

Reducing prison numbers by reducing re-incarceration

Reduce re-incarceration and promote wellbeing:

- Along with prisoner numbers increasing each year, movement of individuals between prison and the community is considerable
- It is clear from current recidivism rates that the majority of prisoners are not successfully integrated into the community after release (2)
- 42% return to custody in Qld - just slightly behind the national average of 44% (13)
- Within weeks after release from prison, risk for suicide and relapse to drug use is significant (2).

The prison treadmill is socially and financially very expensive for the ex-prisoner and society, and thus finding out how to increase an ex-prisoner's chances of making a successful transition is highly desirable. (1)

Too few services - but they do help:

- Few post-release programs have been implemented or evaluated (9)
- Services to support Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals and families with post-release community integration are recognisably inadequate (7)
- Existing programs are not likely to be culturally competent to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (8)
- A very small number of overseas studies have shown those with high levels of support are more easily integrate into the community post-release (3, 4).

Factors in re-incarceration are preventable:

- Poor health has been found to hinder community reintegration post-prison release (5)
- Lack of social support is also widely recognised as a major health risk factor (6)
- Reoffending risk factors also include poor mental and physical health, drug and alcohol misuse, socio-economic disadvantage and poor family and community integration (12).



Disproportionate burden on Indigenous families:

- Families and communities bear much of the burden, often having to house, feed and financially support prisoners after release
- This burden is exacerbated by relative isolation of Indigenous communities
- Indigenous families and communities are themselves affected by high rates of chronic illness and under-utilisation of health and support services (1), and the impact of incarceration including family breakdown, poverty and grief (10).

**Queensland Government has committed to reducing recidivism.
Accountability to meet targets and commitments is required.**

- The evidence base on which appropriate policy and community-level responses can be made needs to be urgently expanded
- Improving outcomes for released prisoners not only rests on improving referrals and linkages to services, but also improving the number and quality of services available (11).

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ANTaR Qld and the Bridge Network are facilitating a Campaign to End Indigenous Over-representation in the Queensland Criminal Justice System. Interested organisations and individuals are encouraged to contact: