

Report summary

This report examines how effectively Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) plans for and facilitates the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners.



What is important to know about this audit?

Corrective services contribute to preventing crime, lowering the number of future victims, and promoting long-term social safety and wellbeing by reducing reoffending. QCS aims to achieve this through the delivery of effective and targeted rehabilitation and reintegration services.

QCS is responsible for rehabilitating prisoners in Queensland. Prisoner rehabilitation involves providing prisoners with education, job training, meaningful activities, and a structured day and programs, which collectively address the root causes of their offending behaviour.

QCS is also responsible for helping prisoners reintegrate back into the community after their release. This transitional support involves connecting prisoners to the right services and ensuring they have the right support.

Figure A
Statistics about Queensland's correctional system, as at 30 June 2025



Note: The 44 per cent reflects prisoners released from a correctional centre who returned with a new sentence within 2 years. The 20 correctional centres include Lockyer Valley Correctional Centre which opened in September 2025.

Source: Queensland Audit Office compiled using public information.

Better practice, including the Guiding Principles for Corrections in Australia, places effective case management at the centre of prisoner rehabilitation. It involves assessing prisoner risks and needs, and planning and facilitating access to the programs and services they need. This includes rehabilitation and wellbeing programs, education, employment, reintegration, and structured routines.



What did we find?

A more effective delivery model for case management is needed to support achievement of QCS rehabilitation and reintegration strategies

QCS has designed its strategies with key elements of an effective approach to rehabilitation and reintegration but has not effectually operationalised or delivered against them. Its case management framework aligns with better practice and provides the foundation for delivering against its strategies and operational plans.



QCS is using its case management framework in 9 of its 20 correctional centres but lacks data to determine how effectively it is being applied. Case management only occurs in limited and varying circumstances in the remaining 11 centres. While QCS sought to fully implement case management across all centres, it has been unable to do so due to factors such as prisoner numbers, resourcing, and funding constraints. This means those prisoners who do receive case management do so more based on location and circumstance rather than risk or potential for successful outcomes. QCS has not identified a preferred alternative delivery model, such as a risk and cohort-based implementation, to target delivery across centres and optimise the benefits of case management.

Without effective case management QCS cannot tailor interventions to provide structure and address rehabilitation and reintegration risks and needs

QCS has a suite of evidence-based rehabilitation programs, however, only some prisoners are completing these programs. Its limited use of case management has compromised its ability to assess and develop individual plans for most prisoners tailored to their risk behaviours and needs. This means they do not get the integrated structure, programs, education, and employment tailored to their rehabilitation and reintegration needs. The increasing prisoner population and limited infrastructure has further impacted QCS’s ability to deliver the programs, education, and employment that prisoners need.

QCS does not have an effective approach to reintegration

Preparing prisoners to reintegrate back into the community needs to start from the time a prisoner enters custody, but this planning is not occurring across many correctional centres. For suitable low-risk prisoners, transitioning to low security centres can be an important bridge between custody and reintegration into the community. However, QCS is yet to plan for how it can safely and effectively use low security correctional centres to their capacity.

Less than half of all prisoners that left custody in 2024–25 received pre-release support, such as help setting up bank accounts and support accessing services and legal advice. This impacts QCS’s ability to help prisoners successfully reintegrate back into the community. QCS can more effectively monitor its reintegration services to determine if they are achieving their intended outcomes.



What do entities need to do?

We make 5 recommendations to QCS. These focus on the following themes:

- strengthening its planning approach
- monitoring and overseeing performance
- case management
- data capture and reporting
- reintegration services.