

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**THE REHABILITATION OF MALE DETAINEES AT THE  
ALEXANDER MACONOCHIE CENTRE**

The ACT Auditor-General, Dr Maxine Cooper, has presented the report on **the rehabilitation of male detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC)** to the Speaker for tabling in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

There are complexities in providing rehabilitative services in any prison, and Dr Cooper's report highlights how these are exacerbated in the AMC due to it being a multi-purpose prison. For example, unlike many other prisons in Australia, it has male and female detainees, houses remanded and sentenced detainees, and it is an all-offences and all-security classifications prison. Its small size and the small ACT jurisdiction create detainee association issues.

Dr Cooper says 'While there have been improvements in management practices that contribute to a healthier context for rehabilitating detainees there are areas where management attention needs to focus. These include improving rehabilitation planning and some management practices'.

'The proposed levels of rehabilitation activities and services, as anticipated in planning (prior to the opening of the AMC), have not been achieved' said Dr Cooper.

'The Government has stated it is important for rehabilitation that detainees have a 'structured day' with 'purposeful activity'. This is not being achieved for many detainees. Some are likely to be bored and this can compromise their rehabilitation' says Dr Cooper.

It has been found that data is not being collected on detainees with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities or those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Dr Cooper says 'Data needs to be collected on these groups so that it can be used in identifying suitable rehabilitation support. Data is collected on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are provided with additional support'.

'The information management systems at the AMC are important but inadequate. Improvements are being undertaken but these need to be done as quickly as possible' said Dr Cooper.

Ten recommendations are made to assist in providing rehabilitative support to detainees. One recommendation calls for the role of commercial or business enterprises (prison industries) in the AMC to be clarified. 'It is recognized that having prison industries at the AMC may be more challenging to achieve in the ACT context than in other larger prisons in bigger jurisdictions' said Dr Cooper.

During the audit detainees, staff and management were interviewed; their views are captured in the report. Their assistance in the audit is greatly appreciated.

Attached is an extract from the Summary in the Audit Report.

Copies of **the rehabilitation of male detainees at the Alexander Maconochie Centre** Report No. 2/2015, are available from the ACT Audit Office's website [www.audit.act.gov.au](http://www.audit.act.gov.au). If you need assistance accessing the report please contact the Audit Office (telephone 6207 0833)

## Overall conclusion

The Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) is a relatively new prison. It incorporates innovative, human rights planning and design, expected to provide an environment to support and foster detainee rehabilitation. This has been compromised due to its relatively small size, multiple classifications, detainee association issues, mixed genders and the unexpected adverse affects of the interaction of these factors with the AMC's design. Lack of continuity in senior management in the first few years of operation contributed to the difficulties.

More recently management practices have been effective in fostering improvements including a 'culture change', which emphasises respect in detainee and staff relationships, and have resulted in reductions in the use of force and lockdown hours. These improvements contribute to a healthier context for rehabilitating detainees.

AMC planning for rehabilitation is ineffective as there is no rehabilitation planning framework, no evaluation framework and no finalised case management policy framework. With respect to management practices, while there have been improvements, there are inadequacies that need to be addressed including improving business planning, internal performance measures and routine quality assurance and evaluation of programs.

As the prison population has increased, the ACT's detainee costs per day and utilisation rates have trended towards the Australian average. However, determining the effectiveness or efficiency of rehabilitation is problematic as there are no generally accepted comprehensive performance measures that can be used for this purpose and there is limited information on rehabilitation costs. Developing these measures will require a national approach and it would be unreasonable to expect the ACT to invest heavily in this given that it is a small jurisdiction with only one prison.

Due to the lack of comprehensive performance measures and cost information an overall assessment of effectiveness or efficiency of AMC operations with respect to rehabilitation was not able to be made. However, the proposed levels of rehabilitation activities and services, as anticipated in planning (prior to the opening of the AMC), were assessed and found to be inadequate. Importantly this means a 'structured day' with 'purposeful activity' is not being achieved for many detainees. It is therefore likely that some detainees are bored and this can compromise their rehabilitation.

The information management systems used at the AMC are inadequate. While action is underway to make improvements, it is important that priority be given to making the necessary changes as quickly as possible.

## Chapter conclusions

### REHABILITATION PLANNING

The ACT Government has emphasised the importance of rehabilitating sentenced detainees in the AMC operating philosophy and in legislation. Planning and managing rehabilitation in the AMC is particularly complex and challenging due to the AMC being relatively small and an all-purpose prison. Furthermore, the profile of detainees is very different to that anticipated in the *Vocational Education and Training and Rehabilitative Programs at the Alexander Maconochie Centre* (2007) (the 2007 delivery strategy) and this has significantly affected activities and services in the AMC.

ACTCS officers advised that, with respect to rehabilitation, their planning priority has been on activities and services for detainees with substance abuse and mental health issues, and vocational education and training. While these are important areas, there is a need for rehabilitation planning to be better integrated and guidance material provided to direct activities and services. The out-dated 2007 delivery strategy needs to be replaced with a rehabilitation planning framework that reflects the reality of the AMC operating environment, has forecasts of the detainee population profile, and provides guidance on how to achieve a 'structured day' with sufficient 'purposeful activity' for detainees.

Additionally, there is a need for a rehabilitation planning framework to articulate why, what and how programs should be delivered. This includes employment programs, for which it is important to clarify the role of commercial or business enterprises ('prison industries') in providing employment for detainees.

### IMPROVEMENT PLANNING AND REPORTING ON PERFORMANCE

Developing comprehensive performance measures for determining the success or otherwise of rehabilitative activities and services provided in prisons is problematic as a wide range of factors, including those outside the control of the prison, influence a detainee's rehabilitation. There are no nationally agreed, comprehensive rehabilitation performance measures available to facilitate the ACT Government determining whether its strong emphasis on the rehabilitation of detainees is being achieved and if efforts to rehabilitate detainees are reducing reoffending rates or improving ex-detainees' prospects after release.

ACTCS does not have an established business planning discipline for its AMC rehabilitative activities and services although it has recently commenced undertaking business planning. It is important that this continues so all improvement priorities can be consistently translated into action. ACTCS internally reported performance measures need to be developed and integrated into the business planning process so that progress can be evaluated and improvements made

when necessary.

The efficiency measures that are available which allow comparisons between jurisdictions show that the ACT's detainee costs per day, and utilisation rates have all trended towards the Australian average over the last five years, from having been the least 'efficient' of all jurisdictions in 2009-10. However, the change may primarily relate to the increase in the ACT detainee population. Although some information is available on the costs associated with the delivery of rehabilitation, without measures of effectiveness it is not possible to determine whether rehabilitation is being achieved efficiently.

Given that comprehensive performance measures are not yet available, undertaking evaluations is particularly important. However, there is no evaluation framework for AMC rehabilitative activities and services. Although some evaluations are undertaken, this is not done routinely. Auditing and quality assurance need to be increased to allow program-specific deficiencies to be identified and addressed systematically.

There is a need to segregate different cohorts of detainees and specific individuals in prisons. This, combined with the physical design of the AMC, an all-purpose mixed gender prison, with a detainee profile that is significantly different from that envisaged prior to opening, have resulted in access to some rehabilitative activities and services being constrained. The major changes to be made to the design, through the addition of new buildings, are likely to improve access. It is important that the effectiveness of the changes on the rehabilitation of detainees be evaluated.

#### INDIVIDUALISED REHABILITATION

Case management plans have an important role in the rehabilitation of detainees. While the need for a case management policy framework, to guide case managers' practices in the AMC was first identified in 2007, five years after the AMC received its first detainees there is no finalised case management policy framework. A draft *Case Management Policy Framework* (July 2014) has been prepared. It needs to be updated and finalised to guide desired, and prevent unwanted, practices.

There have been improvements in case management administration including increased contact between detainees and their case managers, improved timeliness of assessments and improved quality of case notes. However, inadequacies in case management supervision and the coordination of, and communication between, those who contribute to case management needs to be addressed. Guidance on how this is achieved could be given in the finalised case management policy framework.

While the individual needs of male detainees in the AMC are met to varying degrees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees have additional support, there is a need to give

specific consideration to detainees with physical or intellectual disabilities and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Accordingly, data needs to be collected on these detainees to determine their support needs and inform their case management plans. The finalised case management policy framework could provide guidance for the collection of this data.

There are inadequacies in the ACTCS information management system (JOIST). These need to be addressed quickly as this system is restricting the ability of ACTCS to better manage the AMC and make timely improvements.

#### EFFECTIVENESS OF REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Improvements have been made in AMC operations in the last two years; there has been a reduction in staff overtime, an improved ratio of planned to unplanned leave, reductions in the use of force and lockdown hours, and a decline in detainees' length of stay in the Management Unit (facility for specialist supervision of detainees). This, coupled with a 'cultural change' that is underway provides an improved rehabilitation environment. However, despite these improvements, it is not possible to determine if rehabilitation planning and delivery is becoming more effective as the necessary information to determine this is not available.

The Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) assessment, already used in the AMC, could be used more effectively in case management. While LSI-R reliability historically (pre-2012) has been questionable, it can be managed through ensuring assessors are trained and quality assurance measures are implemented. Furthermore, improving ACTCS information management systems will assist in LSI-R assessments being better used.

Although management information on detainee activities and services is limited, that which is available indicates that detainee participation in some purposeful activities gradually increased from 2012 to 2014. This occurred as the detainee population increased. However, programmed activity and participation levels are substantially lower than that planned in the 2007 delivery strategy. ACTCS officers recognise that the 'structured day' is not being achieved for many detainees. The 'structured day' and sufficient 'purposeful activity' need to be defined in ACTCS policy. Without a 'structured day' with 'purposeful activity' there is a risk that detainees will be bored and this can undermine rehabilitative effort.

## Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATION 1 REHABILITATIVE FRAMEWORK (CHAPTER 2)

A rehabilitation framework for the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) should be developed by ACT Corrective Services (ACTCS) which, among other things:

- a) reflects the profile of the detainee population;
- b) is flexible to respond to changes while providing guidance;
- c) guides the integration of rehabilitative activities and services to achieve a 'structured day' that incorporates sufficient 'purposeful activity' for detainees;
- d) provides the rationale and outlines the therapeutic programs that will be provided; and
- e) guides the provision of employment.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2      ROLE OF COMMERCIAL OR BUSINESS ENTERPRISES ('PRISON INDUSTRIES') (CHAPTER 2)**

The role of commercial or business enterprises ('prison industries') in providing employment for detainees in the AMC should be clarified by the ACT Government. A paper for the Government's consideration, which outlines options and recommends the role of commercial or business enterprises ('prison industries') should be developed in consultation with stakeholders.

## **RECOMMENDATION 3      ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING (CHAPTER 3)**

Internal performance measures for rehabilitative activities and services should be developed by ACTCS. These measures should:

- a) reflect work already underway in response to the 2014 Review of Corrective Services Strategic and Accountability Indicators;
- b) complement those measures reported by the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (in its annual reports);
- c) be supported by the collection of data which is stored in ACTCS information management systems; and
- d) be included in business planning, be routinely monitored and guide improvements.

## **RECOMMENDATION 4      EVALUATION FRAMEWORK (CHAPTER 3)**

An evaluation framework for rehabilitative activities and services should be developed by ACTCS which, among other things:

- a) integrates data collection, monitoring and evaluation;
- b) specifies priorities, frequency and timeframes for evaluation;
- c) guides routine programming of auditing and quality assurance work; and
- d) establishes the basis for evaluating the changes in detainees' access and completion of rehabilitation programs prior to, and post, the completion of the new AMC buildings.

**RECOMMENDATION 5 THROUGH-CARE (CHAPTER 3)**

'Throughcare' and Extended Throughcare should be defined and incorporated into ACTCS policy.

**RECOMMENDATION 6 CASE MANAGEMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK (CHAPTER 4)**

The draft *Case Management Policy Framework* (July 2014) should be updated and finalised by ACTCS in a timely manner. It should, among other things, provide guidance on how to:

- a) maintain detainee autonomy while increasing the priority given to detainees' rehabilitation goals, balancing these against the community's need for protection;
- b) improve communication and coordination between those involved in supporting detainees; and
- c) collect data on all detainees.

**RECOMMENDATION 7 ADDRESSING INDIVIDUAL DETAINEE NEEDS (CHAPTER 4)**

Data on detainees with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds should be collected by ACTCS. This should be used to improve services for detainees in these cohorts and evaluate the effectiveness of activities and services.

**RECOMMENDATION 8 ACTCS INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CHAPTER 4)**

The implementation of improvements to ACTCS information management systems should be accelerated to correct inadequacies as soon as possible.

**RECOMMENDATION 9 IMPROVING LEVEL OF SERVICE INVENTORY-REVISED (LSI-R) EFFECTIVENESS (CHAPTER 5)**

Improvements should be made by ACTCS in its use of LSI-R assessments in the AMC. These should include:

- a) improving the reliability of LSI-R assessments through training and development of assessors, and supervisory quality assurance measures;
- b) using LSI-R assessment information effectively in case management planning and implementation; and
- c) recording LSI-R assessment scores in ACTCS information management systems.

**RECOMMENDATION 10 THE 'STRUCTURED DAY' AND SUFFICIENT 'PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY' (CHAPTER 5)**

What constitutes a 'structured day' and sufficient 'purposeful activity' should be defined and articulated in ACTCS policy, based on:



- a) the operational experience of the first five years of providing rehabilitative activities and services at the AMC;
- b) the desirable scale and scope of formal and informal activities; and
- c) equity of access and opportunity, taking into account the specific requirements of cohorts within the AMC including remandees, those progressing through the Transitional Release Centre, and those accommodated in separate communities or units.