

Hon Pete Malinauskas MLC

Minister for Correctional Services

Friday, 9 December, 2016

Major reform to SA's prison system on track

The State Government is one step closer to achieving a major policy shift in the management of the State's correctional system.

The Strategic Policy Panel charged with providing advice on transforming the current system, has handed down recommendations on achieving a 10% reduction in reoffending by 2020.

Chaired by Warren Mundine AO, the Panel presented the Minister for Correctional Services, the Hon. Pete Malinauskas MLC, with a holistic response to reducing reoffending.

With the key principle of improving community safety, the report contains six overarching strategies underpinned by 36 individual recommendations, which outline a whole-of-system change in the approach to the management of offenders.

The six strategies are:

1. **Successful return to the community** with individual case management plans for all offenders from system entry to six months after release.
2. **Employment and industry** where partnerships are to be developed between the Department for Correctional Services (DCS) and the local business sector to improve post custody employment opportunities.
3. **Prioritising target cohorts** to ensure programs are tailored to women, those on short sentences, those on remand and those within the community to achieve best results.
4. **A strategy for Aboriginal offenders** to ensure targeted and culturally appropriate services and programs.
5. **An agency response** that allows for internal change with the culture, resources, capabilities and structure required to achieve the target.
6. **Partnerships and collaboration** with other government agencies and the public to ensure the successful delivery of programs and services.

With 46% of those that leave prison returning to the system within two years, the successful transition from prison back to the community is of paramount importance.

A snapshot of the prison population on 30 October 2016 showed that 74% of prisoners had been in prison before.

The Panel recommends the development of end-to-end case management, with prisoners supported from entry to six months post-release. Transitional support is proposed to include housing, drug and alcohol treatment and involvement of offenders' families.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are over represented within the prison population (1 in 4), and a dedicated Aboriginal Reference Group was appointed to examine contributing factors.

While the Panel intends for the cultural needs of Aboriginal offenders to be considered in the implementation of all recommendations, seven recommendations have been developed specifically to address Aboriginal reoffending.

Lack of employment is a significant contributing factor to repeat offending. Recommendations to improve employment outcomes include engaging a specialist job network provider, developing partnerships with the business sector and investigating the expansion of prison industries.

The State Government will respond to the strategy in the first half of 2017 with an action plan that outlines the implementation of recommendations that the government decides to act on.

Background

The report and more information about the target are available at www.yourSAy.gov.au.

The Strategic Policy Panel comprised state and national leaders in policy and community advocacy including Nyunggai Warren Mundine AO (Chair), Mal Hyde AO APM OSTJ, Amanda Blair, Nikki Govan, Emeritus Professor Anne Edwards AO, Michael O'Connell APM and The Hon Rev Dr Lynn Arnold AO. More information on the panel is available at www.yourSAy.gov.au.

Members of the Aboriginal Reference Group were Cheryl Axelby, Sharon Gollan, Paul Tanner, Wayne Miller, and Allan Jones.

Quotes attributable to Correctional Services Minister Pete Malinauskas

Just a few short months ago I set an ambitious target to reduce reoffending in SA by 10% by 2020.

A target and a policy to reduce reoffending is the most significant reform in the corrections portfolio for over a decade.

A Panel of outstanding leaders and thinkers were set the tight timeframe of providing recommendations by the end of the year. They have delivered on that timeframe.

Focussed on the target, the Panel considered international best practice alongside local issues. Through a 'no holes bared' examination of our system, an innovative and evidence-based response has been provided to address our challenge.

Over the next few months the Government will consider the implementation of these recommendations as we strive to achieve the most comprehensive overhaul of SA's corrections system to date.

Reducing the rate of reoffending will improve community safety, which means less crime and less victims, while easing overcrowding within the prison system and reducing the cost to taxpayers.

Quotes attributable to Chair of the Strategic Policy Panel, Warren Mundine AO

Throughout this process the Panel has engaged with the community, business, government and non-government sectors along with prisoners themselves and correctional services staff.

We sought to create a response to this challenge that was evidence-based and considered the entire journey of an offender; from the moment they enter correctional services and well into their return to the community.

With one in four prisoners being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, factors that contribute to this over representation have significantly informed our overall response.

I am honoured to be presenting a strategy and set of recommendations that the Panel and I believe will set SA on the path to achieving an ambitious target to reduce reoffending.

We believe that these recommendations are achievable and we urge the State Government to set clear and measureable timeframes for implementation to ensure the target is realised.