



PAROLE BOARD

OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



ANNUAL REPORT

2014

The Hon John Elferink MLA
Minister for Correctional Services

I am pleased to provide this report on the activities of the Parole Board of the Northern Territory during the year ending 31 December 2014, in compliance with section 3H of the *Parole Act*.



The Hon Justice Stephen Southwood
Chairperson

Purpose of the Annual Report

The purpose of this report is twofold: first, to meet the statutory reporting requirements of the *Parole Act* as outlined in section 3H; and second, to increase public awareness of the Parole Board's role in the criminal justice system.

The Parole Board of the Northern Territory makes important decisions that affect the freedom of individuals and impact upon victims, their families and the communities into which offenders are released.

Members of the Parole Board take their responsibilities seriously and are committed to affording the public every opportunity to understand the process by which the Board arrives at its decisions.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

Chairperson's Message

2014 was once again a busy year for the Parole Board. During the year the Board considered 804 matters. The Board's deliberations were greatly enhanced by use of iPads to access all of the documents that the Board had to consider.

In 2014 there were the following important developments.

First, the *Parole of Prisoners Amendment Act 2013* commenced on 15 January 2014. From that date the membership of the Parole Board doubled in size. This enabled two meetings of the Board to be held each month and means that the Board is better able to manage its work load.

The increased membership of the Board has brought together an outstanding group of people with a diversity of life experience skills and expertise.

Second, section 3EB(2)(d) was inserted into the *Parole Act*. At the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board, this subsection enables a medical practitioner or a psychologist who is appointed as a member of the Board to attend and participate in all meetings of the Board; not just meetings of the Board considering applications for parole by prisoners who are serving a sentence of imprisonment for life for the crime of murder.

The Board has two highly qualified and very experienced psychologists who have been appointed members of the Board under section 3B(1)(d) of the *Parole Act*. The Board greatly values their participation in its deliberations and is now able to have the benefit of their expertise in considering a much wider range of complex matters.

Third, the Board's Policy and Procedures Manual has now been published and is

available on the Board's website. The main purpose of the Manual is to maintain and enhance the quality of the decision making and management of parole matters by the Board. The Manual also makes the Board's decision making processes more transparent and accountable.

Fourth, in October 2014 the Board hosted the Australasian Parole Authorities Conference 2014. The theme of the conference was Throughcare and Community. The conference was a great success with delegates coming from all over Australia and New Zealand. Over 100 delegates attended the conference.

The Chairperson thanks all of the members of the Board, the Secretary and all of the members of the Secretariat, the Corrections Officers who prepared the Institutional Reports and the Parole Officers who prepared the parole Reports for their excellent work during 2014.

Statistics at a glance

Number of matters before the Parole Board	804
Number of distinct prisoners with matters before the Parole Board	406
Number of initial parole applications	259
Number of prisoners granted parole	106
Number of prisoners refused parole	107
Number of prisoners who declined parole	50
Number of parole orders revoked	60*

* 6 people were revoked from progress/miscellaneous reports therefore this figure doesn't match the revocation information on page 23.

PROFILE

The Parole Board of the Northern Territory (the Board) is an independent statutory body established under section 3A of the *Parole Act*. The Board consists of 18 members who act independently of political and bureaucratic influence to make decisions about the parole of prisoners in the best interests of the community as a whole, including the offender and the victim.

Parole is an important element of the criminal justice system as it allows prisoners to serve the balance of their sentence of imprisonment in the community, under supervision and on very strict conditions. The purpose of parole is to release prisoners into the community in a manner that provides support and increases their chances of becoming members of the community who are free of a criminal lifestyle.

The Board may:

- i. grant a prisoner release on parole;
- ii. deny a prisoner release on parole;
- iii. defer consideration of a prisoner's application for parole until a later date;
- iv. amend or vary a parole order; or
- v. revoke a parole order.

The Board makes decisions in relation to both adult and youth offenders and their jurisdiction extends to prisoners serving a sentence of life imprisonment for the crime of murder.

In addition to the standard conditions of parole, the Board has the power to impose additional conditions which it believes are necessary to support the offender and prevent re-offending. It may also give directions to the Chairperson for guidance

about revocation of parole for either:

- a breach of a condition of parole; or
- offending committed by the parolee while on parole.

Decisions of the Parole Board by their very nature have the capacity to impact not only on individuals but the broader community. Members of the Parole Board are aware of the trust that is placed in them and take their responsibilities seriously.

Parole Board members are supported to fulfil their responsibilities by operational and administrative staff within the Department of Correctional Services.

Parole Board Members

Section 3B of the *Parole Act* stipulates that the Board must have 18 members who are to be:

- a) the Chief Justice or another Judge of the Supreme Court nominated by the Chief Justice; and
- b) the Commissioner of Correctional Services; and
- c) 2 police officers nominated by the Commissioner of Police; and
- d) 2 persons, each of whom is –
 - i. a medical practitioner; or
 - ii. a person registered under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law to practise in the psychology profession (other than as a student); and
- e) 2 persons, each of whom represents the interests of victims of crime; and
- f) 10 persons who reflect, as closely as possible, the composition of the community at large and include women and Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders.

Members described in subparagraphs (d), (e) and (f) above are appointed by the Administrator for three year terms, are eligible for reappointment, and may resign their membership in writing to the Minister.

In the absence of a member appointed under subsections (d), (e) or (f), the Minister may appoint a person to act as a member of the Board. In 2014, no members were appointed to act in positions on the Board.

The Chairperson of the Board:

- has responsibility for resolving questions of law; and
- a casting vote where votes are equal on questions to be determined by a majority of votes.

In 2014 the Board was chaired by Justice Stephen Southwood. Justice Judith Kelly acted in the place of Justice Southwood on two occasions.

2014 saw a number of new members joining the Board following legislative changes to the *Parole Act* to expand the membership from 10 to 18 members.

Seven new members were appointed in March 2014 under the following sections:

- 3B(1)(d) – Kate Crawley
- 3B(1)(e) – Susan Crane
- 3B(1)(f) – Eric Houget-Poole, Jane Lloyd, John Brears, Harold Howard and Mark Coffey.

Superintendent Andrew Pusterla commenced in January 2014 to replace Superintendent Don Fry as the police representative. Superintendent Robert Jordan and Superintendent Brett Prowse each acted in the place of the Police representative on one occasion.

Mr Phil Brown acted in the place of Ken Middlebrook as the Commissioner on one occasion.

At the close of 2014, membership of the board comprised:

Justice Stephen Southwood	Chairperson
Mr Ken Middlebrook	Commissioner, Northern Territory Department of Correctional Services
Superintendent Andrew Pusterla	NT Police representative
Ms Susan Lowry	Victims of Crime representative, Darwin
Mr Paul Rysavy	Psychologist, Darwin
Mr John Flynn	Community member, Darwin
Ms Selina Holtze	Community member, Nhulunbuy
Mr Alasdair McGregor	Community member, Darwin
Mr Mark McAdie	Community member, Darwin
Mr Len Notaras	Community member, Darwin
Ms Kate Crawley	Psychologist, Darwin
Ms Susan Crane	Victims of Crime Representative, Darwin
Ms Eric Houget-Poole	Community member, Darwin
Ms Jane Lloyd	Community member, Alice Springs
Mr John Brears	Community member, Darwin
Mr Harold Howard	Community member, Darwin
Mr Mark Coffee	Community member, Alice Springs

Northern Territory Community Corrections

Secretary

The Secretary of the Parole Board is a statutory role that is held by the Executive Director of Northern Territory Community Corrections. The Secretary provides administrative support and strategic advice to the Board.

Ms Tracy Luke is the Executive Director and held the role of Secretary throughout the year. Mr John Fattore acted in the place of Ms Luke on one occasion. Ms Luke commenced working as a probation and parole officer in 1998, she holds a Bachelor of Social Work and relocated to the Northern Territory in 2008 to undertake a management position within NT Community Corrections.

Parole Board Secretariat

The Parole Board Administrators have the primary responsibility for coordinating and providing all administrative support for the monthly meetings of the Board.

Administration of the activities of the Parole Board continues to increase as a result of:

- new practices designed to increase the application of procedural fairness; and
- an increasing number of matters being heard every month due to the rising number of prisoners.

Parole Officers

The functions of parole officers under section 3R of the *Parole Act* are to:

- supervise persons released on parole as assigned by the Parole Board;
- supervise persons who are mentally impaired and unfit for trial and are therefore made subject to a non-custodial supervision order within the meaning of Part IIA of the *Criminal Code*;
- prepare reports as required by the Parole Board;
- maintain case records and statistics as required by the Parole Board;
- carry out the directions of the Parole Board in relation to a parole order;
- investigate and make reports to the Parole Board on the employment and place of living available to each person applying for release on parole;
- to exercise the functions of a parole officer under the *Serious Sex Offenders Act*; and
- perform such other duties as directed by the Parole Board or the Chairperson.

Parole officers commence working with a prisoner eight months before they become eligible for parole. During this time the parole officer works closely with the prisoners, their family, communities and victims to ensure that Parole Board members are provided with comprehensive, timely and reliable information.

UNDERSTANDING PAROLE

The Non-Parole Period

The *Sentencing Act* provides that a sentencing court may fix a non-parole period (NPP) for an offender who is sentenced to a term of imprisonment of at least 12 months.

The NPP set by the sentencing court stipulates the minimum time a prisoner must serve in custody before being eligible for release on parole. Contrary to other jurisdictions, a prisoner does not have a right to be released on parole and is not automatically granted parole on the expiry of their NPP.

The Parole Board has full authority over the decision of if and when a prisoner is released on parole. The Board may decide a prisoner is not to be granted parole and should serve the whole of their sentence in prison.

Parole Process

Arrangements for Board Meetings

There are several provisions in the *Parole Act* which govern the Board in making decisions regarding the release to, or revocation of, parole. There are additional requirements regarding the consideration for prisoners serving a term of life imprisonment for the crime of murder.

LIFE IMPRISONMENT

Meetings held quarterly

Quorum requires the Chairperson and seven other members

Decisions require a unanimous vote

ALL OTHER SENTENCES

Meetings held monthly

Quorum requires Chairperson and three other members

Decisions require a majority vote

Matters considered at Board Meetings

Parole is a complex administrative process. The Board may hear a number of different types of matters at each meeting. Some of the types of matters considered by the Board are:

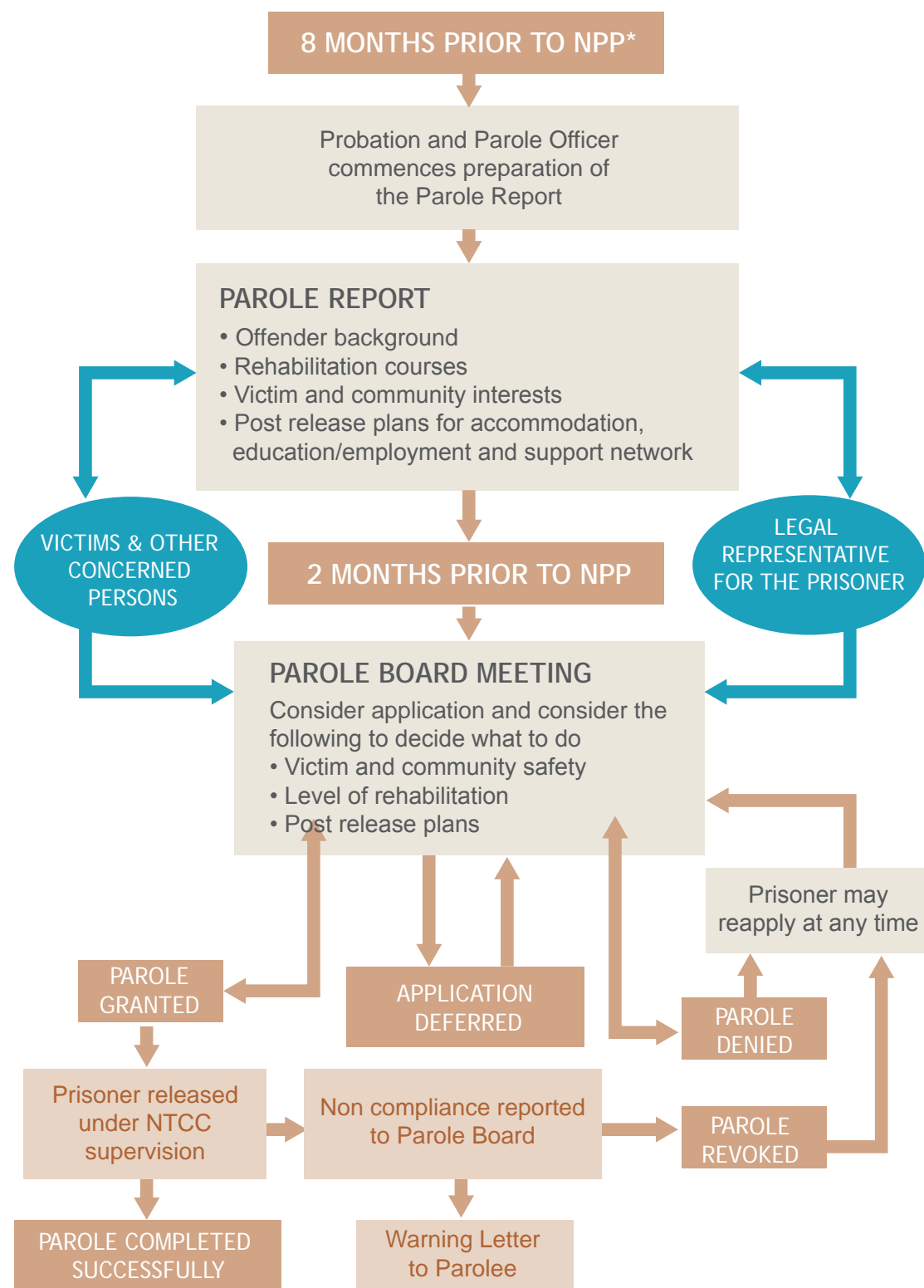
- applications for parole;
- reports about breaches of parole (revocation reports or advice);
- notifications that a parolee has completed their parole order;
- reports providing updates on current parolees and their progress;
- matters about prisoners declining parole;
- applications for variations of parole conditions;
- applications by parolees to travel interstate; and
- applications by parolees to transfer interstate.

Attendance of Prisoners at Board Hearings

It is the practice of the Board to decide parole matters on the papers without the prisoner being present. The Board is of the view that the materials received or obtained by the Board provide a fair and comprehensive basis to decide whether a prisoner should or should not be granted parole.

The Chairman may require a prisoner to be brought before the Board pursuant to section 3G of the *Parole Act*. In 2014, one prisoner appeared before the Board.

Either the prisoner or their legal representative may write to the Secretary of the Board requesting that the prisoner be required to attend their parole hearing. Applications are determined by the Chairperson after consultation with members of the Board.



*non-parole period (NPP)

Prisoners Serving a Life Sentence

When considering applications for parole by prisoners serving a term of imprisonment for life for the crime of murder, the Board must have regard to the principle that the public interest is of primary importance and, in doing so, must give substantial weight to the following matters:

- the protection of the community as the paramount consideration;
- the likely effect of the prisoner's release on the victim's family;
- if the prisoner is an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, the likely effect of the prisoner's release on the prisoner's community.

Section 3GB(4) of the *Parole Act* stipulates that the Board must give reasons for any decision or direction of the Board on a matter concerning a prisoner who is serving a term of imprisonment for murder and those reasons must be included in the record of its proceedings.

Variation of Parole Conditions

Sections 5(6) and 5(6AA) of the *Parole Act* provide the Chairperson with the authority to amend a parole order by varying or revoking a condition at any time before the expiration of the order. Under section 5(7) the variation does not take effect until the notice of the variation is given to the parolee.

Parole conditions may be varied or revoked due to the extent to which the parolee has succeeded in rehabilitating themselves in the community.

Revocation of Parole Orders

Where a parolee has failed to comply with the conditions of their parole order, the parole officer must prepare a report for the Board's consideration setting out the circumstances of the breach of parole.

A breach of parole may fall into one of two categories:

- re-offending – this means that the parolee has committed a fresh offence whilst released on parole; or
- conditional – this means that the parolee has breached one of the conditions of their parole order.

The Chairperson has the authority to make a decision about the revocation of a parolee's parole order and issue an Instrument of Revocation under sections 5(6) and 5(6AA). However, it is the practice that where possible the Board consider recommendations about revocations at Board meetings. If a parole order is revoked, the parolee is arrested by police and returned to prison.

Alternatively, the Board may request the Commissioner of Police to have a parolee who fails to comply with their parole conditions arrested and brought before the Court of Summary Jurisdiction for cancellation of the parole order. The parolee may then provide any reasons for non-compliance to the Court.

Principles of Parole

When considering whether to release a prisoner on parole, the Board considers:

- the interests and safety of the community;
- the rights of the victim, including their families;
- the intentions of the sentencing authority;
- the needs of the prisoner; and
- whether the prisoner has recognised the error of their ways and is prepared to change their behaviour for the better.

In making their decision the Board takes into consideration a number of factors:

- the nature and circumstances of the offence(s);
- comments made by the sentencing Judge when imposing sentence;
- the prisoner's criminal history and patterns of offending;
- the possibility of the prisoner re-offending while on parole and the likely nature of the re-offending;
- the risk of harm to the community and the victim;
- release plans, including accommodation and employment;

- reports, assessments and recommendations made by a variety of professionals, including medical practitioners, psychiatrists, psychologists, custodial staff and/or community corrections officers;
- rehabilitation courses undertaken by the prisoner;
- education courses undertaken by the prisoner;
- institutional reports in relation to the prisoner's behaviour while in prison;
- the security rating of the prisoner within the prison;
- victim's safety, welfare and whereabouts;
- representations made by the victim or by persons related to the victim;
- submissions made by the prisoner, the prisoner's family, friends and any potential employers or any other relevant individuals;
- submissions made by the legal representatives of the prisoner; and
- whether the prisoner can be adequately supervised in the community under the standard conditions of parole or whether further parole conditions should be imposed.

These factors are a guideline only. The Board considers each case on its own merits.

The Board considers a range of material when deciding whether or not to release a prisoner to parole. The documentation will always include:

- a Parole Report prepared by the assigned parole officer;
- an Institutional Report prepared by staff of the Correctional Centre or Detention Centre where the prisoner or detainee is held;
- the facts of the prisoner's offending;
- a record of the prisoner's prior convictions; and
- a transcript of the Supreme Court sentencing remarks, if the prisoner was sentenced in that court.

The Board may also consider such other reports as are relevant for the individual case, including:

- pre-Sentence Reports;
- psychological/psychiatric assessments and reports;
- rehabilitation course assessments and reports including assessments and reports about Anger Management Courses, Sexual Offender Programs and Family Violence Programs;
- medical assessments and reports;
- assessments and reports from substance misuse programs and treatment facilities;
- legal submissions made on behalf of the prisoner;
- letters and/or reports from interstate services;
- letters from the prisoner or written on behalf of the prisoner; and
- letters from the victim or victim's representative.

Parole Conditions

The standard parole conditions attached to every Northern Territory parole order are:

- 1) the parolee must be of good behaviour and must not commit another offence during the period of the order;
- 2) the parolee shall be subject to supervision on parole of a parole officer, appointed in accordance with this parole order, and shall obey all reasonable directions of the parole officer appointed;
- 3) the parolee shall report to the parole officer, or other person nominated by the parole officer, in the manner and at the places and times directed by the officer and shall be available for interview at such times and places as a parole officer or nominee may from time to time direct;
- 4) the parolee shall not leave the Northern Territory without the written permission of the supervising parole officer;
- 5) the parolee shall enter into employment arranged or agreed upon by the parole officer and shall notify the parole officer of any intention to change employment before such change occurs or, if this is impracticable, then within such period after the change as may have been directed by the parole officer;
- 6) the parolee shall reside at an address arranged or agreed upon by the parole officer and shall notify the parole officer of any intention to change address before such change occurs or, if this is impracticable, then within such period after the change as may have been directed by the parole officer;
- 7) the parolee shall not associate with any person specified in a direction by the parole officer to the parolee;
- 8) the parolee shall not frequent or visit any place or district specified in a direction by the parole officer to the parolee.

The Board frequently places additional conditions upon the release of an offender. These conditions are tailored to maximise protection to the community, facilitate the prisoner's successful reintegration and reduce the risk of re-offending.

One of the purposes of placing conditions on parole is to address and manage factors that underlie the prisoner's offending behaviour. Additional conditions often include:

- to not consume or purchase alcohol;
- breath testing and urinalysis;
- no contact, directly or indirectly, with a victim or other specified person;
- to reside at a specified community or outstation;
- participation in and completion of an assessment/treatment/counselling regime (residential or sessional attendance) e.g. alcohol programs, domestic violence programs, sex offender programs, psychiatric treatment;
- not consume a dangerous drug or abuse a prescribed substance that is lawfully obtained;
- not to engage in conduct that might lead to a domestic violence order being made; and
- accommodation curfew.

Release Plans of Prisoners

Parole officers take considerable time to talk to prisoners about their release plans, including proposed accommodation as this is a pivotal factor in the success or failure of the prisoner's parole.

Reintegration into the community is a fragile process. During this time prisoners need the support of Northern Territory and Australian government agencies, family, friends and their community.

Access to suitable accommodation is a vital part of re-integration into the community and can assist a prisoner to remain stable and abstain from the use of alcohol or other drugs.

Transfer of Parole Orders

The *Parole Orders (Transfer) Act* commenced in 1984 as part of a national scheme under which a parolee can transfer to another jurisdiction and have their parole order registered under the corresponding Act in that jurisdiction.

Upon registration of the parole order with the receiving jurisdiction the parolee ceases to have any connection with the originating jurisdiction. The parole order and original sentence are treated as though they were imposed in the receiving jurisdiction.

National Guidelines have been introduced to streamline the process of transferring offenders on community based supervision orders between Australian jurisdictions.

Extradition

Extradition involves the return of an offender from another jurisdiction, this may happen in number of instances, including:

- when a parolee has left the Northern Territory without permission;
- when a parolee on authorised travel has:
 - failed to comply with parole conditions whilst interstate; or
 - committed further offences.

The Board may consider extradition of the parolee to the Northern Territory so the outstanding balance of their sentence of imprisonment can be served. Each case is considered on its merits.

Victims of Crime

The Board is very cognisant of the rights of victims of crime as contained within the Northern Territory Charter for Victims of Crime and ensures the guiding principles are incorporated into practice and procedure.

Under the Charter the victim may apply in writing to the Secretary of the Board requesting:

- a direction be given to a prisoner not to approach them whilst on parole; and
- for advice about the outcome of any parole proceedings concerning the prisoner.

Parole officers liaise with the Crime Victims Services Unit and Witness Assistance Service and the general community to ensure victim's concerns are taken into consideration throughout the parole process and that the victim is kept informed of any developments. Victim issues and concerns are frequently identified in reports prepared for the Board's consideration and may result in special conditions being added to a parole order to ensure the safety of the victim.

Additionally, where a matter has a registered victim, the Secretary of the Board provides timely written updates to the Director of the Crime Victims Services Unit as stipulated by the *Victims of Crime Rights and Services Act*.

In 2014, one victim attended a Board meeting and provided a verbal submission in relation to a parole application.

Supporting Indigenous Offenders

The Department of Correctional Services has entered into formal arrangements with the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) to operate Prisoner Support Officers programs.

Under these arrangements the following occurs when a prisoner is a client of NAAJA:

- The Secretary of the Board provides the relevant Prisoner Support Officer with a copy of the letter they send to a prisoner, informing the prisoner of the decision of the Board about whether the prisoner has been granted parole or not. This means the Prisoner Support Officer can go through the letter with the prisoner and also obtain further information from the Secretary if necessary.
- Where the Board makes a decision about the parole of a prisoner contrary to the recommendation contained in the report of the parole officer, a meeting may be held with the parole officer, the Prisoner Support Officer and the prisoner to discuss the Board's reasons for decision.

NAAJA has been advised that if the prisoner wishes to make an application to be present at the meeting of the Board which considers his or her application for parole, then this can be done by the Prisoner Support Officer and any such application will be considered on its merits. Further, NAAJA and the Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS) have been advised the Board will consider any written submissions that are made on behalf of a prisoner about parole.

Similar arrangements were entered into by the Department of Correctional Services with CAALAS. However, there has been a reduction in the funding provided to CAALAS by the Australian Government. This has meant that CAALAS can no longer provide the prisoner support service it provided in the past. This is most unfortunate. Aboriginal prisoners comprise about 86 percent of prisoners in the Northern Territory, many of whom come from remote communities in Central Australia. The service, care and assistance provided by Mr Thomas Quayle and others to Aboriginal parolees in Central Australia, was invaluable and there appeared to be a reduction in the rate of recidivism of those offenders who were provided with assistance by CAALAS.

PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

PAROLE APPLICATIONS

Number of parole applications heard in 2014	392
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Outcome of the initial hearing

- Prisoners granted parole	106	(27%)
- Applications undetermined (deferred)	118	(30%)
- Applications refused	107	(27%)
- Prisoner declined parole	50	(13%)
- Other*	11	(3%)

PAROLE APPLICATIONS FROM LIFERS

Number of parole applications heard in 2014	10
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- Lifers granted parole	3	(30%)
- Applications undetermined (deferred)	7	(70%)
- Denied	0	(0%)
- Prisoner declined parole	0	(0%)

PAROLE CONDITIONS VARIED

Number of parole orders varied	31
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* Other: noted, amended parole order etc.

REVOCAION REPORTS

Number of revocation reports received by Parole Board	106
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Outcomes

- Parole revoked by the Board	28
- Parole revoked out of session (Chairman)	26
- Warning letter sent	17
- Stern warning letter sent	10
- No Action	8
- Request further information / deferred	11
- Amend parole order	6

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Number of freedom of information applications	12
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PAROLE ORDERS TRANSFERRED TO ANOTHER JURISDICTION

- South Australia	1 (Lifer)
- Queensland	1

BREACHES RESULTING IN PAROLE REVOCATION

Number of breaches resulting in reimprisonment	65
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Type of breach

- Conditional	58	(89%)
- Re-offending	7	(11%)

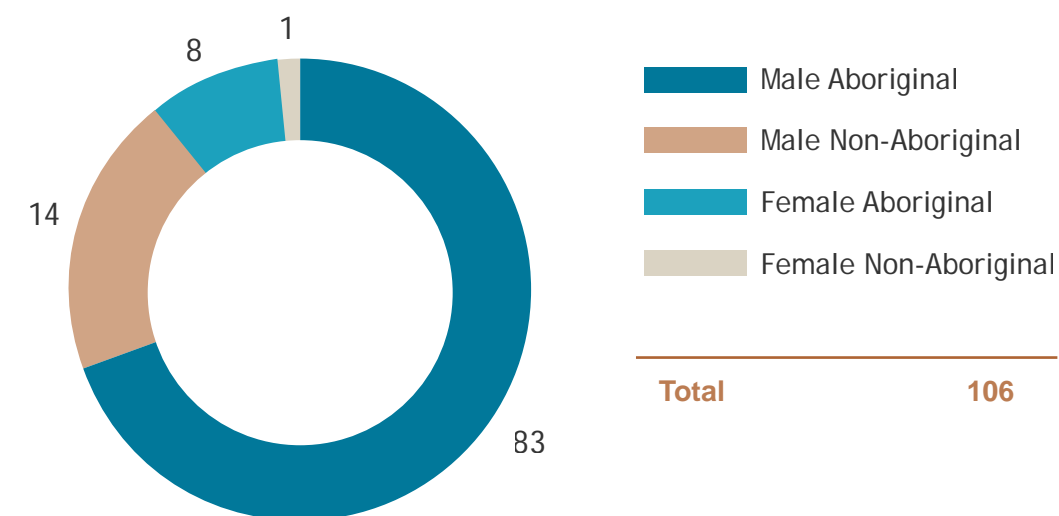
ADDITIONAL PAROLE CONDITIONS SET

Non-consumption of Alcohol	112
Breath Testing	112
Non-consumption of Drugs	52
Urinalysis	52
Residence	
- Treatment/Program	56
- Community/Outstation	35
Counselling	
- Sex Offender Treatment	2
- General assessment, treatment and/or counselling	96
- other *	18
Nil Contact – Victim	63
Nil Contact – Children	6
Home Detention	6
Surveillance	32
Electronic Monitoring	6
Not to be subject to domestic violence order	69
Other **	44

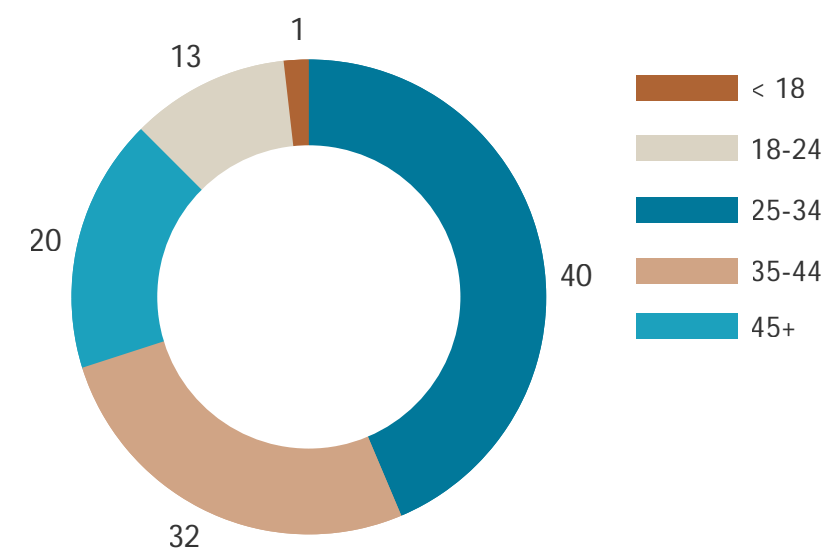
* Includes: mental health counselling, specific anger management, drug and alcohol counselling, Family Violence Program

** Includes: not visit specified communities; not to leave Australia; maintain employment; curfew; not possess firearm/prohibited weapon; not to associate with or harm certain persons.

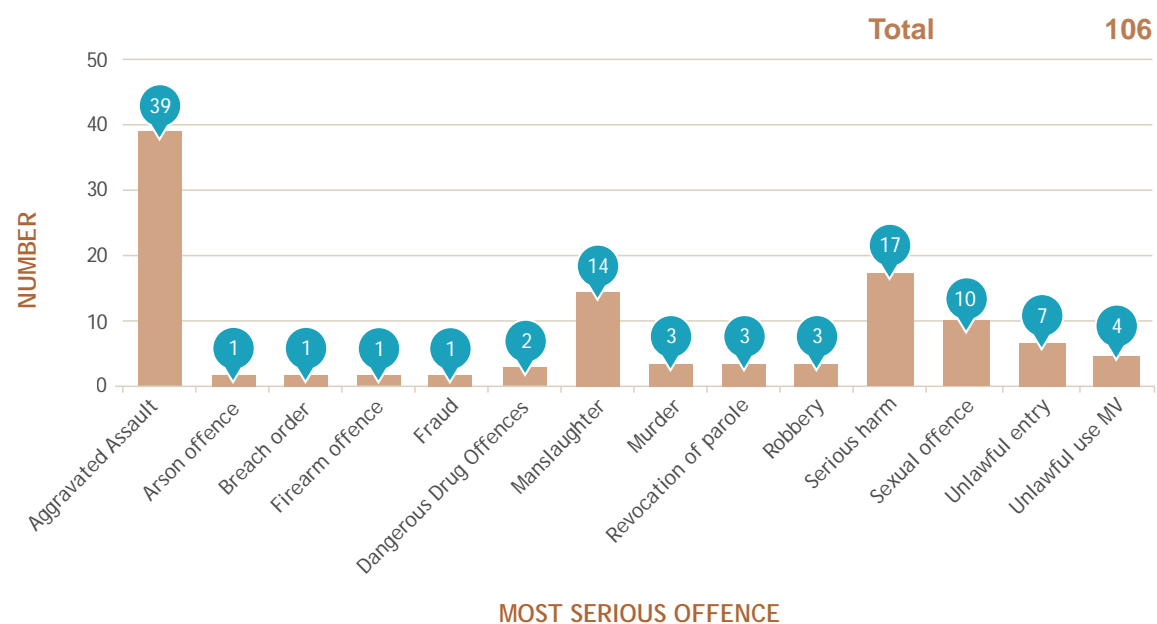
CHARACTERISTICS OF PRISONERS RELEASED TO PAROLE DURING 2014 BY SEX AND ABORIGINALITY



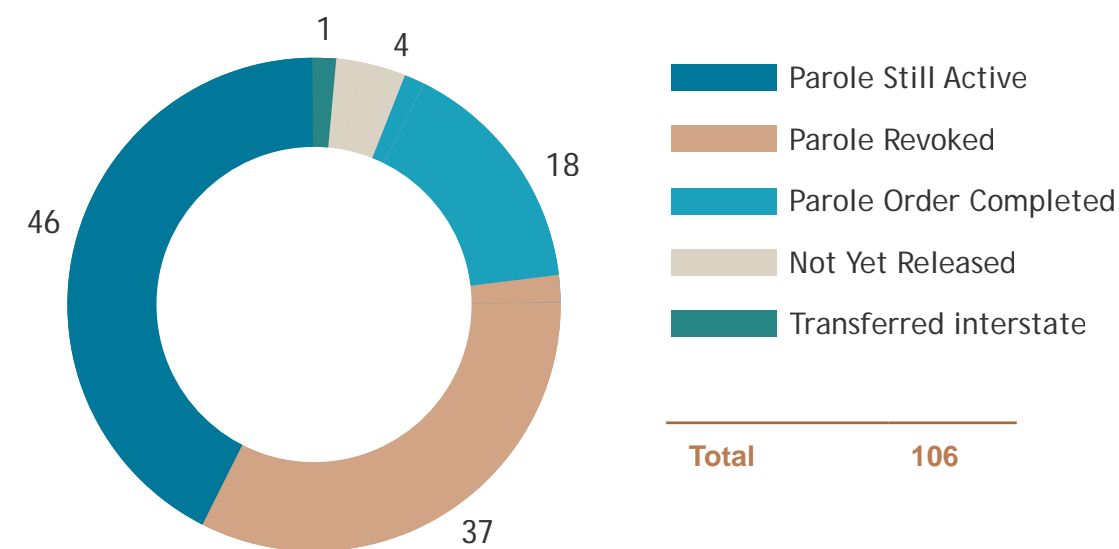
PRISONERS RELEASED TO PAROLE DURING 2014 BY AGE



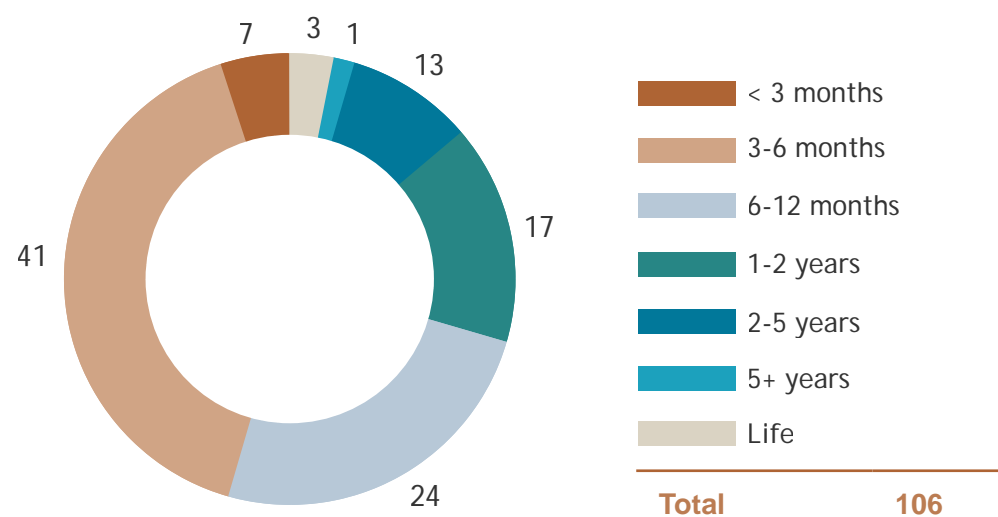
**PRISONERS RELEASED TO PAROLE DURING 2014
BY MOST SERIOUS OFFENCE CATAGORY**



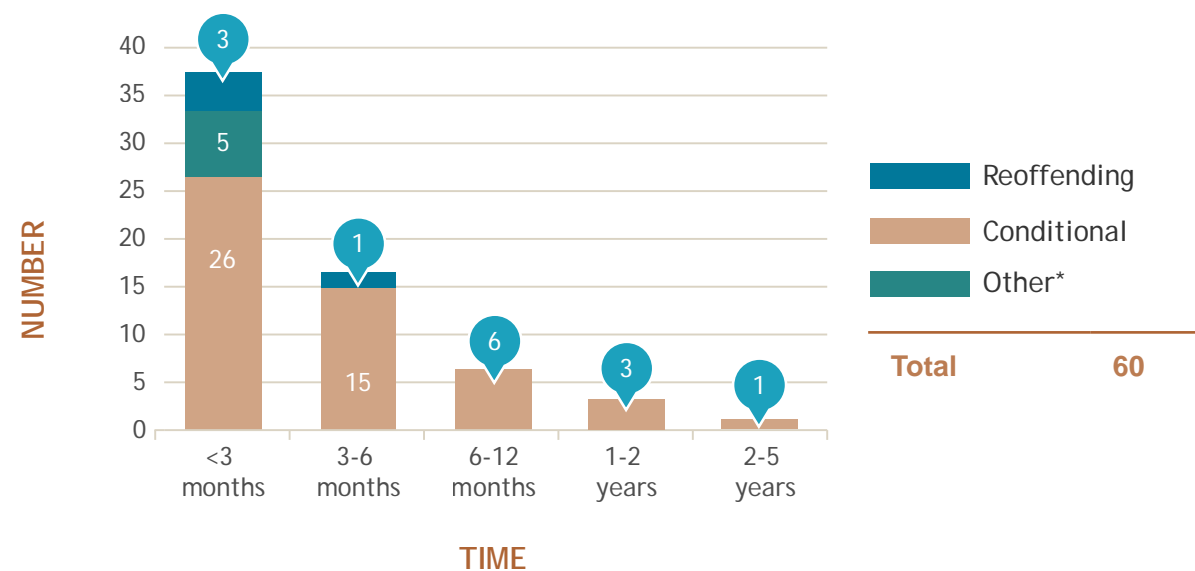
OUTCOMES OF PRISONERS RELEASED TO PAROLE DURING 2014



**LENGTH OF PAROLE FOR PRISONERS RELEASED
TO PAROLE DURING 2014**

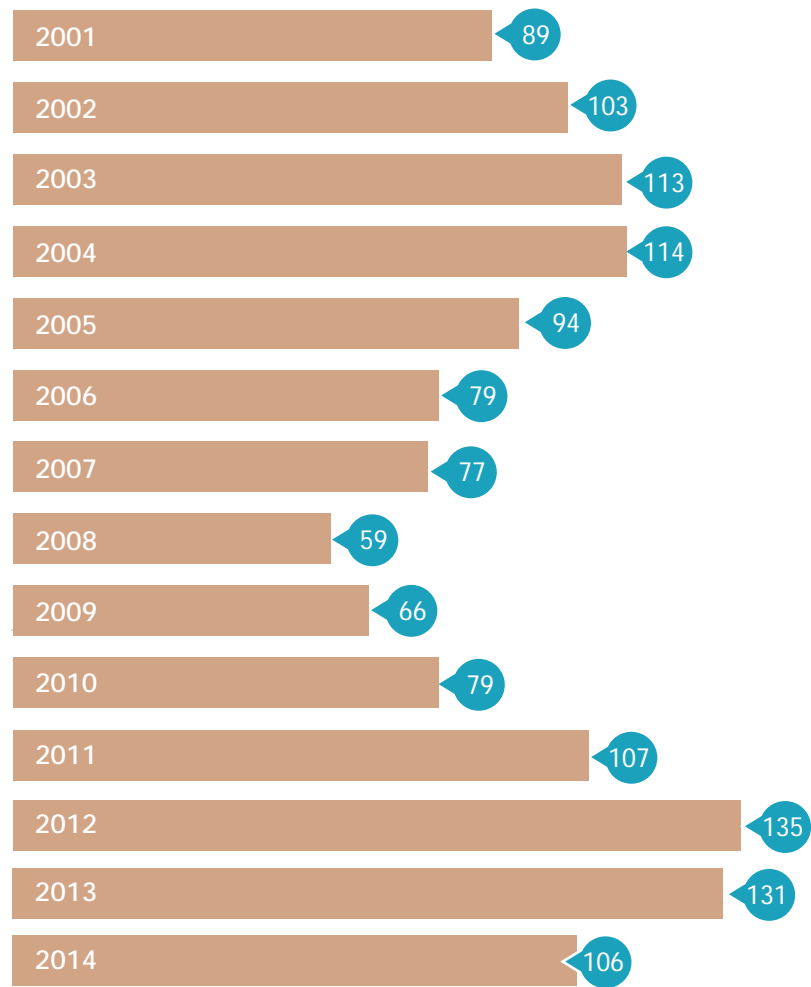


**PERIOD ON PAROLE PRIOR TO REVOCATION
- CONDITIONAL AND RE-OFFENDING 2014**

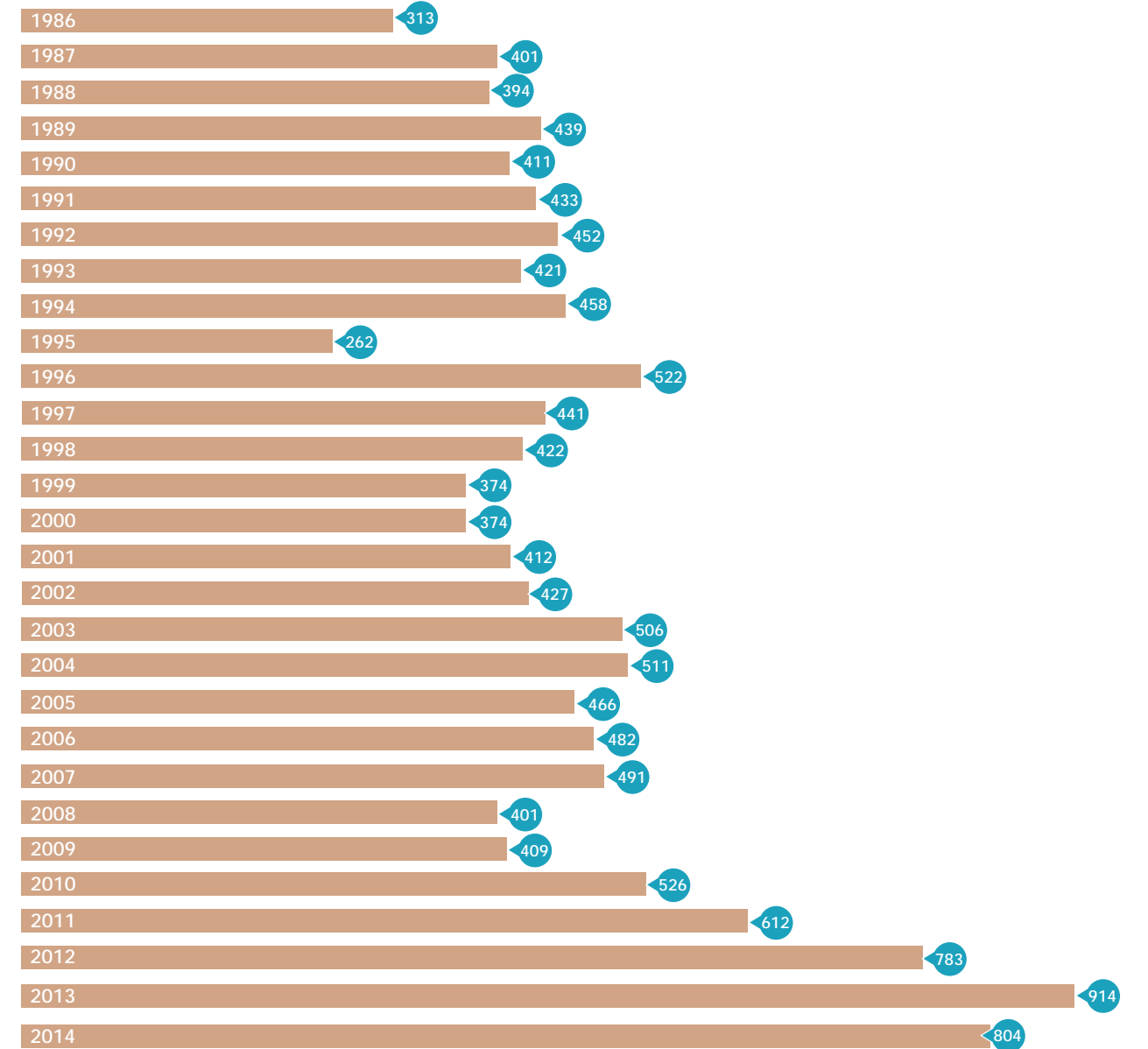


*Includes prisoners who had their parole revoked prior to release from prison

PRISONERS RELEASED TO PAROLE 2001 - 2014



ANNUAL TOTAL OF ITEMS OF BUSINESS 1986 - 2014



PARTNERSHIPS

Parolees face many barriers to successful reintegration in the community that place them at risk of re-offending, including difficulties securing accommodation and employment.

To try and overcome the barriers to reintegration, the Department of Correctional Services entered into partnerships with NAAJA and CAALAS aimed at expanding the amount of throughcare available to prisoners and parolees. These organisations had developed their own throughcare programs which are and were relied on to complement and supplement the throughcare provided by the Community Corrections Division of the Department of Correctional Services.

The purpose of throughcare is to assist prisoners who are on parole to set realistic goals, identify appropriate support networks and maintain practical plans for re-integration in the community.

North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA)

NAAJA has established a Prison Support Officer Project and an Indigenous ThroughCare Project.

The Prison Support Officer Project started in September 2009. It has two Prison Support Officers who are based at the Darwin Correctional Centre. Their roles include:

- Supporting Aboriginal prisoners applying for parole by liaising between the prisoner and their parole officer and providing access to legal advice and representation.
- Providing some post-release support to selected Aboriginal prisoners leaving prison to reside in the Darwin region after serving an extended sentence.
- Making referrals to the Darwin Correctional Centre's Prisoner Services for prisoners with complex needs, including substance abuse and mental health issues to assist them prepare for release.

NAAJA's Indigenous ThroughCare Project started in February 2010. It has

four case managers who each provide case management for up to 15 Aboriginal clients. Their roles include:

- Accepting referrals of clients, including from the Darwin Correctional Centre, the NAAJA Prison Support Officer, external service providers or the family of Aboriginal prisoners.
- Assessing the transitional needs of Aboriginal prisoners prior to their release, interviewing Aboriginal prisoners individually to determine their needs for rehabilitation, accommodation, family support and employment prospects.
- Developing individual case management plans in partnership with the prisoners who will have identified their goals upon their release.
- Identifying relevant services that can be accessed to achieve their transitional goals upon release.
- Working in partnership with key stakeholders to provide the essential services to contribute to the success of transition from prison back into the community. These include community groups and government agencies.

Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service (CAALAS)

Due to a reduction in their funding, CAALAS no longer provides a prisoner support service. The history of CAALAS' partnership with the Board and the Department of Correctional Services is as follows.

In 2011 Northern Territory Correctional Services worked with CAALAS to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to guide two programs:

- Prisoner Support Program; and
- Youth Justice Advocacy Project.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed and came into effect on 23 March 2012. The objectives of the Prisoners Support Program were to:

- Assist Aboriginal prisoners to understand parole by explaining the process of parole and the role of parole officers and the Board.
- Assist Aboriginal prisoners to successfully obtain and complete parole by:
 - Raising their awareness of the factors contributing to their offending behaviours; and

- Helping them identify appropriate rehabilitation programs to be completed while in custody and upon release.

- Assist Aboriginal prisoners to develop viable post-release plans with due consideration for community safety and the victims of crime.
- Make submissions to the Parole Board on behalf of prisoners making an application for parole.

From March 2012 until their funding was cut, CAALAS worked closely with Correctional Services and the Board to:

- help prisoners develop suitable release plans and provide them with support in the community; and
- make submissions on behalf of prisoners who were applying for parole.

AMENDMENTS TO LEGISLATION IN 2014

In 2014, the *Parole of Prisoners Act* saw two amendments. The first was a consequential amendment that modified the name of the Act to the *Parole Act* when the new *Correctional Services Act* was introduced in November 2014.

The second amendment, also in November 2014, was a more substantial amendment whereby the Act was modified to allow the members appointed under section 3B(1)(d), a medical practitioner or registered psychologist, to attend any meeting. As the current legislation stood, these members were only able to attend meetings considering parole applications for prisoners serving a sentence of life imprisonment for the crime of murder.

The amendments increased the constitution of the Board (for general matters) by adding a discretionary seventh psychologist/medical professional member who, where it is considered appropriate by the Chairperson, may now be invited to meetings where the Board will be considering matters of particular seriousness and complexity. There was no change to the quorum of the Board for general meetings and the psychologist/medical professional is already an appointed member of the Board.

PROJECTS

Taking the Parole Board Paperless

Work commenced in late 2011 into researching options to electronically manage Parole Board meetings and deliver documents to members.

In 2013, the development, testing and implementation of the remaining IOMS enhancements were completed and the primary focus of the project moved to eScribe. Significant work was undertaken with the developers and key stakeholders to support the introduction of eScribe in a manner that was compatible with the requirements of the Northern Territory Government and maintained the confidentiality and security of the material provided to the Board.

eScribe was initially trialled by a select group of members of the Board in October and November 2013 before going live for all members in December 2013. Members were provided with a one on one training session to assist them in learning the product and on-site support was also made available at the meeting.

Members continued to receive hard copy files for the January and February 2014 meetings whilst transitioning to the new system. From March 2014 meetings of the Board became completely paperless.

eScribe has proven to be a much more efficient way for members to receive and access all of the documents which they must consider at each meeting of the Board. Paperless meetings are now business as usual for the Parole Board and will continue to be into the future.

Development of Aboriginal Language Resources

Following a tender which was awarded in 2013, Community Corrections worked with Creative Territory and the Aboriginal Interpreting Service to undertake a project to design and implement a suite of educational resources that are available in plain written English and, once completed, will be available in audio in nine Indigenous languages.

The resources will be utilised by Community Corrections staff using an iPad application and will be available to other agencies and the wider public via the Correctional Services website.

The resources are a tool to assist in increasing understanding amongst offenders, their families and communities; they are not designed to replace the case management work undertaken by the Probation and Parole Officer or the role of an interpreter.

The project encompasses three separate pieces of work, including:

- information about 16 common conditions placed on Court Orders and Parole Orders plus picture icons and wallet cards;
- 2 eStories to be displayed on an iPad (Court Orders and Parole Orders); and
- 12 factsheets that provide information about: the conditions of parole; the obligations of parolees while being supervised by Community Corrections; and the role of Probation and Parole Officers.

Extensive consultation and testing of resources has been conducted and, following staff training in June 2015, the resources will be officially launched and implemented operationally. The resources will be known as the Indigenous Language Resources.

Parole Board Members Manual

In June 2013, Community Corrections commenced the development of a Manual for Parole Board members.

The Manual was prepared as a collaborative exercise with sections being written by relevant parties who hold particular expertise and knowledge.

The purpose of the Manual is to:

- maintain and enhance the quality of decision making and management of parole matters by the board;
- provide a detailed description of the legislative, administrative and enforcement framework in which the Board members are required to operate;
- maintain the high ethical standards that have been adopted and followed by the Board;
- explain the procedure which is followed when a prisoner applies for parole;

- delineate the decision making framework, which emphasises community safety; and
- increase the transparency and accountability of the Board's decision making process and support probation and parole officers, other stakeholders and educate the members of the public.

The manual was finalised in late 2014 and is available on the Parole Board website.

Parole Board Training Workshop

Training workshops are an essential element of the professional development of Parole Board members.

Workshops provide an opportunity to:

- share information about current developments in the Department that impact on prisoners;
- deliver training and share information on contemporary practices and research in relation to offender management and the work of the Parole Board; and
- receive feedback from members on the current operations of the Parole Board and any matters that may be of concern for them.

A workshop was held on 10 May 2014. The one day workshop presented an opportunity to introduce the newly appointed members of the Board to their counterparts and Correctional Services staff as well as the opportunity to discuss the operation of the recently created second Board.

Also discussed was the Policy and Procedures Manual for members outlining what was being updated and amended. With the recent introduction of paperless meetings and the use of iPads, the workshop allowed members to discuss any difficulties they were having with the new program and also the benefits of moving to paperless meetings.

The workshop saw presentations from a number of Correctional Services staff regarding a range of current projects and topics relevant to the Parole Board, including work release for prisoners and the Sentenced to a Job program, treatment and clinical programs available within the prisons, new sentencing initiatives such as administrative home detention and electronic monitoring, changes to the sentence management manual and prisoner security ratings and an update on prisoner work camps.

AUSTRALASIAN PAROLE AUTHORITIES CONFERENCE 2014

The Australasian Parole Authorities Conference is held annually and is hosted by different states and territories each year, with attendees from across Australia and New Zealand. The conference is intended to allow attendees to exchange ideas and information concerning current issues regarding parole.

The aim of the annual conference is to facilitate proactive discussion between parole authorities in order to determine both best practice and innovative ways of addressing emerging common issues.

The Parole Board of the Northern Territory hosted the conference for 2014 held at the Darwin Convention Centre with the overarching theme 'Throughcare and Community'.

Over 100 delegates attended the conference to hear speakers such as Justice Jenny Blokland of the NT Supreme Court, Judge Michael Bourke of the Youth Parole Board of Victoria, Professor Patrick Keyzer of La Trobe University and Ms Debbie Boar of the Harlem Community Justice Centre (New York) on the Parole re-entry courts.

The delegates also visited the new Darwin Correctional Centre and attended a number of social events.

The feedback from the conference was very positive, especially from interstate delegates; it was clear that they enjoyed their visit to Darwin.

Further information on the Australasian Parole Authorities Conference can be found on the website:

<http://www.apac2014.com.au>

CONTACT DETAILS

For more information on the Parole Board contact the Parole Board Administrator:

Postal Address: GPO Box 3196 Darwin NT 0801

Phone: (08) 8935 7477

Fax: (08) 8935 7734

Web: www.paroleboard.nt.gov.au

Email: ParoleAdministrator.NTDCS@nt.gov.au



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