

# Improving Outcomes for Women Offenders

Women Offenders Policy and Action Plan 2008—2012



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Artwork (page 12): *Nine Tribe Sacred Ground* by Donna.

Artwork (Below): *Family Tribes in NT* by Maryanne, who is an Aboriginal woman in custody in north Queensland. This painting tells the story of people from four different tribes who meet each other when they are out hunting. The story is about the artist's grandfather's people. She says it is "about the way the world is today and (how) these things and their ways have been forgotten."

Queensland Corrective Services would like to thank these offenders for their kind contribution of artworks for use in the policy and action plan.





## Minister's foreword

Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) is facing the challenge of an increasing prisoner population compounded by a more complex and diverse prisoner profile. The Queensland Government is responding to this challenge by putting in place long term strategies to ensure Queensland's corrective services system can, and will, continue to meet its obligation in protecting the community.

The Improving Outcomes for Women Offenders: Women Offenders Policy and Action Plan 2008–2012 is evidence of QCS' commitment to achieving its vision of being a leader in the delivery of corrective services and a partner in criminal and social justice.

In 2006, Queensland recorded the largest prison population in the State's history with further growth expected during the next decade. As a result of the continued growth in prisoner numbers, and in anticipation of future growth, the Queensland Government has significantly invested in a capital works program including the construction of a new stand-alone women's prison in Townsville. The new prison precinct in south-east Queensland will also include a women's prison.

With this investment, QCS is entering into a new era, where it can deliver dedicated infrastructure, programs and resources that are better tailored to the women offender population.

In addition, the Queensland Government has invested in a Probation and Parole service to provide a new regime of case management, supervision, compliance, surveillance and targeted interventions and therapeutic programs to address the causes of crime and reoffending.

Queensland Corrective Services' impressive achievements in protecting the community are underpinned by the Corrective Services Act 2006, which is the most modern correctional legislation in Australia.

Through careful planning, innovative solutions and strategic investment across the criminal justice system, the Queensland Government is delivering on its commitment to protecting the community and reducing crime.

**Judy Spence**  
**Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport**



## Introduction

Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) aims to contribute to safer communities by reducing re-offending and providing opportunities for offenders to be rehabilitated. The Agency actively contributes to government priorities by ensuring prisoners are securely and humanely contained in the custodial environment and by carefully monitoring and managing offenders under community-based supervision.

While women offenders share common experiences and certain characteristics, they are not a homogenous group and their unique life experiences and circumstances must be acknowledged. Considerations include, but are not limited to, socioeconomic background, disability, sexuality, ethnicity and culture. International profile analysis across a diversity of jurisdictions confirms that the average woman offender is invariably poor, undereducated and lacking in employment skills. Admittedly these characteristics are not unique to female offender populations and are often shared by male offenders. However, differences in female and male criminality, life circumstances and parental responsibilities are well documented and women who are part of a minority group in offender populations can be further marginalised by these differences. This implies that correctional responses should take into account gender and cultural differences. It is therefore important to provide appropriate correctional services which recognise the individual circumstances of women offenders. The fact that women make up only a small proportion of the prison and community sentences populations does not reduce the importance of addressing their particular needs and characteristics.

## Policy statement

Queensland Corrective Services acknowledges that imprisonment of women can have profound effects on their children and families and broader implications for society. The Agency is committed to managing a correctional system that is responsive to the issues and challenges relevant to women offenders. The distinct needs and characteristics of women offenders are recognised and correctional responses will be based on their identified risks and needs.

The Improving Outcomes for Women Offenders: Women Offenders Policy and Action Plan 2008–2012 provides a framework to improve the gender responsiveness of Queensland's adult corrective services system, to improve service delivery to women offenders, to sustain existing initiatives and to develop new strategies in the longer term.

## Policy principles

Queensland Corrective Services' vision is to be a leader in corrections and a partner in criminal and social justice. Accordingly, the Agency seeks to set the benchmark for the management of women offenders. To achieve this vision, the Agency will ensure correctional responses for women offenders are designed to take into account their distinct needs, characteristics, life experiences and family circumstances within broader offender management practice. Correctional responses will be based on identified risks and needs of women offenders.

Within the context of safety and security, QCS supports the following principles:

- Women offenders will be able to access programs, services, and opportunities that are responsive to their needs.
- Women offenders will be managed with respect and regard for dignity, in a way which facilitates self-responsibility.
- Women offenders will be provided with rehabilitative and culturally-sensitive environments that acknowledge their diverse characteristics, needs and life experiences in accordance with assessed risks and needs.
- Correctional services for women will acknowledge the centrality of relationships and the importance of maintaining connections with family. Individual women offenders will be encouraged and supported to maintain their role as primary caregivers.
- Correctional services for women will adopt a consistent and co-ordinated approach to service delivery that incorporates inter-agency collaboration and provides opportunities for support that extends beyond the period of correctional supervision.

## New infrastructure for the future

In 2006, Queensland recorded the largest prisoner population in the State's history. During the last decade, the number of women offenders in the prison system has almost doubled from around 218 in 1997 to 420 in 2007. Despite the rapid growth, women offenders still comprise a relatively small proportion (seven per cent) of the total Queensland prisoner population. The most significant implication of this growth is that, despite women prisoners still being a minority group within the total prisoner population, Queensland Corrective Services' is now in a position to deliver dedicated infrastructure and a range of correctional responses that are better tailored to the women offender population.

In 2006, the Queensland Government announced the construction of a 154-bed stand-alone facility in Townsville at a cost of \$130 million. This facility will address long standing pressures associated with the accommodation of women in northern Queensland, and will complement the existing Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre, which is also a secure correctional facility. The planned south-east Queensland correctional precinct will also include a women's correctional centre to address growth in women prisoner numbers in southern Queensland.

QCS currently operates a range of high and low security facilities for women offenders. Following the Agency's review of its business model in 2006, all south-east Queensland low security facilities for women offenders are linked to Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre to facilitate rehabilitation and transition from high to low security centres and then to the community.

Women prisoners accommodated in low security facilities are encouraged to develop increased levels of self-responsibility and, as in secure custody, opportunities are provided for their participation in education, work, vocational training and programs.

In 2007, a second women's work camp was established at Bowen, to provide additional opportunities for low risk women prisoners to make reparation to the community by being employed on meaningful projects in regional communities.

## Enhancing community supervision

The new court-ordered parole scheme, introduced by the *Corrective Services Act 2006*, provides for enhanced community supervision of prisoners sentenced to three years imprisonment or less who are not sexual offenders or serious violent offenders. Court-ordered parole gives the courts greater flexibility in sentencing low risk offenders, particularly women offenders, who are more likely to belong to this offender group.

There are significantly more women offenders being supervised on post-prison community-based orders now than before. For example in January 2005 there were only 116 women offenders on post-prison community-based orders compared to 474 women offenders in January 2008. Prior to the introduction of court-ordered parole many of these women would have been released without supervision either on conditional release orders or suspended sentences.

Court-ordered parole is complemented by the new Probation and Parole service, which delivers an enhanced model of case management, supervision, compliance and surveillance for offenders serving their sentence in the community. There are now 34 Probation and Parole district offices located across Queensland, providing improved rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities for offenders and enhanced community safety.

As part of this initiative, the Agency has enhanced service delivery in the remote Indigenous communities of northern Queensland by establishing permanent Probation and Parole offices in Doomadgee, Normanton, Mornington and Thursday Island, Weipa and Aurukun. Planning is underway for further establishment of the Probation and Parole service at other remote locations in the Gulf and Cape York. Preliminary indicators suggest that these diversion strategies are working as intended.

The benefits of these initiatives for women offenders include remaining with their families, supervision in their local communities and provision of appropriate intervention programs and community support services.

## Improving reintegration and reducing re-offending

The implementation of the throughcare philosophy has reinforced the Agency's commitment to providing the assistance and strategies necessary to give women offenders the best opportunity to successfully reintegrate into the community. The throughcare model, which is based on national and international evidence, provides an integrated offender management process that commences when a prisoner enters the correctional system and continues following their release into the community. This includes providing education, training, employment and rehabilitative opportunities to women offenders while in custody.

National and international research has shown that employment opportunities are one of the critical factors in breaking the re-offending cycle. QCS delivers a range of integrated vocational education and training, programs and health services to maximise the opportunity for women offenders to rehabilitate. Participation enables women prisoners access to accredited vocational education training and provides them with the opportunity to attain valuable employment skills and/or to gain credits towards numerous training programs upon release.

In recognition of the critical transition from custody to community, the Agency has developed and implemented an integrated transition model to better assist women prisoners' resettlement in the community. The new approach provides more flexible and efficient transition assistance by better coordinated access to a range of community-based service providers. The Transitions Program includes components to address the specific needs of women offenders, and places a strong emphasis on the role of most women offenders as mothers and partners, including the need to consider the well-being of themselves and their children in unsafe relationships, and the development of linkages to appropriate agencies that can support them and their children.

The Agency has implemented programs and services aimed at improving the lives of women offenders and their children. These include a residential program for children to be accommodated with their female primary care giver until they reach school age.

Weekend and school holiday visits enable children who reside in the community to spend dedicated time with their female primary care giver. Other parenting programs include a:

- weekly Happy Healthy Children Group
- weekly Playgroup Program
- 10-week Sing and Grow Music Therapy Project, and
- 14-session parenting program.

A number of criminogenic programs have been adapted to be responsive to the differing learning styles, life experiences and criminality of women offenders. For example the Making Choices Women's Program, a general criminogenic program, has been developed specifically for women offenders. It incorporates different approaches to developing personal insight and working towards improving life outcomes, with a focus on female specific issues in the personal/emotional domain, such as victimisation issues, distress tolerance and interpersonal effectiveness. Intervention programs can be delivered to women offenders in a custodial or community environment.

In recognition of the close association between drug use, criminality and negative health outcomes for offenders, the Agency released its Drug Strategy in 2006. The strategy is based on evidence-based practice and is aligned with the National Drug Strategy. The Drug Strategy enshrines a zero-tolerance approach to drug use within a context of harm minimisation which focuses upon supply reduction, harm reduction and demand reduction.

The *Corrective Services Act 2006* which commenced in August 2006 provides Queensland with one of the most modern legislative foundations for the operation of correctional services in Australia.



## Humane containment of women offenders

The Act provides that every member of society is entitled to certain basic human rights and that an offender's entitlements, other than those that are necessarily diminished by imprisonment, should be safeguarded. The Act also recognises the need to respect an offender's dignity and the special needs of some offenders by taking into account an offender's age, gender, cultural background and/or disability.

The *Corrective Services Act 2006* also established the Office of the Chief Inspector as a statutory office to conduct inspections, reviews and investigations of correctional centres and provide oversight of the Official Visitors scheme. In 2007, the Office of the Chief Inspector rolled out a comprehensive set of inspection standards, underpinned by the Healthy Prison Test.

The Healthy Prison Test assesses whether custodial centres provide a safe and predictable environment where prisoners are treated with respect as individuals; where prisoners are purposefully occupied and are expected to improve themselves; and where prisoners are able to strengthen links with their families and prepare themselves for release.

In addition to provisions in the *Corrective Services Act 2006*, a number of safeguards exist to protect women offenders. Women prisoners may confidentially raise concerns through a range of internal and external complaints processes, including the Queensland Ombudsman and the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian.

## Giving back to their local communities

In 2007, following an outbreak of Equine Influenza, women from the Warwick Women's Work Camp worked around the clock for eleven days straight helping horse owners trapped in a quarantine zone at the Warwick Showgrounds. As part of their regular community service work for the Warwick Horse Trials, women from the camp had been preparing jumps and a cross country course for the event. Their roles changed dramatically when the quarantine was put in place. Prisoners set up a canteen and prepared food for everyone on site, including roast dinners for 200 people. They also cleaned amenities and stables and assisted with decontamination procedures. Field Supervisor Rona Frankcombe went on to receive a 2008 Australia Day Medal for the outstanding leadership of the camp during its contribution to the emergency efforts.





# Key issues for women offenders

Women have significant physical, psychological, social, vocational and health needs that require recognition in all areas of the correctional system. Many women offenders enter the correctional system with limited education, a poor employment history, poor coping skills and limited social supports.

Imprisonment of women can have profound effects on their children and families and broader implications for society. The fact that women are a minority group within the general custodial and community supervision population does not reduce the importance of addressing their particular needs and characteristics.

Following release from custody many women face a range of challenges when reintegrating into the community. Some of these risks include returning to dysfunctional relationships, welfare dependency and inadequate accommodation or homelessness.

Research confirms that assisting prisoners to address these issues can reduce the likelihood of re-offending and enhance their chances of successful reintegration.

Many of the key issues facing women offenders are inter-related and reflect their position in society both prior to and after their experience in the correctional system.

This policy recognises the need for the Agency to provide transitional support, contribute to interagency initiatives and to develop effective partnerships with other agencies in order to provide a coordinated response to meeting the needs of women offenders.

## Making a difference through community service

Community service projects provide valuable opportunities for prisoners and offenders to give back to their local communities and learn new skills. The work is diverse and for many women under the supervision of QCS, it can be a rewarding experience to contribute to a community-based project or organisation and receive recognition, respect and gratitude. Work ranges from labour-intensive projects involving concreting, maintenance such as whipper snipping, mowing and painting to sewing quilts for children's hospitals, packing meals for the elderly, caring for animals, and sorting, cleaning and grading spectacles for shipment to third world countries.





## Health and well-being

The majority of women offenders enter the correctional system with significant needs relating to their physical or mental health and emotional well-being.

Women offenders are a significantly disadvantaged group who disproportionately report a higher incidence of:

- victimisation including sexual, physical and emotional abuse, polysubstance use related to offending,
- self-harm and multiple mental health issues, often complicated by substance use, and
- poor employment and education outcomes.

Other health issues include Hepatitis C, poor reproductive health, unplanned pregnancy, low levels of exercise, poor nutrition due to lifestyle choices including alcohol and drug abuse.

## Nutrition

Women offenders entering the correctional system also present with health issues due to poor nutrition. Contributors to poor nutrition include eating behaviours, cooking skills, living conditions, physical inactivity, tobacco use, and alcohol and drug abuse.

Poor nutrition results in an increased incidence of a range of health issues including obesity, malnutrition, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, renal disease, and some cancers. Many of these conditions are often preventable by addressing underlying determinants of health including nutrition, physical activity and lifestyle within a chronic disease prevention framework.

Indigenous women make up approximately one quarter of the Queensland female offender population. Like other Indigenous Australians, Indigenous women offenders still suffer a much greater burden of ill health and chronic disease attributable to poor nutrition, in comparison to other groups. In Queensland the mortality rate for heart disease is at least twice as high as in the non-Indigenous population; and 17 times higher for diabetes. (Queensland Public Health Forum Strategic Statement Food and Nutrition "Eat Well Qld").

The Women Offenders Policy and Action Plan 2008–2012 recognises the need for the Agency to continue to provide nutritious food to women offenders by introducing evidence-based food and nutrition policy. The policy will ensure the provision of safe and nutritious meals to all offenders, including women, to minimise the development and progression of chronic diseases.

This policy will be supported by other health strategies including an education strategy that will encourage lifestyle choices to support healthy eating and physical activity. It is anticipated that these strategies will reduce the burden of chronic disease and ultimately reduce offenders' reliance on the public health system.

## Substance abuse

The link between substance abuse and criminality is well documented, with almost two-thirds of Australian women offenders identifying as regular illicit substance users in the six months prior to arrest, and 39 per cent identifying as polysubstance users. Women are more likely to have committed their offence(s) while under the influence of substances or to support their drug use. This suggests that, for a substantial proportion of women offenders, substance use plays a role in shaping the onset of criminality<sup>1</sup>.

Substance-related offences comprise a significant proportion of offences committed by women, and women prisoners report high levels of substance misuse in the community. Non-Indigenous women are more likely than Indigenous women to be regular users of drugs other than cannabis, and more likely to be polysubstance users. Alcohol dependency among Indigenous women is higher than for non-Indigenous women.

Victimisation and subsequent trauma appear to contribute to women's criminality and shape their patterns of offending.

Research demonstrates that substance abuse is often associated with a history of physical and/or sexual abuse, complicated by inadequate coping mechanisms and subsequent anxiety and mental health issues.

The challenge for the Agency will be to develop treatment and management strategies that respond to the inter-related and complex issues of substance use, victimisation experiences, trauma and mental health issues.

## Over-representation of Indigenous women offenders

Indigenous people continue to be over-represented in the Queensland correctional system, with about a quarter of all women prisoners identifying as Indigenous as at June 30, 2007.

The challenge for the Agency is to develop diversion options and culturally-appropriate management strategies, provide transitional support services, and maintain family ties and interventions for Indigenous women which include supervision in the community where possible.

<sup>1</sup>Johnson H. (2004) Australian Institute of Criminology Drugs and Crime: A Study of Incarcerated Female Offenders

## Family relationships

The majority of women offenders are primary carers of dependant children and women prisoners often experience the negative consequences of separation from their children. The benefits of supportive family and social networks are well documented in reducing recidivism. Assisting women offenders to maintain and enhance their family relationships, where appropriate, ensures that the child is not punished for the mother's offending.

Challenges include balancing a mother's needs with the best interests of the child, the provision of a range of options for family contact, and ensuring that the Agency's policies and procedures recognise parental responsibilities without compromising the safety and good order of correctional facilities.

## Employment

Most prisoners face obstacles in securing adequate employment after release from custody. Women experience particular challenges in securing adequate employment.

Research demonstrates that many women offenders have limited experience in the labour market, low educational attainment and are more likely to be responsible for dependent children. Responsibility for children means that employment considerations must also include access to affordable childcare.

Challenges for the Agency include providing women offenders with educational, vocational and employment opportunities that are relevant to the needs of the contemporary employment market and assisting prisoners to break the cycle of unemployment, welfare dependency and offending behaviour.

## Reintegration

Prisoners typically face a range of barriers to successful reintegration following release from custody. The immediate post-release period has been identified as a high-stress, high-risk period for recidivism, homelessness, drug overdose and suicide. For many offenders, a return to crime becomes an easy solution to the obstacles and difficulties encountered during this time, particularly in relation to establishing safe and affordable accommodation, independent living and financial responsibility.

The challenge for the Agency is to provide intervention programs and transitional support services that provide women offenders with opportunities to address their practical reintegration needs prior to release and to continue to provide support after their release to reduce the likelihood of re-offending.



# Action plan

## Outputs, goals, performance measures and strategies

This policy is aligned with Queensland Corrective Services' three outputs:

- Facility-based containment services
- Community supervision services, and
- Correctional intervention services.

These outputs provide the framework for goals, strategies and actions for enhancing the management of women offenders. Performance measures and an evaluation and reporting framework will gauge the Agency's progress towards achieving these goals. Detailed strategies will be incorporated into operational plans across the Agency. Further review and development may occur during annual planning cycles.

## Facility-based containment services

**Goal:** Provide integrated and effective management and supervision of offenders in accordance with assessed risks and needs.

**Performance:**

We will assess our performance by monitoring:

- Assault rates
- Death by unnatural causes
- Self-harm rates for women offenders
- Incidence of illicit substance-use in custody, as identified by random urinalysis testing.

**Strategy:** Ensure that facilities offer safe and non-threatening environments to maximise opportunities for the well-being of staff and offenders.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Custodial Operations	Strive to achieve best practice in the management of women offenders at the new Townsville Women's Correctional Centre.		✓	→		
Custodial Operations and Facility Management Branch	Commence planning to establish a new women's correctional centre in southern Queensland to cater for the growth in women prisoner numbers.	✓	→			
Custodial Operations	Maintain the existing safety unit at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre for the management of women offenders who are at risk of self-harm.	→				
Custodial Operations	Maintain appropriate assessment and transport processes for women offenders when accessing medical services outside a correctional centre.	→				
Custodial Operations	Maintain the Murri meeting place at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre.	→				
Facility Management Branch	Establish safety units at Townsville Correctional Centre and the south-east Queensland correctional precinct for the management of women offenders who are at risk of self-harm.		✓			
Facility Management Branch	All new women's correctional centres will be designed to incorporate the needs of children. This includes incorporation of community spaces, play areas, additional emphasis placed on visiting areas and larger rooms to enable cots to be accommodated within the facility. Residential groupings will afford a higher level of privacy for mothers and children away from the mainstream population.	→				
Facility Management Branch	Establish Murri meeting places at the Townsville Women's Correctional Centre and the south-east Queensland correctional precinct.	✓				✓
Facility Management Branch	All new female correctional centres will be designed to create and foster an open environment inside the secure perimeter with the building layouts designed to encourage small group activities.	→				
Strategic Policy and Services	Conduct research to develop a profile of women offenders to inform infrastructure and management needs.	→				

**Strategy:** Strengthen offender management processes to ensure offenders are offered an integrated and structured progression through their sentences.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Offender Assessment and Services	Implement a validated actuarial risk assessment tool with strong predictive validity for women offenders.					→
Offender Assessment and Services	Review existing immediate risk needs assessments to improve assessment practices for women offenders.					→
Offender Assessment and Services	Review offender management planning process to ensure a whole of sentence planning approach is implemented across the Agency.	✓				
Strategic Policy and Services	Women offenders' needs are considered when developing and reviewing Agency procedures.					→
Custodial Operations	Maintain and review existing video conferencing facilities for family contact and legal purposes. Further develop procedures to facilitate court video conferencing.	✓				→

**Strategy:** Enhance access to legal visits for women offenders on remand.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Strategic Policy and Services and Offender Programs and Services	Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with Legal Aid Queensland to ensure women offenders on remand have access to timely legal advice and representation.	✓				
Strategic Policy and Services and Offender Programs and Services	Develop local protocols between Legal Aid Queensland and individual correctional centres regarding arrangements for legal visits.	✓				

**Strategies:**

- Provide integrated support services for effective offender management.
- QCS staff are valued and investment in training will improve service delivery to women offenders.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Corporate Services and Legal Services Unit	Submit to the Anti Discrimination Commission Queensland for expansion of the gender ratio exemption of Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre to include Numinbah and Townsville Correctional Centres, and the planned south-east Queensland correctional precinct.	✓				
Corporate Services	Implement and maintain the preferred gender ratio model at all correctional centres delivering services to women offenders including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre</li> <li>• Numinbah Correctional Centre</li> <li>• Townsville Correctional Centre.</li> </ul>	✓	✓	→		
Corporate Services	Develop and apply staff recruitment and selection strategies to achieve an improved attraction and retention rate of women employees from Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	✓				
Corporate Services	Enhance the Equity Contact Officer network through the provision of supportive services to women employees.	✓	✓			
QCS Academy	Review the training content on the specific risks and needs of women offenders in the custodial Entry Level Training.		✓		✓	
	Develop and deliver the custodial Entry Level Training on the specific risks and needs of women offenders.		✓	✓		
	Evaluate the training on the specific risks and needs of women offenders delivered in the custodial Entry Level Training.				✓	
QCS Academy	Develop in-service training that will incorporate training on the specific risks and needs of women offenders for Probation and Parole officers.		✓			✓
	Deliver in-service training on the specific risks and needs of women offenders to Probation and Parole officers.			✓		
	Evaluate the in-service training to Probation and Parole officers on the specific risks and needs of women offenders.				✓	

**Strategy:** Improving service delivery and outcomes for women offenders.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Custodial Operations	Establish a senior position to lead the development and implementation of strategies for the management and rehabilitation of women offenders.	✓	→			

**Strategy:** Improving the health and lifestyle of women offenders and their children.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Strategic Policy and Services	Develop and implement a policy that will reduce the rate and prevalence of tobacco use within custodial centres; encourage and support tobacco cessation among women offenders; and reduce the exposure of women offenders and their children to passive smoking within custodial centres.	✓	✓	→		
Strategic Policy and Services	Develop and implement a food and nutrition policy to ensure the provision of safe and nutritious foods to all offenders, including women, to minimise the development and progression of chronic diseases and obesity.	✓	✓	→		
Offender Programs and Services	Undertake research to support the development of evidence based food and nutrition policy in correctional centres.	✓	✓			
Offender Programs and Services	Develop and implement a health education strategy in conjunction with Queensland Health that will support healthy eating and physical activity.		✓	→		
Queensland Health correctional staff	Provide specific health promotion interventions (for example, pap screens, breast screening and attending Child Health, Midwifery and Sexual Health Clinic visits).	→				
Offender Programs and Services	Develop and implement a HIV, Hepatitis C and Transmissible Infections Strategy.	✓				

## Community supervision services

**Goal:** Provide integrated and effective management of offenders on community-based orders in accordance with assessed risks and need.

### Performance:

We will assess our performance by:

- Monitoring the percentage of successfully completed orders by women offenders,
- Monitoring the number of breach of order conditions by women offenders, and
- Developing diversion options for women offenders.

**Strategy:** Tailor service delivery practices to meet the specific needs of women offenders.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Probation and Parole	Continue to enhance service delivery in remote communities to facilitate sustainable and viable sentencing alternatives to imprisonment.	→				
Probation and Parole	Conduct inductions for court-ordered parolees at all women's correctional centres to enhance the offender's understanding and compliance with orders.	→				
Probation and Parole	Participate and provide advice on Offender Management Review Panels regarding the availability of rehabilitation and intervention services within communities and highlight any impediment that may affect the offender's release plan.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Probation and Parole	Actively seek and establish referral and management protocols with appropriate community support services to meet the specific needs of women offenders.		✓			
Strategic Policy and Services	Investigate appropriate diversion options for women offenders.	✓	✓			



## Correctional intervention services

**Goal:** Minimise the risk of re-offending through targeted and coordinated intervention and throughcare services.

**Performance:**

We will assess our performance by monitoring:

- Participation and completion rates of women offenders in Agency programs for custodial and community supervision,
- Industry participation rates for women offenders in custody,
- Participation rates in literacy/numeracy programs and vocational education and training programs for women offenders in custody,
- Access and participation rates in reintegration-related support services,
- Financial value of work performed in Queensland through the Work Camps, and
- The number of community service project sites suitable for women offenders that provide opportunities for women offenders to be engaged in traditional and non-traditional work.

**Strategy:** Design and implement monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure that interventions are effective and delivered efficiently.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Strategic Policy and Services	Develop a profile of women offenders in custody using data extracted from the Integrated Offender Management System.	✓				
Strategic Policy and Services	Monitor implementation of the Women Offenders Policy and Action Plan and report to Board of Management on progress and outcomes.		✓	✓	✓	✓

**Strategy:** Provide ways of addressing drug and alcohol use and misuse, including detection, treatment and interventions.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Offender Programs and Services	Continue to provide women offenders with access to opioid replacement therapy if this was available to them in the community.	—————→				
Offender Programs and Services	Train staff on gender specific delivery of the Pathways program.	✓	—————→			
Offender Programs and Services	Conduct targeted and random testing to identify drug use.	—————→				
Offender Programs and Services	Conduct itemiser random testing to detect traces of drugs to reduce supply.	—————→				

**Strategy:** Apply a throughcare approach to offender management, assessment and intervention services to address the rehabilitation needs of individual offenders.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Offender Assessment and Services	Deliver case management training to field staff to promote throughcare by ensuring that offender planning practices are integrated and effective.	✓				
Offender Programs and Services	Deliver the Integrated Transitional Support Model to women offenders in custody to enhance their successful preparation for release and community reintegration. This will include developing links to appropriate service providers in the community and the provision of gender and culturally appropriate resettlement information as detailed in the Transitions Program facilitators' manual.	✓	→			
Offender Programs and Services and Strategic Policy and Services	Develop and implement an offender rehabilitation policy that has a focus on throughcare.	✓	✓	→		
Offender Programs and Services	Review the prisoner remuneration strategy to ensure fairness and equity.	✓				
Offender Programs and Services	Implement gender and culturally-appropriate reintegration support through the Offender Reintegration Support Service delivered by funded service providers.	✓	✓	→		
Strategic Policy and Services	Establish links and formalise arrangements with other agencies that are able to provide integrated services for women offenders in custody and in the community.	→				
Strategic Policy and Services	Conduct a three phase evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Strategy.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Strategic Policy and Services	Evaluate the short-term impact and effectiveness of court-ordered parole as a strategy for managing growth in prisoner numbers.	✓				
Strategic Policy and Services	Evaluate the longer-term impact of court-ordered parole in terms of recidivism and the impact on prisoner numbers.				✓	✓
Custodial Operations Strategic Policy and Services	Examine options for post-release accommodation services for women offenders who are on parole.	✓	✓			
Strategic Policy and Services	Develop and implement a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Child Safety to facilitate information exchange on shared clients.	✓	✓			
Offender Programs and Services	Deliver the Advance 2 Work program to women offenders.	→				
Offender Programs and Services	Develop partnerships with funded service providers to increase access to services such as accommodation and domestic violence support services.	→				
Offender Programs and Services	Implement the Memorandum of Understanding between QCS and the Department of Housing to address issues relating to women offenders who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless upon release from custody.	✓	✓			
Offender Programs and Services	Enhance a coordinated approach to rehabilitation by linking prison industries with vocational training and employment opportunities for women offenders to enhance post-release outcomes.	→				
Offender Programs and Services	Continue to work with Centrelink to develop and enhance service delivery to women offenders which will include in-house assessments prior to release and access to timely payments and services on release.	✓				

**Strategy:** Develop and deliver a range of interventions appropriate to the assessed risks and needs of offenders including targeted interventions to meet cultural, gender and disability needs.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Custodial Operations	Establish a language laboratory at Townsville Women's Correctional Centre where women offenders can record their oral histories and stories from their communities in an effort to promote cultural preservation.		✓			
Custodial Operations	Establish and maintain effective partnerships with Elders in various Indigenous communities to facilitate the teaching of traditional languages in the language laboratory at Townsville Women's Correctional Centre.	✓	✓	→	→	→
Custodial Operations and Probation and Parole	Develop and maintain formal relationships with Indigenous community justice governance groups and their boards.	→	→	→	→	→
Custodial Operations and Probation and Parole	Implement the Agency's revised programs and update where necessary to meet gender specific needs.	→	→	→	→	→
Strategic Policy and Services	Develop and maintain effective partnerships with other government agencies and contribute to interagency initiatives and projects.	→	→	→	→	→
Strategic Policy and Services	Annually review the Agency's Multicultural Action Plan to ensure the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse offenders are considered.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic Policy and Services	Annually review the Agency's Disability Services Plan and Offenders with Specific Needs Policy and Action Plan.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strategic Policy and Services	Review and implement Queensland Corrective Services and Disability Services Queensland Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the needs of offenders with an intellectual disability.	→	→	→	→	→

**Goal:** Provide appropriate opportunities for offenders to make reparation to the community.

**Strategies:**

- Develop community service projects that provide women offenders with a range of opportunities to gain work-related skills.
- Expand opportunities for low security women offenders to participate in reparation to the community.

Responsibility	Actions	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Community Service Rejuvenation Project and Probation and Parole	Review community service projects to ensure that they contribute significant public value to local communities and provide women offenders with a range of opportunities to gain work-related skills.	✓	✓			
Strategic Projects	Review and implement the new Work Camp model with a view to expanding current opportunities for low risk women offenders to undertake community service work and increase the number of sites for low security women offenders.	✓	✓			
Offender Programs and Services	Develop a strategy to enhance community involvement in the identification of community service projects.	✓	✓			



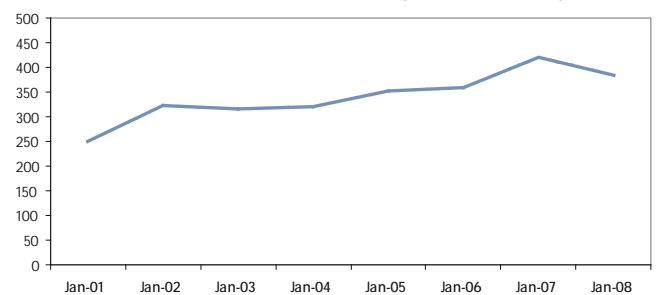
## Profile of women offenders

In general, women commit fewer and less serious crimes than men, and are less likely to be placed in police custody or sentenced to imprisonment unless they have committed serious offences. Consequently, women comprise a considerably smaller proportion of the Queensland imprisonment population.

During the past seven years, the rate of growth in the women prisoner population has continued to increase in Queensland. Despite the growth in women prisoner numbers, they still comprise a relatively small proportion of the total Queensland prisoner population. Women prisoners accommodated in high and low security centres now comprise seven per cent of the prisoner population compared to 5.8 per cent in 2000.

The following chart shows the growth in women prisoner numbers from January 2001 to January 2008.

Female Prisoner Population - January 2001 to January 2008

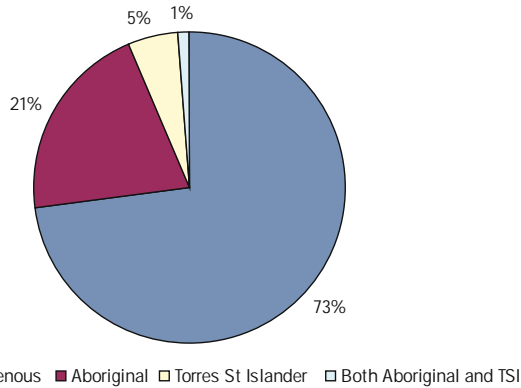


The most significant implication of this growth is that, despite women prisoners still being a minority group within the total prisoner population, Queensland Corrective Services is now in a position to deliver dedicated infrastructure, programs and resources that are better tailored to the women offender population.

Indigenous women continue to be over-represented in custody in Queensland, with about one quarter of the women prisoner population identifying as Indigenous. Aboriginal women comprise the majority (21 per cent) of women offenders who identified as Indigenous.

A comparison of Indigenous and non-Indigenous women in custody as at 30 June 2007 is illustrated in the following chart.

### Women Prisoners by Indigenous Status



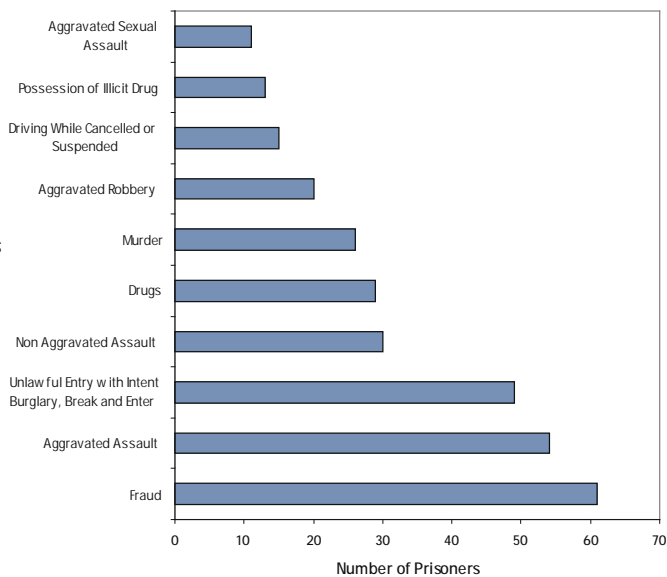
Source: Queensland Corrective Services Integrated Offender Management System as at 30.06.2007.

A snapshot of women offenders conducted in 2007 reveals that the majority (71 per cent) of women prisoners in Queensland are young women aged between 20 and 38 years of age.

Women who are in QCS' custody are most likely to have committed deception and related offences, acts intended to cause injury, murder and drug offences.

The following graph represents a breakdown of the 10 most serious offences recorded for the total female prisoner population. Of the 409 female prisoners, 75 per cent (308) have been charged with the nominated offences.

### Female Prisoners by Most Serious Offence Type



Source: Queensland Corrective Services Integrated Offender Management System as at 30.06.2007.



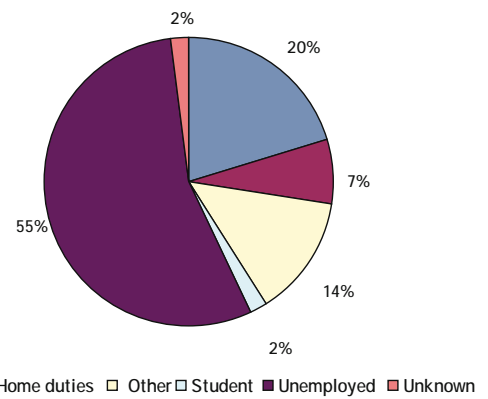
# Townsville Women's Correctional Centre

The new 154-bed Townsville Women's Correctional Centre is built on land adjacent to the men's. Before construction of the new centre, women were housed within the secure perimeter of the men's centre. The new stand-alone facility includes an Indigenous meeting place, medical services, program education and sentence management and administration buildings, a new gatehouse, a central kitchen and bulk store, covered sports hall and a visits facility. The centre also includes special facilities for prisoners with disabilities and a double unit – equivalent to eight beds – for mothers and their children.

Very low levels of employment and education are reported by women prisoners. The majority (76 per cent) of women report not completing secondary schooling and 55 per cent report being unemployed on admission to custody. Aboriginal female prisoners report higher levels of unemployment on admission than non-Indigenous women, reflecting their relative disadvantage in the wider community.

The employment status of female prisoners on admission is illustrated in the following chart as at 30 June 2007.

**Women Prisoners by Employment Status on Admission**

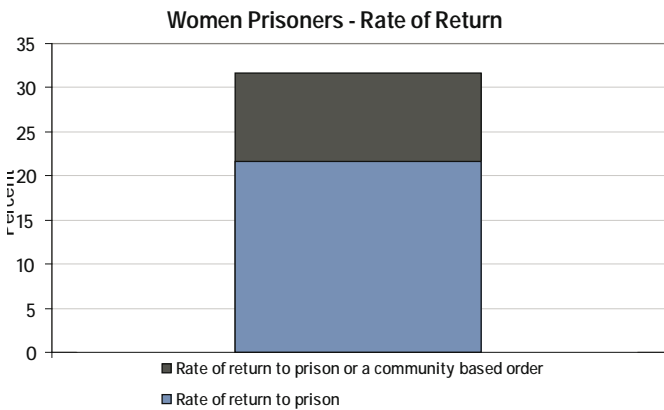


Source: Queensland Corrective Services Integrated Offender Management System as at 30.06.2007.



The majority of all women prisoners have not been imprisoned previously.

The below graph demonstrates 21.69 per cent of women prisoners released from prison, reoffended and were returned to prison within two years. Of the women prisoners released from prison, 31.67 per cent returned to either prison or a community-based order within two years.



Source: Queensland Corrective Services Integrated Offender Management System as at 30.06.2007.

The below graph demonstrates that 10.30 per cent of all women offenders reoffended within two years and were returned to a community-based order. Of the women offenders sentenced to community-based orders, 13.88 per cent reoffended within two years and were returned to prison or a community-based order.



## Supporting mothers and their children

About 800 children have attended the Playgroup Program since it was started in 1997 at the old Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre, adjacent to Boggo Road Gaol. Playgroup allows mothers to build appropriate parenting skills and learn how to respond appropriately towards children, including how to play and enjoy their child. A Queensland Health child health professional attends the group fortnightly and monitors the health and development of children accommodated at the centre in a friendly, non-invasive way.



## Pups in Prison

The Pups in Prison foster care program at Numinbah Correctional Centre women's unit was launched in September 2006. Prisoners at the centre care for and train pups from the local branch of the Animal Welfare League. The dogs are then passed on to needy owners such as elderly or disabled persons who spend many hours alone in their homes. Since the program began, prisoners at the centre have cared for 88 puppies and 14 adult dogs. The program provides prisoners with a different sort of experience, giving them an opportunity to develop new levels of responsibility, compassion and self-esteem.

In Queensland, women offenders are represented in greater numbers on community supervision orders than on orders of imprisonment. Women offenders make up 21 per cent of the offenders subject to community supervision in Queensland in comparison to seven per cent of the total prisoner population.

The majority of female offenders subject to community supervision orders are non-Indigenous. Indigenous women continue to be over-represented on orders of imprisonment and under-represented on community supervision orders.

Women who are subject to community supervision are most likely to have committed fraud and deception offences, acts intended to cause injury and drug offences. Non-Indigenous women committed higher levels of fraud, drug possession and driving while under the influence and disqualified driving than Indigenous women. Similar levels of common assault convictions were recorded for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women, while Indigenous women recorded higher levels, of more serious assault offence types.

The majority (80 per cent) of women offenders subject to community supervision fall between the ages of 20 and 44 years. The majority (35 per cent) of women offenders in Queensland report being unemployed on admission to community-based supervision.





The table below demonstrates the levels of employment recorded for women offenders upon their admission to Probation and Parole supervision:

Employment status	Number	%
Unemployed	945	35%
Employed	634	23%
Pensioner	374	14%
Home Duties	307	11%
Unknown Or Not Stated	261	10%
Student	78	3%
Self-employed	38	1%
N/A	31	1%
Not Applicable	31	1%
Other	27	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2726</b>	<b>100%</b>

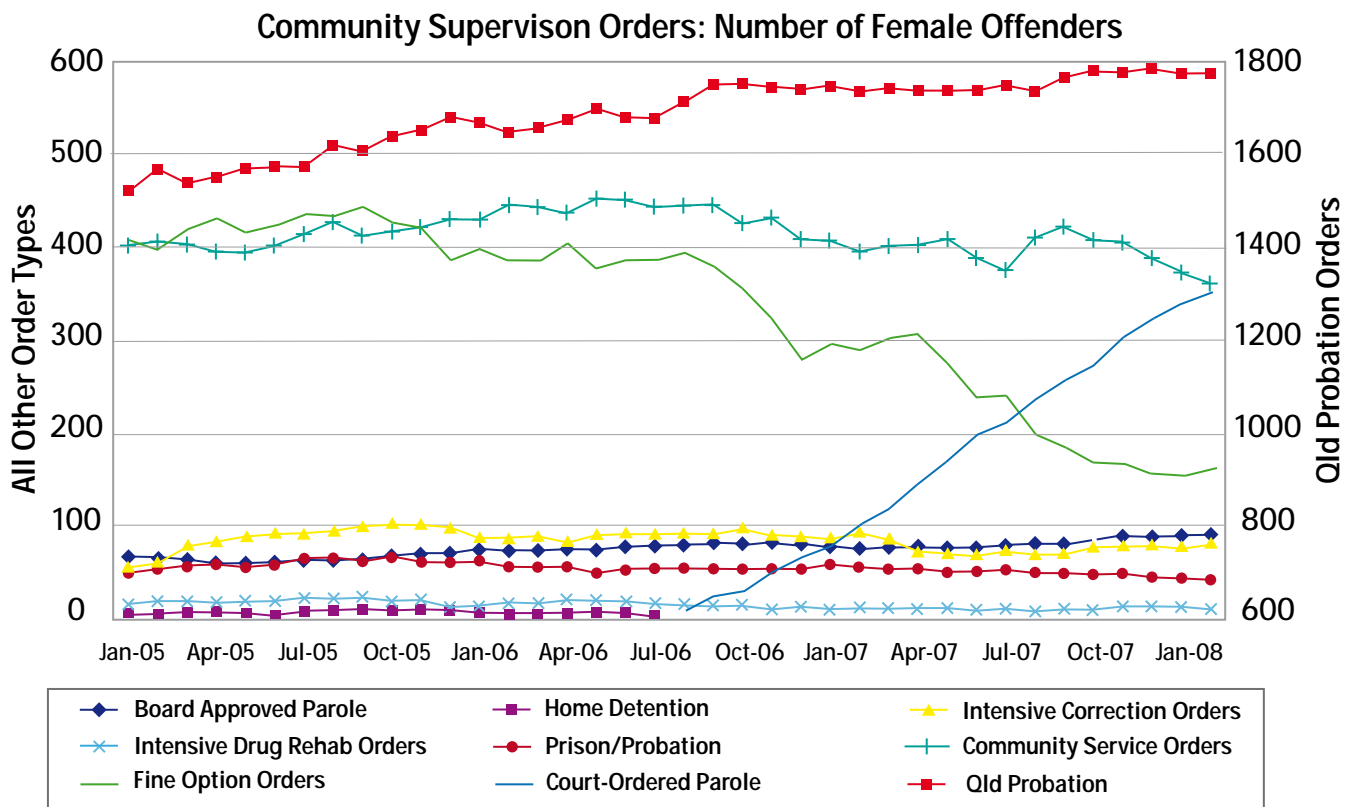
Source: Queensland Corrective Services Integrated Offender Management System as at 30.06.2007

Higher levels of education and employment are reported for women offenders subject to community supervision compared to women in custody.



While 23 per cent of the women subject to community supervision report being employed another 14 per cent report being income support recipients. It is likely that a significant proportion of the women receiving income support are in receipt of the Sole Parent Benefit or the Disability Support Pension rather than the Aged Pension.

The following graph shows the various community supervision orders by type that women offenders are subject to. It should be noted that offenders may be subject to more than one order. Probation orders comprise the largest category of orders undertaken by women offenders. Since the introduction of court-ordered parole in September 2006, there are significantly more women offenders on supervised release orders than before. In January 2008, 474 women offenders were subject to supervised release compared to 116 women offenders in January 2005.

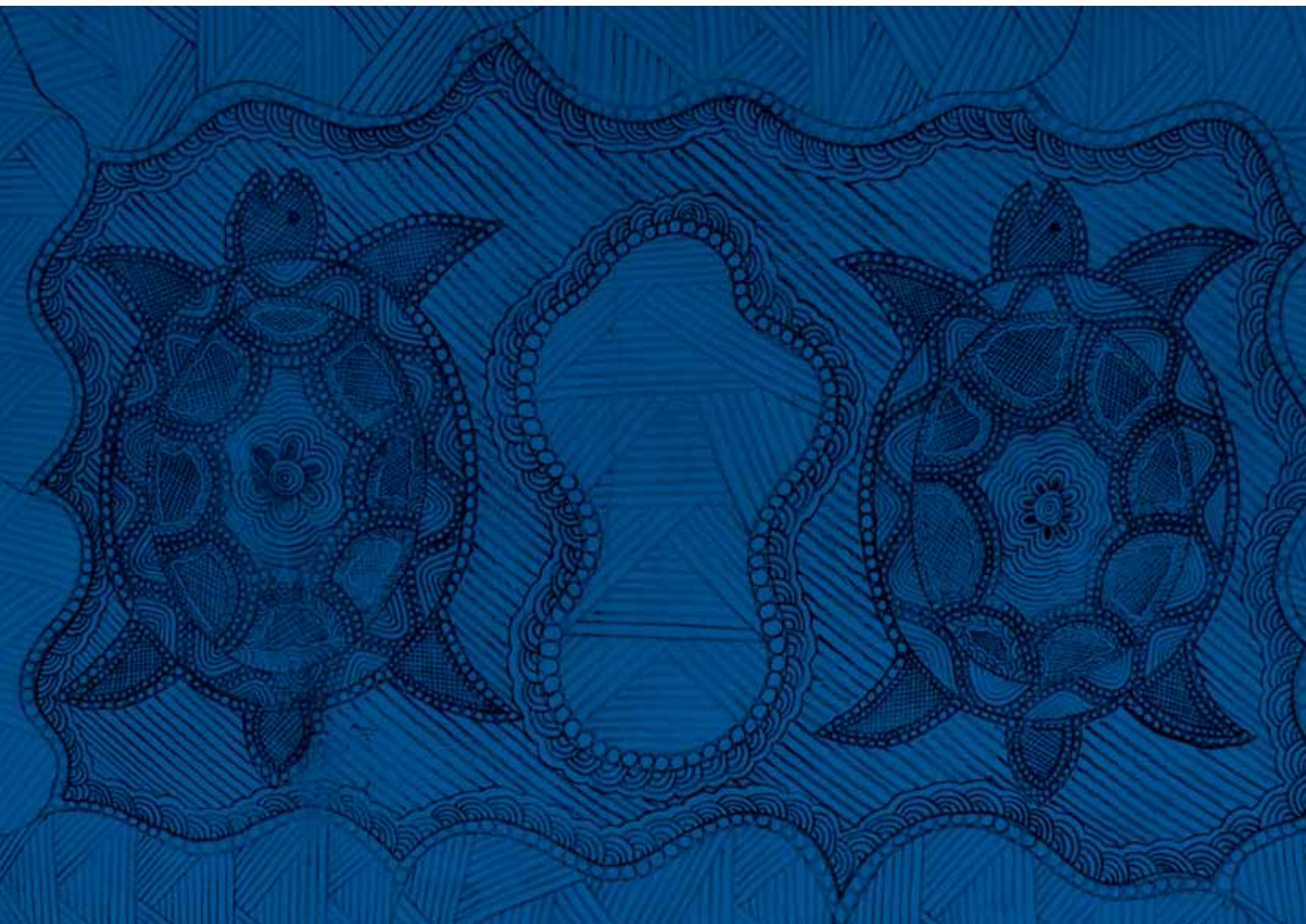


## Facilities across Queensland

OCS operates a range of facilities for female offenders including Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre (BWCC), Numinbah Correctional Centre's women's unit and Townsville Correctional Centre (TCC). The Helana Jones Centre and the Warwick Women's Work Camp are attached to BWCC. The Bowen Women's Work Camp is currently attached to TCC and will be aligned to the new Townsville Women's Correctional Centre. All south-east Queensland centres are linked to Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre to facilitate rehabilitation and transition from secure to open custody and then to the community. In south-east Queensland, prisoners assessed as low risk may progress from secure custody to either the Helana Jones centre and/or the Warwick Women's Work Camp. In the north, similarly assessed prisoners move to the low security facility at Townsville and then to the community. Teams of offenders at the low security facility also travel to Bowen to the women's Work Camp to work on local community service projects.



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