Tsuru, Hashimoto, and Okawa[8] report that Japanese prisoners well into life sentences have 'flatter' personalities than others.

Unfortunately, all of the studies discussed above are both methodologically suspect and of doubtful practical utility. They tend to focus on unrepresentative groups of long-termers, often

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6. For example, Cormier, B.M. and Williams, P.J., 'La Privation Excessive de la Liberté', *Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal*, Vol. 11, 1966, pp.470-484; Scott, G.D. and Gendreau, P., 'Psychiatric Implications of Sensory Deprivation in a Maximum Security Prison', *Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal*, Vol. 14, 1969, pp.337-341.
7. Taylor, A.J.W., 'Social Isolation and Imprisonment', *Psychiatry*, Vol. 24, 1961, pp.373-376.
8. Tokuyama, T., Tsuru, M., Hashimoto, K., and Okawa, C., 'A Study on Prisoners Serving Life Sentence', *Bulletin of the Criminological Research Department*, 3rd Report, Japanese Ministry of Justice, Tokyo, 1973, pp.18-22.

predominantly those selected for psychiatric or psychological investigation. Most of the data are impressionistic and tend to be interpreted from an overly psychiatric viewpoint which is pathologically orientated and might be expected to predict negative outcomes. Further, the data provide no clue as to whether or not the changes described are transient adaptations to the environment or irreversible changes in behaviour.

It is interesting to note that those studies which are methodologically superior find it very difficult to measure any quantifiable deterioration. The most careful research of this type is the series of studies carried out by the team of psychologists from Durham University. These studies involved the cross-sectional testing of the intelligence, personality, and attitudes of 175 prisoners sentenced to long terms of imprisonment (a determinate sentence of 10 years or more, or an indeterminate sentence of life or detention at Her Majesty's Pleasure) whose total present and past prison experience ranged from zero to 40 years. Banister, Smith, Heskin, and Bolton[9] reported that over various lengths of time served there was no significant decline in intellectual ability although non-significant trends were revealed suggestive of decrements in performance speed in complex tasks. On the other hand there appeared to be some improvements in verbal ability over time. Heskin, Smith, Banister, and Bolton[10] reporting the results of personality tests administered to the sample, found a decline in extroversion and an increase in hostility (particularly self-directed). No significant differences in spontaneity, emotional maturity, or neuroticism were detected. Using a semantic differential to measure attitude change, Heskin, Bolton, Smith, and Banister[11] found that self-respect decreased significantly with imprisonment. They found no evidence that hostility towards the law and its agents increases with increasing imprisonment. A subsequent re-test of most (154) of the original sample and a comparison group of 30 non-prisoners was reported by

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9. Banister, P.A., Smith, F.V., Heskin, K.J., and Bolton, N., 'Psychological Correlates of Long-Term Imprisonment. I: Cognitive Variables', *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 13, 1973, pp.312-323.
10. Heskin, K.J., Smith, F.V., Banister, P.A., and Bolton, N., 'Psychological Correlates of Long-Term Imprisonment. II: Personality Variables', *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 13, 1973, pp.323-330.
11. Heskin, K.J., Bolton, N., Smith, F.V., and Banister, P.A., 'Psychological Correlates of Long-Term Imprisonment. III: Attitudinal Variables', *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 14, 1974, pp.150-157.

Bolton, Smith, Heskin, and Banister.[12] Analysis revealed no evidence of psychological deterioration as measured by intelligence, personality, and attitude tests. The results confirmed the findings of the previous studies concerning improved verbal intelligence in prisoners who have served more of their sentences, and increases in self-criticism and intro-punitive hostility.

Findings similar to those reported by the Durham research have also been reported for life sentence prisoners in the Federal Republic of Germany. Rasch[13] with 53 subjects, used medical examination, intelligence tests, semantic differentials, interview assessment and a variety of questionnaires (including the MMPI and 16PF) to gather data on psychological changes with length of incarceration. The sample (which constituted 57.6 per cent of prisoners serving life sentences in West Berlin in February 1977) was divided into three groups with increasing periods of time already served. Group 1 comprised 17 prisoners with a mean age of 28.4 years and a mean time of imprisonment of just over three years. Group 2 comprised 18 prisoners with a mean age of 34 years and a mean time of imprisonment of eight and a half years. There were 18 prisoners in Group 3 who had served a mean time of 13 years 5 months.

Overall, Rasch found remarkably little difference between the groups. Medical examinations showed no evidence of deterioration in health, other than that within normal limits. Test results and interviews found no development of psychotic symptoms and no evidence of intellectual deterioration. Psychological tests and interviews found that, contrary to expectations, emotional bluntness or moodiness were not typical, although Rasch believed that slightly over half the prisoners appeared depressive or sub-depressive. Emotional withdrawal was the most characteristic trait.

The only statistically significant differences between the groups appeared on attitudinal change measures. With increasing length of detention, prisoners tended to develop a more positive attitude towards

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12. Bolton, N., Smith, F.V., Heskin, K.J., and Banister, P.A., 'Psychological Correlates of Long-Term Imprisonment. IV: A Longitudinal Analysis', *British Journal of Criminology*, 1976, Vol. 16, pp.38-47.
13. Rasch, W., *The Development of the Mental and Physical State of Persons Sentenced to Life Imprisonment*. Paper presented to an International Seminar on Long-Term Imprisonment, Mont-Gabriel, Canada, June 1977.

prison officers. Further, embitterment and expressions of being demoralised by the prison environment were most common in Group 1 (those who had served the least time). Prisoners in Group 2 showed the most favourable attitude towards other prisoners and tended to have more actual contact with other prisoners than did those in Groups 1 or 3. In sum, Rasch was unable to report any consistent negative effects of long-term imprisonment (at least up to 17 years, which was the longest period served by a prisoner in this sample).

It would seem then that acceptance of evidence concerning psychological deterioration of long-term prisoners comes down to methodological and ideological questions. Those who insist on objective tests and methodologically sound experimental designs can turn to studies which meet their criteria and essentially will find no evidence of deterioration. Those who criticise this approach as sterile (and even politically and socially objectionable) can turn to studies which seek prisoner opinion and will uncover a multitude of fears and adaptations which may be said to constitute deterioration. The problem with interpreting either set of results depends greatly upon what is accepted as deterioration. It seems to the present authors, however, that while it would be most desirable to have objective evidence of deterioration (in the sense of measurable, replicable data) our present psychological tools do not measure those aspects of a person's behaviour or environment that are relevant to this particular problem. It seems to us, then, that most weight must be given to observational data and the autobiographical evidence of those who must endure long terms of imprisonment. Certainly work in the ethnographic tradition, such as that of Cohen and Taylor reveals that long-term prisoners fear deterioration, that they must make significant adaptations in order to maintain themselves in a controlled environment devoid of choice and stimulation, and that the personal cost of long-term imprisonment is high. Rather than rely on research findings of doubtful applicability, it seems that many of the decisions about the justifiability of long-term imprisonment will have to be made on moral and human grounds.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NEED FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

It is frequently argued that long-term prisoners, particularly those serving indefinite sentences, have a number of special needs which set them apart from other prisoners. At the very least, long-termers will be subject to more scrutiny because of the more complex evaluation and reporting procedures that apply to them. These procedures in themselves may create unique pressures. For example, the anxiety engendered by assessments of suitability for release is likely to be more severe and to occur more often in the case of a long-term, as compared with a short-term, prisoner. Further, prison administrators sometimes consider that long-term prisoners reach a 'peak' at which time they are more suitable for release. If the Parole Board, or other authority declines to release an individual at this stage, administrators claim that there is a danger of the prisoner deteriorating and either becoming withdrawn and depressed or more difficult to interact with because of an increasing hostility towards what is perceived as an arbitrary and biased exercise of power. These problems are particularly marked in those cases in which damaging predictions concerning future dangerousness are involved.

Prison administrators generally agree that the needs of long-term prisoners change as the sentence progresses and that these needs correspond roughly to three basic stages in a sentence. First there is an initial period immediately after sentence during which the individual is subject to particular stress (especially if an appeal has still to be considered). Particularly for a person with no previous prison experience the fear of institutionalisation and the unknown is very great. Even those who have experienced imprisonment before are likely to find it difficult to understand the meaning, in any real sense, of (for example) a life sentence. A prisoner's problems are amplified by the reactions of family, who will also experience great difficulty in adjusting to the reality of what is occurring. The married prisoner, as well as attending to the difficulties surrounding the disruption to family affairs occasioned by any instance of imprisonment, faces the additional worry of whether or not the relationship will, or indeed should, remain intact over what might be very many years of difficulty.

As the sentence continues, and the prisoner is said to 'settle' into it, the middle (and major) phase of adjustment takes place. As is clear from the writings of long-term prisoners, this phase is characterised by difficulties in measuring the passage of time and apprehensiveness about whether or not 'progress' (as defined by the authorities, often arbitrarily and without informing the individual involved) is being made. Particular stress is evident during the later stages of this phase when Parole Board or other review hearings are imminent. Many prisoners are seen to throw themselves wholeheartedly into hobby or educational activities during this period in an effort to help the passage of time or to shut out the world outside.

Finally, the prisoner faces the problems brought about by the impending termination of the sentence. Problems of re-establishing personal relationships or reassuring oneself that the relationships will work, maintained over the period in prison, loom large in the prisoner's mind. Finding employment and accommodation, and adjusting to the many changes that may have taken place in the world since entering prison are particularly frightening aspects of release which cause extreme anxiety, and even panic, in many long-termers facing the end of their sentence.

YOUNG LONG-TERM PRISONERS

Many of these problems of adjustment are accentuated in the case of young long-term prisoners who, as a group, are isolated, both from other long-termers and from their short-term contemporaries. This isolation is primarily psychological rather than organisational, although the latter is a factor when administrators try to keep young and old prisoners physically separate. While special facilities are available for young long-termers in a number of countries this is not possible in Australia because of the small number of individuals involved. Such prisoners could be held in an institution such as a youth training centre in Victoria, for example, but as a rule they are sent to adult prisons. The actual disposition depends very much on individual circumstances.

It is often the case that young long-termers have fewer convictions and less institutional experience than similarly aged persons

serving short sentences. As a consequence the initial impact of a long sentence may be felt more severely. In addition, the circumstances surrounding some of the offences involving young offenders frequently make them perceive a greater sense of injustice than is the case with adults, a perception which is often reinforced by the attitudes of their parents. This constellation of problems is exacerbated by the fact that young long-termers will grow from youth to adulthood within the constricting and stultifying environs of a prison, with consequent effects on socialisation and emotional maturity. G.W. Axe, the Governor of Swinfen Hall (a British institution for young prisoners) sums up the situation in these words:

> Is it any wonder therefore that after some years the limitations imposed by his sentence and the establishment may leave the young prisoner at the point of entry into the adult system as a very much more naive and insecure person than is apparent on the surface. For instance he will have little, if any, concept of what it is like to be involved in the adult industrial scene, neither will he have any real idea of how to cope with adult relationships in what to him is a changed world. Even within his own home and social group, the changes and growth that will have taken place since he was last a part of it will have left him behind. His fears and fantasies, his sheer naivete in relation to the adult world can pose very real problems to him ...[1]

Axe suggests that the problems of re-entry into society upon release, acknowledged as being serious for any long-term prisoner, are greatly amplified for those who have spent their teenage years in prison and proposes that a special effort should be made to cater for the needs of this group, however small it may be.

TREATMENT PROGRAMMES FOR LONG-TERM PRISONERS

In discussions of the management of long-term prisoners the suggestion is frequently heard that this is a group which is particularly in need of 'treatment'. What exactly is meant by treatment is often not made clear, but it is evident that many people view those sentenced to long terms of imprisonment as being more likely

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1. Axe, G.W., *Young Prisoner Lifers and the Adult System.* Paper delivered to the Conference on the Revised Strategy for Life Sentence Prisoners, held by the British Prison Department, 3-5 March 1976.

than others to have psychological or psychiatric problems. The extent to which this is claimed to be so seems to depend to a large extent on theoretical or ideological prejudices. Thus, it is easy to ascribe psychiatric malady to a murderer or other violent criminal if it is held that violence *per se* is indicative of madness. It is considerably more difficult to pinpoint the nature of such madness and even more difficult to prescribe a specific remedy. It is because of basic difficulties with these two concepts - diagnosis and specific intervention - that most of the discussion of treatment for long-termers (or indeed for any prisoners) is revealed as being nothing but empty rhetoric. Apart from the possibility of offering specific treatment programmes for some types of sex offenders, or of investigating the psychological bases of a small number of specific offences, such as arson, there is little specific treatment that can be aimed at long-termers other than intervention aimed at assisting individuals to cope with the crises that arise during their sentence. To suggest otherwise is both an exaggeration of our capabilities and personnel and could be viewed by some as a cynical exercise in public relations aimed at silencing those critics who claim that not enough is done with violent criminals whilst in custody.

A related matter of concern is that parole boards frequently have the attitude that long-term prisoners are especially in need of treatment and make it clear that participation in a treatment programme will improve the prisoner's chances of favourable parole consideration. There is no evidence that counselling or treatment makes any difference at all to the behaviour of the average parolee. The fact is that 'counselling and treatment' all too often means a few chats with the prison psychologist or psychiatrist rather than a planned intervention of a specific nature. The seductive appeal of references to 'treatment programmes' cannot hide the emptiness of the delivery of most psychological services in prisons. This is not to deny that such services do not have a place and cannot be effective. We must, however, carefully define our terms and not claim results that cannot be attained. It is unfortunate that prison psychologists seem to become as institutionalised as the inmates they treat and allow their work to be characterised inaccurately

and used as an inappropriate basis for decisions in which their work is irrelevant or of unproven validity.

RECORD KEEPING - CLASSIFICATION - CAREER PLANNING

Because long-term prisoners are subject to many reporting procedures (parole board hearings, periodic reviews, life sentence reviews, etc.) and may be considered to have, or to be likely to develop, special problems, a great deal of time and energy is expended in collecting information about them. The files containing the multitude of records (work reports, reports from wing officers, social workers, medical officers, psychiatrists, psychologists, parole boards, applications by the prisoner, charges against the prisoner, administrative papers, interview records) accumulated over the years often take on a life of their own and assume an importance greater than that of the individual to whom they refer. Apart from the fact that prison records contain a good deal of information that is unnecessary or repetitive and that an immense amount of labour is wasted in maintaining them, they also pose some dangers. Foremost amongst these is the danger to proper decision-making caused by uncorroborated statements and reports which occur in some files. Often these are suspicions of prison officials or speculation on the prisoner made by psycholgists or psychiatrists. In addition to being unsubstantiated, these reports may frequently be many years old, and hence out of date, but may still exert an influence on decision-makers at such times as parole reviews. There is a strong case to be made for tightening up the regulations governing what can be reported and for a careful analysis of what data are really useful in decision-making. The specific proposals we have made in Chapter Two with regard to the streamlining of the collection of information for classification files would, in our view, overcome many of these problems.

One of the major justifications for record systems is the part they play in assessment procedures. Of necessity, assessment and classification occupy a central place in the lives of long-term prisoners. The question that must be asked, however, is how much of this assessment is really necessary? The philosophy that assessment of long-term prisoners should be a lengthy process is summed up

in the following quote from a report on a conference on life-sentence prisoners held by the British Prison Department in 1976:

> The initial allocation of a lifer to a training prison was currently made within months, if not weeks, of sentence. This allowed little time for proper assessment and the difficulties were compounded if there were residual problems from the prisoner's former life, by his own task of personal adjustment, and by the severe limitations on the options which were in practice open to allocators. The Department had concluded that it would be better to provide a longer period for assessment during which the lifer could come to terms with his sentence and settle down to serving it and the staff could really come to know him. The aim would be by the end of the period, first, to have formed an opinion on the length of time an individual was likely to have to spend in custody; secondly to have reached a considered decision on the prisoner's disposal on first allocation; and thirdly to have formulated a tentative outline career plan incorporating suggested subsequent, and where practicable, progressive moves. Such a plan would naturally be refined, developed and modified over the years in the light of the prisoner's response, but it would mean that more effort had been made to think ahead and a better basis would be available for subsequent decisions.[2]

On the face of it, this represents a rational, humane approach to the problem of classifying long-termers. A critical analysis, however, reveals that there are several major deficiencies in practice. Foremost is the assumption that early in a lengthy sentence, the prison officials will somehow be able to make a reasonably accurate guess as to the prisoner's eventual release date. Given all the factors that enter into the release decision an accurate estimate is a virtual impossibility. This point is illustrated by data on life sentence (and commuted death sentence) prisoners collected by Freiberg and Biles.[3] Figure 2 reproduced from their study, shows the distribution of time served by commuted and life sentence prisoners in New South Wales from 1932-1974. Although the average time served was in the vicinity of 13½ years the range was between 1 year 5 months and 30 years 6 months. As may be seen from the figure the distribution was widely spaced and no clear prediction would have been possible for individual cases.

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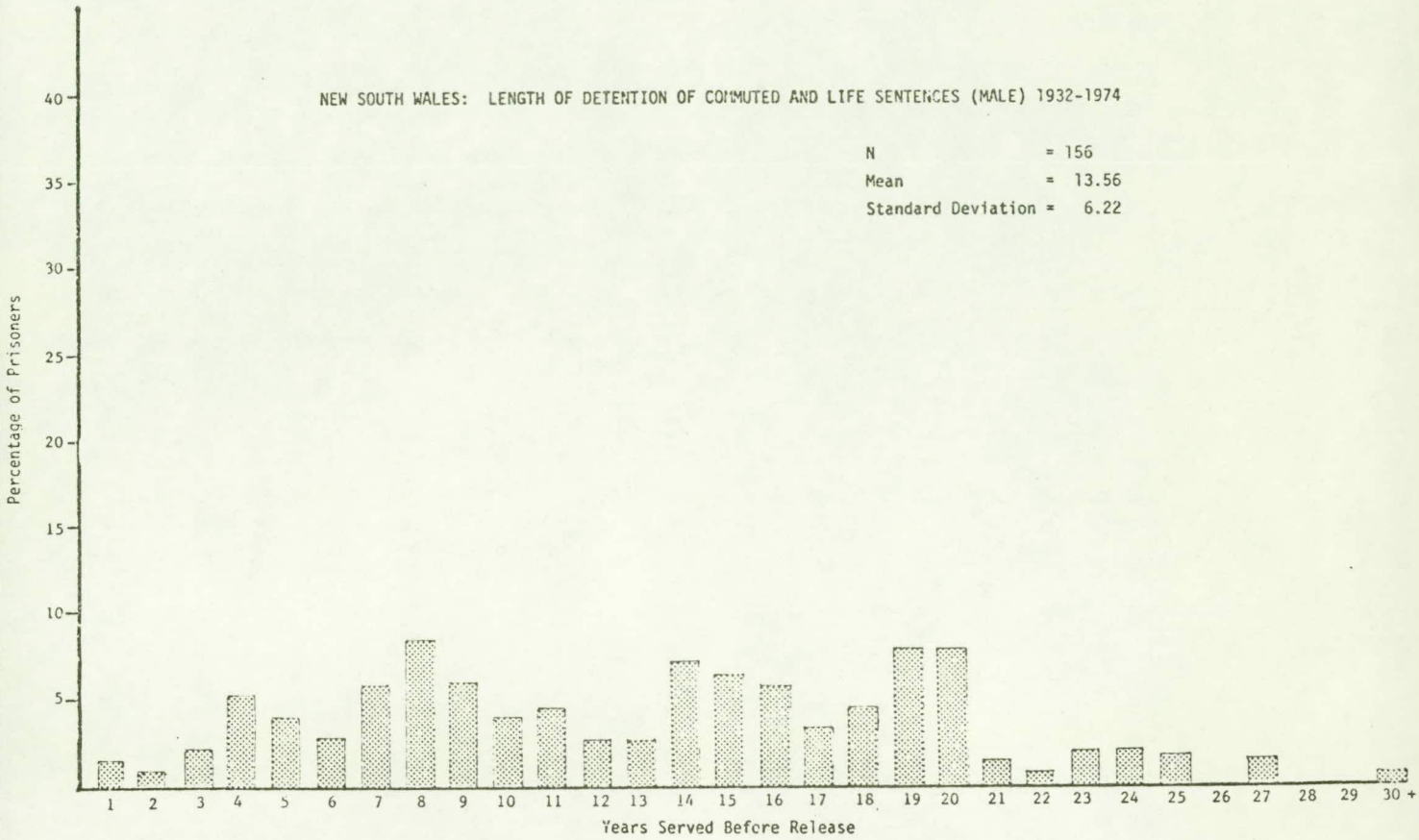
2. Report on the Conference on the Revised Strategy for Life Sentence Prisoners, held by the British Prison Department, 3-5 March 1976.
3. Freiberg, A. and Biles, D., *The Meaning of 'Life': A Study of Life Sentences in Australia*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 1975.

Figure 2: (Reproduced from Freiberg and Biles, 1975)



Given the probable unreliability of predictions of release dates made early in a sentence there are two obvious dangers to the prisoner about whom the prediction is made. First, if the estimate is favourable, and this is communicated or becomes obvious to the inmate, it would cause considerable distress and friction if the releasing authority eventually makes a decision significantly later than that forecast. Conversely, if an unfavourable prognosis is made which turns out to be a significant overestimate, the prisoner could be caused unnecessary hardship. Perhaps even more important, a negative prediction could become a self-fulfilling prophecy, especially if the prisoner reacts negatively to the realisation that the prison authorities consider he will be held for a very long time.

The second difficulty revealed by the British approach centres on the concept of 'career planning'. This is an attempt by the Prison Department to take account of the need for 'time markers'[4] for long-term

4. See Cohen, S. and Taylor, L., *Psychological Survival: The Experience of Long-Term Imprisonment*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972.

prisoners. In an effort to provide distinct phases of a sentence which provide change and an indication of progress, a 'career' is mapped out which involves moving the individual to different prisons to cater for different needs and circumstances as the sentence progresses. This is a laudable aim. However, given limitations in resources and our lack of knowledge of precisely what ill effects of long-term imprisonment we are trying to avoid or what positive effects of the programme are expected, it is possible that career planning could merely serve, as do so many other 'programmes', to convince observers (and indeed the system itself) that 'something is being done' to counter the presumed ill effects of lengthy incarceration. To be fair, these criticisms are recognised by the British Prison Department. To quote again from the report on their 1976 Conference:

> Throughout the conference there was much honest questioning of whether the idea of 'progress' was not in practice synonymous with administrative convenience. Whilst there could be no doubt that movement was necessary and, for most lifers, inevitable under the revised strategy, it was asked whether the movement that had already taken place was not motivated more by pragmatic than theoretical considerations. It was agreed it would be dishonest to dress administrative necessity in the garb of progress, and such a strategem would be unlikely to deceive the prisoner himself.[5]

The British solution is a model for prison movement which might satisfy both the needs and aspirations of the lifer and the administrative requirements of a prison system:

> If an individual's needs were primarily educational, he would be passed through a number of prisons, with decreasing degrees of security, which would be better equipped than others to cope with his requirements. Similarly, if his needs were primarily medical or industrial, he could be processed through a different constellation of establishments. Purely custodial needs could also be met. The model raised important questions of whether priorities could be assigned to an individual's needs, and whether the regimes of establishments could be tailored to such specialisation and yet cater for medium and long term prisoners as well as lifers. The model was suggested as one means of utilising present resources in a more schematic fashion, thereby lending a greater credence to the concept of career planning. One argument raised against the model was that the assignation of roles to specific prisons would have the effect of fixing

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5. *op. cit.*, p.5

> expectations of lifers allocated to them in an even more definite way than was apparent at present. Another objection was that a more precise and fixed definition of the regimes of lifer-designated prisons would detract from the flexibility which was already one of the strengths of the system as a whole.[6]

Of course the introduction of such a model would require a system with a range of institutions and programmes and a fair degree of flexibility. It is doubtful that such conditions obtain in any but the largest prison systems in Australia.

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION FOR LONG-TERM PRISONERS

The value and meaning of employment and education within prisons is currently much debated[7] and it is possible that special considerations apply to long-term prisoners. For example, long-term prisoners, more than others, may view work and education as diversions from either the monotony of the prison routine or something to bury themselves in so that they can deny the reality of their offence and its consequences. Thus, the prisoner who decides that surviving the sentence without undue strain or deterioration is his major goal may well utilise work, education, or recreational activities as a vehicle towards this end. Similarly, a prisoner whose offence may be psychologically-based and for whom counselling or treatment may be realistic can bury himself in activity and so prevent penetration into sensitive areas. These considerations highlight the futility of using progress in activities as a measure of suitability for release.

Of course, a prisoner's enthusiastic participation in work, education, or hobbies may well be a genuine attempt to acquire new skills or knowledge in preparation for release. In this case, however, the danger is that new skills will be attained early in a long sentence which may arouse unreal expectations that the prisoner will soon be released and able to employ them. When it becomes evident that such is not the case, disillusionment or resentment are real possibilities. The approach of some authorities is not to let the prisoner acquire new skills too soon. The problems with this approach, however, are many. For example, how does one judge the appropriate starting time?

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6. *ibid*, pp.5-6.
7. See, for example, Braithwaite, J.B., *Prisons, Education and Work: Towards a National Employment Strategy for Prisoners*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra (in press).

What does one do with the prisoner in the meantime and what are the effects of an initial policy of virtual inaction?

A more reasonable and productive approach is to guide the type of activity into which a long-term prisoner's interest is channelled. For example, there may be little point in letting a long-termer undertake, early in his sentence, a practical course in computer operator skills. Such skills could not be used for many years and may well be outdated by the time of release. On the other hand, a course in welding, for example, may equip him to work in more demanding and satisfying prison industries as well as giving him better post-release qualifications. There is a need for administrators to use commonsense and a good deal of imagination in trying to offer opportunities within the prison which combine short-term satisfaction with long-term employment-related advantages.

DISTRIBUTION OF LONG-TERM PRISONERS WITHIN THE PRISON SYSTEM

The problem of whether long-term and high-security prisoners should be held centrally or dispersed throughout the prison system is a vexing one. It was given particularly close scrutiny in the inquiry into long-term, maximum security prisoners in Britain in 1968.[8] In Australia, all the large jurisdictions lean toward a system of dispersal. It has been suggested, though, that some thought might be given to holding long-term prisoners in institutions of their own. Often length of sentence is highly correlated with degree of security classification, so this suggestion would really amount to a system of concentration. Supporters of a specialised institution argue that it would allow special programmes or regimes to be developed which would be inappropriate for short-term prisoners. As has been pointed out, however, it is difficult to see what realistically is meant by reference to such 'programmes'. The argument against specialised institutions is that mixing with short-termers helps long-term inmates 'keep in touch' with the outside world, and that this important link would be broken (a possibility which does not appear to have disturbed the long-termers interviewed during this study). Probably the major objection to the concentration argument, however, is that family and

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8. Great Britain, Home Office, *The Regime for Long-Term Prisoners in Conditions of Maximum Security*, Report of the Advisory Council on the Penal System, HMSO, London, 1968.

friendship links are more likely to be disrupted - there would be no flexibility to allow for the tailoring of allocations to meet individual needs. It could be that, in reality, this is a spurious argument because even now prisoners may well be located according to administrative, rather than personal, convenience and the problems of lack of contact with family and friends are likely to exist whatever system operates.

It seems to us that a system of locating all long-term prisoners in special-purpose institutions would inevitably go hand-in-hand with an increase in the proportion of long-termers subjected to high security conditions. We view the unnecessary imposition of high security to be counterproductive. In particular, it would seriously restrict the opportunities for work, education, training, treatment and other experiences which can be offered to long-term prisoners dispersed throughout the system. It is desirable that prisoners should be allocated to institutions on the basis of their needs and the degree of security it is deemed they require rather than the basis of their membership in an arbitrarily-defined group. Further, since it has not proved possible to show empirically that long-term prisoners suffer specific deterioration or, as the survey of prison administrators revealed, present peculiar management problems, it is difficult to see any compelling justification for the existence of special purpose institutions for long-term prisoners.

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE

As part of the preparation for this research project a number of long-term prisoners were interviewed to seek their opinions about the matters raised in this chapter. The general opinion of the interviewees was that long-termers who have served more than five years mellow and become more mature and better people. There was some argument about whether or not mellow was another way of saying 'vegetate' but on the whole no-one was able to point to any specific ill-effects of long-term imprisonment. The only positive danger they saw was that if a person thinks he is ready for release and comes up before the Parole Board and is turned down he may become morose and dangerous or else recede into some sort of childish behaviour or recede into himself. In

relation to other prisoners they thought that it was more difficult to get on with short-term prisoners. This is not a matter of not being friendly with short-term prisoners, but they are not interested in establishing a relationship with them because they know short-termers will be released soon and, consequently, they will suffer the breakdown of yet another relationship. Some considered that they tended to get on better with some prison officers as relationships were developed but because officers are moved from place to place within the prison they often were not able to develop long-term relationship with prison officers. Others did not want to develop any friendly interactions with officers.

In the area of work, they thought that long-term prisoners had even more need for meaningful work than any other sort of prisoner. At the moment there is no incentive at all - nothing of a long-term nature to be interested in. A couple of interviewees thought that educational opportunities were particularly important and saw the administration's attitude at the moment as being obstructive to this course of action. Some of them also mentioned that they would like to get involved in projects such as restoring motor-bikes or old vehicles or something that would enable them to have an interest in an activity outside the routine prison life and which would be of long-term involvement for them. They thought that they should not be kept separate from other sorts of prisoners because being with the same sort of people all the time would be very stultifying and that they would, in fact, withdraw into themselves or levels of tension would rise because they were forced to associate with only the one sort of person. Among suggestions for changes were the importance of conjugal visits and the introduction of annual holidays (either in the form of being allowed to stay within the same prison but have two weeks where they did not have to join in the regime or, better still, to be sent to another prison for two weeks). They thought that greater access to people was of particular importance to long-term prisoners because they were then able to form new relationships. They pointed out that the average relationships with people on the outside such as with wives or girlfriends and so forth break down in under two years. They thought that it was possible to establish new relationships with people who did not have

the expectations of being with them all the time, as wives and girlfriends did. They all pointed to the particular importance of pre-release counselling and work release for long-term prisoners and they thought that this should be available for all long-term prisoners.

In summary, the long-term prisoners interviewed were not able to add anything particularly original to the debate on long terms of imprisonment. They were unable to point to specific permanent damage - other than to say that long-termers tend to vegetate. They did have some specific suggestions for change but again these were, although practical, and useful, not original.

PRE-RELEASE COURSES

In one sense, a sentence of imprisonment, if it is well managed, is totally aimed at preparing the prisoner for release to the community. This is done by reducing the level of security or restriction imposed on the individual, increasing his or her personal responsibility and encouraging education or training that is likely to assist with post-release adjustment. It is not always possible for this to be done, however, due to the lack of options available or lack of cooperation by the prisoner. In any event, we suggest that all prisoners who are approaching release and have served two or more years should be offered the opportunity of participating in pre-release courses which aim, over a two or three-week period, to assist with the immediate problems of post-release adjustment. The courses should comprise informal discussions, led by appropriately trained staff or visitors, on such topics as parole, finding a job, personal and social relations, budgetting, welfare agencies, attitudes to police, health and recreation. Some tentative steps have been taken to develop courses of this type, but we believe there is a need for further action in this area.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

One of the fundamental problems that creates significant difficulties in management and programme planning for long-term prisoners is the fact that programme decision-making is separate from release date decision-making. Classification or assessment committees are responsible for the assignment of prisoners to particular institutions

and their transfer from maximum to medium security and from medium to minimum security in a planned manner as sentences are served, and yet these committees have no direct influence on the date of release. It is parole boards, or in the case of life sentence prisoners the Executive Council, that decide the time and conditions of release on parole. This discontinuity of decision-making can lead to obvious management problems, as would occur if a classification committee misjudged the probable release date of a long-term prisoner and consequently held him or her for too long or too short a time in a secure environment.

This problem is particularly acute with the granting of work release a few months before the end of the custodial part of the sentence. It is understood that in most jurisdictions where work release is an available option informal arrangements have been made with parole boards in order to avoid the situation in which work release is rendered ineffective by lack of knowledge of the likely parole date. Nevertheless, the problem exists with regard to the less dramatic decision-making of classification itself in their control of long-term prisoners.

There are no simple solutions to this problem. If parole boards assumed responsibility for the administrative transfers and management of long-term prisoners they would usurp the functions of the classification committees and the latter would become redundant. If, on the other hand, classification committees were permitted to have a greater influence on releasing policy, the parole boards would lose some of their independence. It is obviously necessary for effective channels of communication to be established between the two bodies and it should be possible for either body to make recommendations to the other. In the case of life sentence prisoners, we suggest that parole boards should review each case annually, perhaps sitting together with the relevant classification committee. Such an arrangement would, in our view, provide for the type of detailed oversight and planning that is needed in these cases.

SPECIAL PROGRAMMES FOR LONG-TERM PRISONERS IN AUSTRALIA

In an effort to ascertain if any special programmes for long-term prisoners exist in Australia, the present authors wrote to the

heads of all prison systems seeking this information. The uniform reply received indicated that no specific programmes for long-term prisoners have been instituted. The only significant difference in treatment is likely to be that long-termers are often subject to more frequent and more detailed assessment and review procedures than are other prisoners. It was also pointed out that merely by virtue of serving longer sentences, long-termers would be more likely to participate in and benefit from such work, educational, and pre-release facilities as are available and would be more likely to occupy preferred trustee positions and receive greater privileges in prison.

The present authors do not find the lack of special programmes either surprising or indicative of an unmet need. It is our view that such procedures as are termed 'special programmes' in some overseas systems amount to little more than grandiose labelling. It is reasonable that long-term prisoners should receive more attention than others, but to exaggerate the nature of this attention by implying that it is systematic and unique to long-termers rather than merely 'more of the same' is both unnecessary and unhelpful (except as a cynical exercise in public relations). In our view, there is no evidence that long-term prisoners have unique, identifiable problems remediable by specific interventions. Special programmes therefore become a non-issue.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Of the 10,000 prisoners in Australia nearly 30 per cent can be classified as long-termers in that they have been sentenced to five years or more, regardless of minimum or non-parole periods, or have been sentenced to indefinite terms. A further 10 per cent of all prisoners are unconvicted remandees. The differences in imprisonment rates between Australian jurisdictions have been reviewed and the lack of relationship between these and crime rates has been discussed. Trends in the use of imprisonment over time and the relative occupancy rates for different prison systems have been analysed.

An analysis of the available data on long-term prisoners is given in Chapter One, and shows that long-termers comprise over 40 per cent of prisoners in a number of jurisdictions. This reflects a significant increase in long-term prisoners in Australia in the past decade. Not only have the actual numbers of long-term prisoners increased, but the proportion of long-termers in the overall prison population has increased dramatically as well. The most dramatic change has been in New South Wales where long-termers constituted 25 per cent of prisoners in 1969 and 43.3 per cent in 1978. With overall prison populations continuing to rise and with legislation being introduced encouraging courts to sentence perpetrators of certain types of prevalent offences (for example, armed robbery and drug trafficking) to very long periods of imprisonment, it is almost certain that long-term prisoners in Australia will be both numerically and proportionately a more important group in our prisons. If this trend continues prison administrators will face the problem of providing the necessary accommodation in the future.

A survey of 510 long-term prisoners (17 per cent of the total) found that over 50 per cent were aged between 20 and 29 years and that the majority of them were also unmarried. Approximately 80 per cent were born in Australia, comparable with the proportion found in the general population. The most common offence was homicide, followed by robbery and rape, but significant differences were found between the States. In Western Australia more long-term prisoners were

sentenced for drug offences than elsewhere, and in New South Wales more than 20 per cent were sentenced for property offences. Nearly 30 per cent of the sample were serving life sentences or were detained at the Governor's Pleasure. South Australia had proportionately more lifers than other States. Approximately 60 per cent of the sample had served one or more previous sentences in adult correctional institutions, but only a small minority had served previous sentences in juvenile institutions. Over half of the sample were serving their sentences in maximum security institutions, and approximately half had been charged with prison offences during their current sentences. Long-termers appear to have a fairly high escape rate, with 17 per cent having escaped from juvenile detention and nearly 13 per cent from adult detention.

Prisoner classification has been considered in Chapter Two and is seen as a central aspect of prison management. A number of views of classification from the American literature have been summarised. Procedures currently followed in each Australian jurisdiction for the classification and placement of long-term prisoners have been reviewed in detail with significant differences being noted in the structure and authority of decision-making bodies. Differences were also noted in the proportion of prisoners received who were processed through the classification systems. The larger prison systems formally classify smaller proportions of their intakes.

The use of statistical techniques for determining the security rating of prisoners has been outlined, and the possible use of computers to aid record-keeping and maintaining protection registers has been discussed. A streamlined and more manageable system for maintaining prisoners' files has been proposed. It has also been suggested that more detailed information should be provided to prisoners on reception and during classification.

A number of Australian prison classification systems are currently under review, and the descriptions of current practices contained in this chapter may be of value to these reviews. Particular differences between jurisdictions have been noted in the extent to which classification procedures use professional staff and with regard to the style

adopted by staff in dealing with prisoners. It has been argued that information collected during classification (particularly with regard to security rating and prisoners' needs for education, training, treatment and work experience) could provide an invaluable basis for the future planning of correctional systems. Nowhere in Australia, however, has an effective link between classification and planning been established.

The results of a survey of prison staff assessments of long-term prisoners are summarised in Chapter Three. This survey was conducted in two stages. In the first stage the views of officers-in-charge of all prisons in Australia were sought, and this showed that long-term prisoners were generally regarded as better behaved and less troublesome than other categories of prisoners. In the second stage the views were sought of supervising officers with personal knowledge of long-term prisoners. These officers confirmed the views of senior staff in that long-term prisoners were generally thought to work better and to behave better towards staff and other prisoners than the 'average' prisoner.

While our research has shown that Australian prison administrators do not regard long-term prisoners as a particularly problematic group, it is possible that some changes in the composition of the group may well alter their perceptions. If, for example, a relatively large increase occurred in the number of persons sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for drug offences, it is more than likely that some other sections of the long-term population could become politicised by the behaviour and attitudes of some drug offenders. The survey of prison administrators reported in Chapter Three indicated that drug offenders are already a cause of concern to administrators. The increasing likelihood of prison systems having to accept responsibility for holding persons convicted for acts of political violence (particularly terrorist acts) is also likely to affect the way in which the long-term population is perceived and managed.

The results of overseas research into the effects of long-term imprisonment have been reviewed in Chapter Four. Numerous studies have attempted to ascertain whether or not changes amounting to deterioration occur in persons undergoing long terms of imprisonment.

Studies using psychological measures generally are equivocal but tend to support the proposition that deterioration of any significance does not occur. Studies which incorporate the views of long-term prisoners themselves, on the other hand, provide considerable evidence of subjective experiences of or fears about deterioration. The present authors concluded that our present psychological tools quite possibly do not measure those aspects of a person's behaviour or environment which would show deterioration as it is experienced by prisoners. At present it appears that empirical research into the effects of long-term imprisonment cannot answer the important questions for which we seek answers. Decisions about the desirability, practicality, or ethical status of long-term imprisonment will have to be based on other than research findings.

Chapter Five examined the question of the desirability or necessity of providing special programmes for long-term prisoners. The utility of programmes based on a treatment model was seriously questioned but procedural changes concerning classification, institutional employment, work release, and the provision of various facilities were proposed as a means of at least contributing towards a more humane envionment for long-term prisoners.

For the moment, however, we can only conclude that long-term prisoners are not a subject of administrative concern in Australian prisons. For those on the outside of the system who argue that such imprisonment is debilitating to the prisoners, there is little empirical support to offer for their arguments. It is obvious that the fear of deterioration is very real for many long-termers but its actual extent, if any, cannot be established empirically. We can only reiterate that decisions about the appropriateness or humanity of measures such as long-term imprisonment cannot be made scientifically, but are essentially matters of morality and philosophy. Perhaps in the final analysis, though, the most powerful arguments against the widespread use of long-term imprisonment rest not on the danger to the individual prisoners but on its sheer economic cost and ineffectiveness.

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NAME OF STATE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF LONG-TERM PRISONERS

Please either tick the appropriate box or write the information requested in the space provided.

PART A (to be completed from official records)

1. Identification number

2. Age at 30 June 1978 _____

3. Marital status at 30 June 1978

   - Single ☐
   - Married ☐
   - De facto ☐
   - Separated ☐
   - Divorced ☐
   - Widowed ☐
   - Not known ☐

4. Country of origin _____

5. Is the prisoner likely to be considered for extradition or deportation on the expiry of his sentence?

   - YES ☐
   - NO ☐
   - DON'T KNOW ☐

6. What was the most serious offence (in terms of length of head sentence imposed by the court) for which currently imprisoned?

   _____

7. What was the actual (head) sentence imposed for this offence?

_____

8. How long has the prisoner served of the sentence for the above offence?

_____

9. Has the prisoner served any previous custodial sentences?

(a) Juvenile YES ☐ (insert number of previous juvenile sentences if known ☐)

NO ☐

(b) Adult YES ☐ (insert number of previous adult sentences if known ☐)

NO ☐

10. Was the prison in which the prisoner was held on 30 June 1978 within 50 km. of his known residential address?

YES ☐

NO ☐

11. What was the prisoner's security rating on 30 June 1978 (i.e., what was the degree of security under which the prisoner was required to be held)?

MINIMUM ☐

MEDIUM ☐

MAXIMUM ☐

12. Has the prisoner escaped from an adult institution?

(a) During previous sentences YES ☐ (If yes, insert number of escapes if known ☐)

NO ☐

(b) During this sentence YES ☐ (if yes, insert number of escapes if known ☐)

NO ☐

13. Has the prisoner been found guilty of breaches of prison discipline?

(a) During previous sentences YES ☐ (If yes, insert number of breaches if known)

NO ☐

(b) During this sentence YES ☐ (If yes, insert number of breaches if known)

NO ☐

PART B (to be completed by the prisoner's Wing Officer/Work Supervisor or someone else who has detailed knowledge of him)

1. What is the prisoner's current work assignment? _____

_____

(If unemployed, tick box ☐)

2. In comparison with the "average" prisoner what is his standard of work?

Much better ☐

Better ☐

Same ☐

Worse ☐

Much worse ☐

3. In comparison with the "average" prisoner what is his behaviour toward prison staff?

Much better ☐

Better ☐

Same ☐

Worse ☐

Much worse ☐

4. In comparison with the "average" prisoner, what is his behaviour towards other prisoners?

Much better ☐

Better ☐

Same ☐

Worse ☐

Much worse ☐

5. If any physical or mental problems are known to have become obvious

Question 5 Contd.

since he began this sentence please state briefly what they are.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Does he seem to have more personal problems than the "average" prisoner"

YES ☐

NO ☐

7. How often does he receive letters?

Weekly ☐

Fortnightly ☐

Monthly ☐

More than monthly ☐

Never ☐

8. How often does he receive visits?

Weekly ☐

Fortnightly ☐

Monthly ☐

More than monthly ☐

Never ☐

9. Is he known to be involved in the prison in:

(a) Drugs YES ☐

NO ☐

(b) Violence YES ☐

NO ☐

10. Is the prisoner known to need protection?

YES ☐

NO ☐

Rank or position of officer completing Part B _____

_____

QUESTIONNAIRE ON PROBLEMS OF INMATE MANAGEMENT

(TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERINTENDENTS OR OFFICERS-IN-CHARGE)

Following a decision made at the annual meeting of Ministers and Administrators responsible for correctional services, a national survey on problems of inmate management is being conducted by all State correctional services in cooperation with the Australian Institute of Criminology. As part of this national survey we would appreciate your cooperation in providing your opinions on the following matters.

1. LIST THE MAIN PROBLEMS YOU FACE IN THE DAILY MANAGEMENT OF INMATES IN YOUR PRISON.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL GROUPS OF PRISONERS WHO CAUSE YOU MORE PROBLEMS THAN AVERAGE? (IF SO, PLEASE SPECIFY IN WHAT WAY THEY ARE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. IN YOUR INSTITUTION THERE ARE PRISONERS SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS OR MORE (INCLUDING THOSE WITH INDETERMINATE SENTENCES). AS A GENERALIZATION, DO THESE LONG-TERMERS CAUSE MORE OR LESS DIFFICULTY THAN OTHER PRISONERS? (PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR VIEW WITH EXAMPLES.)

4. IN YOUR VIEW, HOW DO LONG-TERMERS (AS DEFINED IN QUESTION 3) COMPARE WITH OTHER PRISONERS WITH REGARD TO (PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX IN EACH CATEGORY):

		better	same	worse
(a)	conformity to rules	☐	☐	☐
(b)	work performance	☐	☐	☐
(c)	general behaviour and attitudes	☐	☐	☐
(d)	participation in recreation, education etc.	☐	☐	☐

5. WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE ANY OTHER COMMENTS ON PARTICULAR PROBLEMS OF PRISONER MANAGEMENT?

For statistical purpose please indicate:

1. The number of prisoners in your institution. ☐
2. Sex of prisoners. Male ☐ Female ☐
3. Security rating of your institution. High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐

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WARDLAW, Grant

The management of long-term prisoners in Australia

SA Govt Tech	10/3/81		
~~9/2/93~~			
~~Belmont~~	9/2/93		