

# Follow up—Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community

Report to Parliament 4 : 2013–14



---

Queensland Audit Office

Location Level 14, 53 Albert Street, Brisbane Qld 4000

PO Box 15396, City East Qld 4002

Telephone (07) 3149 6000

Email [qao@qao.qld.gov.au](mailto:qao@qao.qld.gov.au)

Online [www.qao.qld.gov.au](http://www.qao.qld.gov.au)

---

© The State of Queensland. Queensland Audit Office (2013)

Copyright protects this publication except for purposes permitted by the *Copyright Act 1968*.  
Reproduction by whatever means is prohibited without the prior written permission of the  
Auditor-General of Queensland. Reference to this document is permitted only with  
appropriate acknowledgement.



Front cover image is an edited photograph of Queensland Parliament, taken by QAO.

ISSN 1834-1128

Your ref:  
Our ref: 2013-9112P



October 2013

The Honourable F Simpson MP  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Madam Speaker

**Report to Parliament**

This report is prepared under Part 3 Division 3 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, and is titled Follow up - Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community.

In accordance with s.67 of the Act, would you please arrange for the report to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Greaves', is written over a light grey circular stamp.

Andrew Greaves  
Auditor-General

# Contents

<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Conclusions .....	1
Findings .....	1
Reference to agency comments (Appendix 1) .....	2
<b>1. Context .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Background .....	3
1.2 Audit objective, method and cost .....	4
1.3 Structure of this report .....	4
<b>2. Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Background .....	6
2.2 Conclusion .....	6
2.3 Findings .....	6
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Appendix A—Agency comments.....	16
Appendix B—Audit details.....	19

# Summary

Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) is an operational unit of the Department of Community Safety (the department). Its purpose under the *Corrective Services Act 2006* is to provide community safety and crime prevention through the humane containment, supervision and rehabilitation of offenders.

In 2011 the Queensland Audit Office conducted a performance management systems audit which examined whether the systems and processes in place in QCS to manage offenders in the community were efficient, effective and economical.

The subsequent report to Parliament, Report No 1 for 2011: Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community included seven recommendations that the department accepted. The audit raised issues in the quality of supervision and rehabilitation services provided. These included staff issues such as training delays and high workloads and a lack of evaluation of offender programs and interventions for effectiveness.

This audit follows up on the department's progress and effectiveness in implementing the seven recommendations of Report to Parliament No 1 for 2011: Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community.

## Conclusions

There is a range of factors which can, directly or indirectly, contribute to offenders returning to the corrections system. Some of these are within the control of QCS and many are outside its direct influence. Nevertheless, QCS can do more to effectively address those factors it does control and that were identified through the recommendations in Report to Parliament No 1 for 2011, such as program evaluation, staff training and workload.

QCS has taken steps to address all of the seven recommendations of Report to Parliament No 1 for 2011, with four of these implemented fully. Some of the more difficult recommendations which relate to the quality of service provision to offenders—such as program evaluation and staff workloads—are yet to be implemented fully.

QCS provides its probation and parole service at a cost well below the national average, but it achieves this with a relatively high offender to staff ratio and without evaluating the effectiveness of all its interventions and programs. The low cost of the probation and parole service provided by QCS is a false economy while the number of offenders returning to the system continues to increase. The rate of return has been higher than the national average since 2009-10 and has been increasing, while the national average has not.

The challenge for QCS is getting the balance right. Investing appropriately in services that reduce reoffending can pay significant dividends in total cost savings, by reducing the prison population and the numbers of offenders being supervised in the community.

## Findings

Between the 2007-08 and 2012-13 financial years, the percentage of offenders who returned to either probation and parole, or prison within two years of completing their community orders increased from 20.4 per cent to 34.1 per cent. In 2010-11, when the audit was conducted, the percentage of returning offenders was 30.7 per cent. This results in additional workload on the justice and corrections systems and increased costs for the community.

QCS reports on two key efficiency measures for probation and parole: cost per offender per day and offender to staff ratio. QCS has consistently had a lower cost per offender per day and a higher offender to staff ratio than the national average. It has the second lowest cost of supervision per offender per day at \$14.20 in 2011-12 and \$13.64 in 2012-13.

Contributing to the low cost is the high ratio of offenders to operational staff, which has consistently been well above the national average over the previous six years. Furthermore, while the Queensland trend in offender to staff ratio has been increasing over this period, the national average has been decreasing. While the number of offenders supervised by each operational staff member provides a measure of efficient resource management by QCS, increased workloads can limit the capacity of staff to provide appropriate, timely and quality supervision to offenders.

QCS instigated the People, Resourcing, Innovation, Supervision and Management (PRISM) program to address issues relating to resourcing and the supervision of offenders in the community. Six intended deliverables of the PRISM program have not been delivered. These relate to the evaluation and ongoing management of aspects of the program. For this reason QCS is unable to identify whether the intended benefits of the program are being achieved.

QCS trialed a biometric reporting system as part of the PRISM program in 2011. This involved offenders scanning their fingerprint and answering a number of questions on a computer screen to reduce the frequency of face to face reporting to a case officer. The system was intended to service low risk offenders and improve staff workloads and has now been implemented across the state. No cost-benefit analysis or plans for an evaluation of the long term effects of biometric reporting have been done. The short term effectiveness is also uncertain, due to the limitations of a six-month evaluation of the pilot program. There was some improvement in assessment officer workload, but no improvement in workloads for reporting and case management officers. The reporting and case management officers are responsible for the ongoing supervision and management of offenders.

QCS has taken measures to address knowledge gaps in staff managing high risk sexual offenders identified in the 2011 audit. It has developed and implemented operational practice guidelines for case managers working with offenders under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003*. Case managers have received specialist training to achieve consistency of knowledge between the High Risk Offenders Management Unit (HROMU) and regional offices. Previously regional case managers were supervising high risk sexual offenders with limited legislative knowledge and a higher caseload than their colleagues at the HROMU. Monitoring of caseloads for regional case managers commenced in May 2013; however, there has not been a reduction in caseloads.

The 2011 audit identified delays of up to 12 months in training for new staff managing offenders. QCS has updated and improved timeliness of training for probation and parole staff through the provision of online training. Online training is intended to complement in-person training at the QCS Training Academy.

## Reference to agency comments (Appendix 1)

In accordance with section 64 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, a copy of this report was provided to the Department of Community Safety with a request for comments. The Departments' views have been considered in reaching our audit conclusions and are represented to the extent relevant and warranted in preparing this report.

The full comments received are included in Appendix A of this report.

# 1 Context

---

## 1.1 Background

Managing offenders in the community under parole and court orders is the responsibility of Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) which is a division of the Department of Community Safety. The *Corrective Services Act 2006* defines the purpose of corrective services as providing community safety and crime prevention through the humane containment, supervision and rehabilitation of offenders.

The rehabilitation of offenders can be influenced directly and indirectly by a range of factors, some within the control of QCS and many others outside its control. These include employment, support of family, friends and community, accommodation and education and training opportunities.

In 2011, we conducted a performance management systems audit to determine whether there were appropriate systems in place to manage offenders efficiently, effectively and economically in the community.

The audit, through Report to Parliament No 1 for 2011: Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community concluded:

- QCS was adequate at measuring effectiveness at very high levels but not at operational or program levels
- key performance measures were not reported consistently in external reports
- the evaluation of the effectiveness of offender management was not effective
- transition of prisoners from prison to community supervision was not coordinated effectively
- not all internal offender intervention programs were evaluated and no external programs were accredited nor evaluated for effectiveness
- there were delays of up to 12 months in training new case officers
- there was a significant gap in knowledge and workload between Brisbane and regional staff supervising offenders subject to orders under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003*.

All of these findings had the potential to affect service delivery to offenders and meant that QCS did not have systems that allowed for the most effective supervision and rehabilitation of offenders. For example, transitional support is important to help offenders to resettle into the community and lower the risk of them reoffending. Rehabilitation programs and interventions to offenders are also intended to prevent reoffending and returns to the corrections system.

QCS commenced its People, Resourcing, Innovation, Supervision and Management (PRISM) program in 2009. It was a business improvement strategy to address issues such as workforce planning and flexibility, offender case management, offender risk management and resource allocation. The program objective was to '*future proof Probation and Parole*', delivering a service that was capable of delivering quality supervision within available resources. In its response to the 2011 audit, QCS identified that the initiatives intended by PRISM would address the key issues of resourcing and offender management identified by the audit.

## 1.2 Audit objective, method and cost

The objective of this audit was to determine the progress and effectiveness of QCS in implementing the seven recommendations of Report to Parliament No 1 for 2011.

QCS provided an update and supporting documentation on the implementation of each of the recommendations. From this we identified further areas for risk based checks to gain assurance on the agency actions. The review included testing the documentary evidence and conducting interviews to clarify agency responses.

The audit cost was \$68 000.

## 1.3 Structure of the report

The report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 examines the progress of implementation of recommendations for Report No 1 for 2011: Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community
- Appendix A contains responses received.



## 2 Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community

---

### In brief

#### **Background**

Report to Parliament No 1 for 2011: Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community identified that Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) did not measure effectiveness adequately at operational levels. QCS did not know how effective it was in delivering quality programs and interventions to rehabilitate offenders and reduce the risk of reoffending.

#### **Conclusions**

While QCS has been efficient in supervising offenders in the community its effectiveness has not improved. The percentage of offenders returning to prison and community corrections within two years of completing their orders has continued to increase since the audit. The increasing offender to operational staff ratios, and a lower than national average daily cost of supervision, all have the potential to affect the quality of service provided to offenders.

#### **Key findings**

- QCS has implemented four of the recommendations and partially implemented the remaining three.
- The percentage of offenders returning to prison and community corrections has increased to more than 34 per cent.
- Because QCS has not delivered on six components of PRISM it is unable to identify whether the intended benefits from resourcing and staffing changes are being achieved.
- Queensland has the second highest offender to operational staff ratio in Australia and this is showing an upward trend while the national average is showing a downward trend.
- QCS has trialed and implemented biometric reporting to manage low risk offenders across Queensland without rigorous evaluation.
- QCS programs to change offending behaviour of Indigenous and high risk offenders are yet to be evaluated in 2013.
- Staff training has improved and waiting times have been reduced; however, the risk remains that staff with insufficient training are managing offenders.

## 2.1 Background

Community based supervision provides offenders with opportunities to remain connected with their communities, to access community and family support and to maintain accommodation and employment. The ability to manage offenders effectively, efficiently and economically is essential to raise the confidence of the Parliament, the judiciary and the public in the supervision of offenders in the community.

Report to Parliament No 1 for 2011: Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community made seven recommendations. The report recommended that the Department of Community Safety:

- evaluates the effectiveness of offender management and intervention programs
- addresses staffing issues such as training, knowledge and workloads; and
- aligns public reporting of key performance measures.

We examined agency progress and effectiveness in implementing the recommendations made by the audit. We expected to find that:

- recommendations had been implemented
- performance or systems issues had been addressed
- plans or programs were in place to progress implementation of recommendations not yet completed.

## 2.2 Conclusions

Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) has taken steps to address all of the seven recommendations of Report to Parliament No 1 for 2011: Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community. Four recommendations have been implemented fully. The more difficult recommendations relating to the quality of service provision to offenders, such as program evaluation and staff workload are yet to be implemented fully.

Increasing numbers of offenders returning to the corrections system has both social and economic effects on the community. The rehabilitation of offenders is extremely complex and represents a difficult challenge which is not the sole responsibility of QCS. Rehabilitation can be determined by any number of factors many of which are outside the control of QCS. Nevertheless, QCS has an important and legislated role as a contributor to the rehabilitation of offenders.

With more than 34 per cent of offenders who complete their orders returning to the corrective services within two years, and with this figure increasing, there is a need for QCS to ensure it addresses factors under its control effectively to improve quality of service to offenders.

Evaluating the effectiveness of offender programs and interventions; ensuring workloads and training allow staff to provide quality service; providing effective support to prisoners transitioning to the community; and working toward a staff mix that better reflect offender diversity could improve the quality of offender management.

## 2.3 Findings

QCS has implemented four and partially implemented three of the seven recommendations of Report to Parliament No 1 for 2011. Figure 2A shows the implementation status of the recommendations.

**Figure 2A**  
**Queensland Audit Office assessment of the implementation status of recommendations**

Recommendation	I	P
<b>It is recommended the Department of Community Safety:</b>		
1. Align public reporting to ensure greater consistency of key performance measures between the Service Delivery Statement, Annual Report and the performance information provided for the Report on Government Services.	I	
2. Establish comprehensive processes and measures to evaluate the effectiveness of offender management, specifically for the aims of breaking the cycle of reoffending and improving community safety and confidence.		P
3. Establish processes to develop greater consistency in case load and legislative knowledge between the High Risk Offender Management Unit and Regional Case Managers.	I	
4. Establish processes to improve coordination of services between Custodial Operations and the Probation and Parole Directorate, including the evaluation of the effectiveness of Transitional Coordinators.	I	
5. Ensure all staff at all levels of offender management receive timely and sufficient training, before, or immediately on commencing duties.	I	
6. Develop strategies to provide a staff mix that better reflects the offender diversity in accordance with Section 6.7 of the Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia-revised 2004.		P
7. Ensure accreditation and evaluation of all intervention programs and continue the development of Indigenous programs to ensure relevance and effectiveness.		P
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>

I - Recommendation has been fully implemented

P - Recommendation has been partially implemented

Source: Queensland Audit Office

## 2.3.1 Offender management

### Reporting

In 2011, reporting by QCS on performance measures in its three public reports was inconsistent. Its public reporting of performance is through the Department of Community Safety's annual report, service delivery statement and the Commonwealth Report on Government Services. QCS has since aligned its performance measures in the three public documents and now reports its performance more consistently.

There are two public reporting measures common to the three public documents. These are the number of completed supervision orders and the cost of supervision per offender per day.

## Returns to corrections

An offender can return to corrective services in two ways: either to prison or to probation and parole. There is a broad range of factors, many outside the direct control of QCS that can contribute to offenders returning to corrective services after completing their orders. Individual circumstance, psychological and social issues and economic capacity are factors that can be difficult for QCS to isolate and address. Because of the range of potential contributing factors, it is often difficult to establish any direct cause of an offender returning to corrective services.

More than one third of community corrections offenders returned to corrective services in 2012-13. This is 13.7 percentage points higher than 2007-08 and is consistently higher than the national average, which has been decreasing over this period. Figure 2B shows the percentage of community corrections offenders who returned to corrective services within 2 years of discharge.

**Figure 2B**  
Community corrections offenders who returned to corrective services under sentence within two years (per cent)

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
<b>Queensland</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>32.2</b>	<b>34.1</b>
South Australia	20.7	22.3	23.5	25.2	24.2	N/A*
New South Wales	28.3	27.8	23.9	23.1	21.5	N/A*
Tasmania	21.6	20.1	26.3	25.2	23.8	N/A*
Western Australia	40.1	41.1	40.6	22.2	17.6	N/A*
Northern Territory	27.3	27.4	27.6	32.7	28.2	N/A*
Victoria	N/A	20.1	19.9	21.7	21.3	N/A*
<b>National</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>N/A*</b>

\* National 2012-13 figures not available until January 2014

Sources: *Report on Government Services and Queensland Corrective Services*

QCS does not collect information from returning offenders to assess effectiveness of past interventions.

## Transitions from prison

Transition from custody to supervision in the community is potentially a risky period for offenders for reoffending or breaching parole. Coordination and integration of transitional support provided by Custodial Operations and the Probation and Parole Directorate was found in the 2011 audit to be ineffective.

Transition programs are intended to help offenders reintegrate into the community after being released from prison. Transitional support should identify and address risk factors such as accommodation, substance abuse, gambling, domestic violence and relationship support.

As part of the merging of the Probation and Parole and Custodial directorates in 2012, all correctional centres and probation and parole regions have regional integration plans. The QCS operational plan for 2012-13 includes developing a model for parole release and transition management by aligning management of the transitions program and transitional and offender reintegration support services. This model was implemented in 2012 and integrates the transitional support program, transition program and the offender reintegration support service. The Offender Reintegration Branch has responsibility for the offender reintegration model. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of these changes; however, these measures represent an improved effort to coordinate and integrate transitional services.

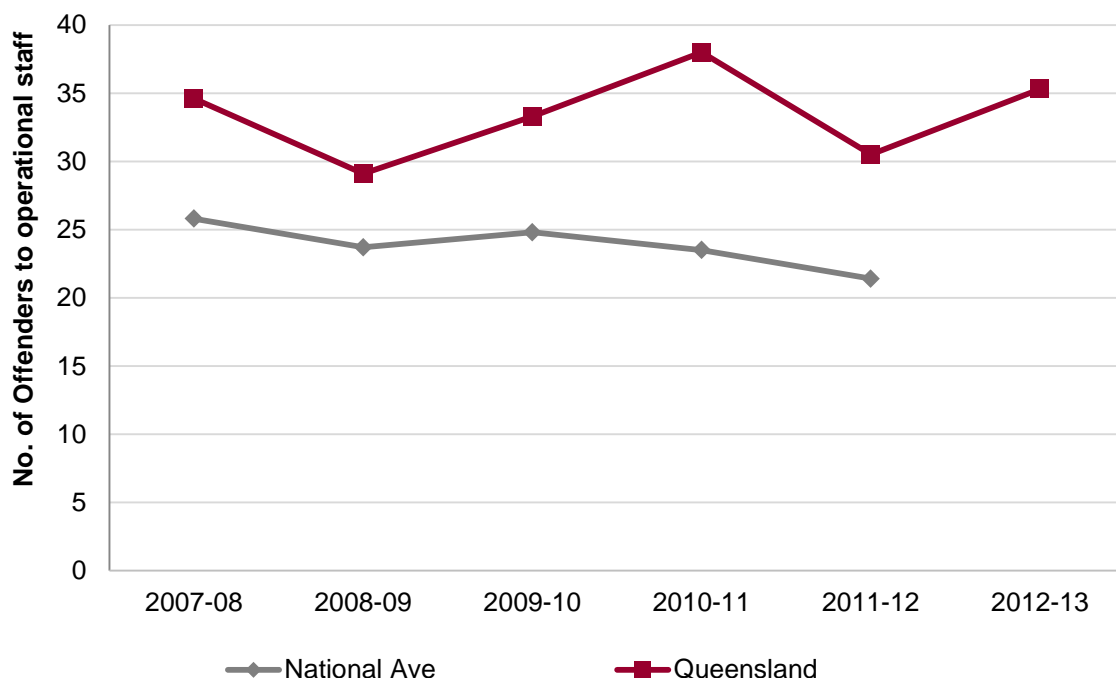
### Ratio of offenders to operational staff

The PRISM program was intended to address the issue of workforce planning, offender case management and offender risk management.

Up to 75 per cent of offenders under community supervision are reporting weekly or fortnightly to probation and parole staff. This level of supervision requires more staff as the number of offenders increases. The number of full time equivalent operational staff at June 2013 was 423, while the number of offenders subject to supervision in the community was 15 441.

Queensland's ratio of offenders to operational staff increased from 30.5 in 2011-12 to 35.3 in 2012-13 and has remained higher than the national average over the past six years. The state's higher than national average offender to operational staff ratio is reflected in the lower than national average cost per offender per day. Figure 2C shows the offender to operational staff ratios for Queensland and nationally since 2007-08.

**Figure 2C**  
Community corrections offender to operational staff ratios 2007-08 to 2012-13



Source: Department of Community Safety 2013, Report on Government Services, 2013, Table 8A.22

The Queensland ratio in 2010-11 was affected by an increase in numbers of offenders and a decrease in staff numbers due to poor recruitment practices, such as a lack of coordination and inconsistent processes across the Probation and Parole Directorate offices.

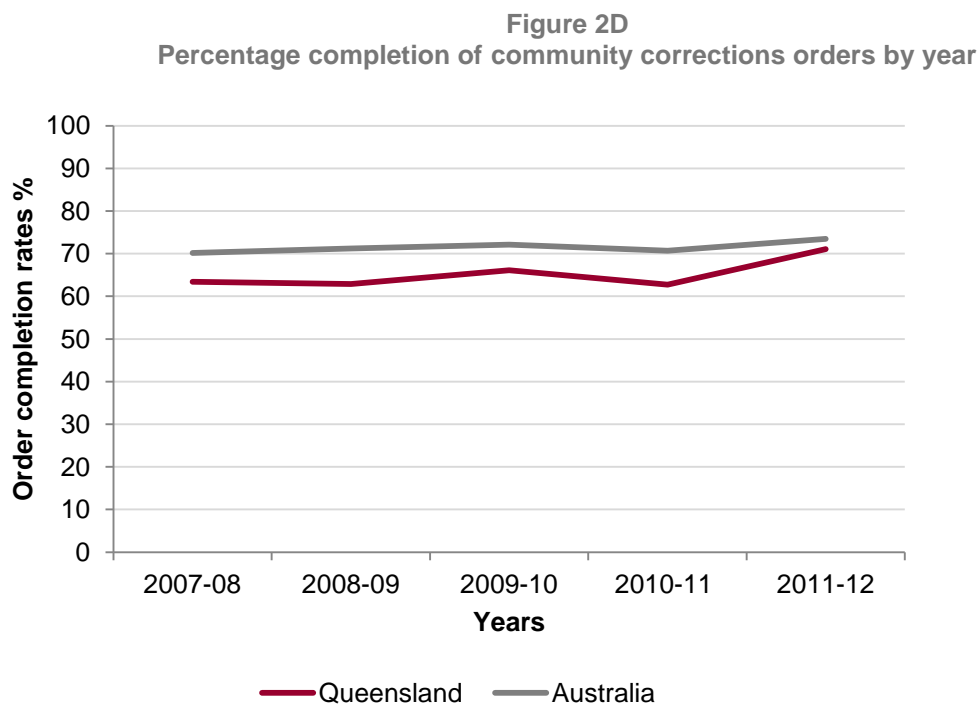
Despite efforts to address the issue, high offender to operational staff ratios means that QCS operational staff members continue to experience high workloads in supervising and managing offenders compared with other jurisdictions. The high workload means that probation and parole officers have reduced capacity to provide quality supervision to offenders. QCS does not know the effect, if any, of this on:

- offenders completing orders
- its ability to detect breaches of orders (contraventions)
- increases in returns to the corrections system.

### Completion of orders

Evaluation of the effectiveness of offender management is based on the number of offenders completing their orders and the number of contraventions identified by QCS. While the ability of an offender to complete an order can be indicative of effective offender management, it can equally be indicative of a failure to detect contraventions. An order is successfully completed if the requirements of the order are satisfied. Action to return an offender to court for a breach of a community based order, a further offence or, for parole orders, cancellation of an order by a parole board, is counted as an unsuccessful completion.

The rate of completion of orders is improving and is shown in Figure 2D.



Source: Report on Government Services, 2013, Table 8A.19

QCS does not know whether the increasing rate of order completions is influenced by high staff workloads and if this means that breaches are not being detected. Since the number of offenders completing orders has increased, so has the percentage of offenders returning to corrective services after completing their orders. This means that a higher percentage of a higher number of offenders is returning.

The completion of an order does not provide any indication of whether intervention programs are effective in preventing an offender's return to community corrections in the future. Although returns to the corrections system after order completion can be influenced by factors outside of the control of QCS, it can also be influenced by the effectiveness of QCS interventions. QCS does not analyse data about the intervention and programs an offender undertook under previous orders to know which interventions and programs are effective and which are not.

### Cost of supervision

Queensland has maintained the second lowest cost per offender per day in Australia for the years 2007-08 to 2011-12. The average cost of community supervision for 2011-12 was \$14.20 per day per offender, compared to average daily cost of custodial operations per prisoner at \$205. In 2012-13, this reduced to \$13.64 per offender and \$189.87 per prisoner.

While Queensland's costs are low compared to other states and territories, the rate of return to corrective services is increasing, as is operational staff workload. QCS has not investigated whether maintaining a low average daily cost of supervision and high staff workloads may be affecting the quality of offender management and rehabilitation.

The state incurs additional costs of supervision for each offender who returns to corrective services, including extra costs for court appearances by staff, administration of new orders, the provision of a higher level of supervision for each reoffender and provision of further intervention programs to change offending behaviour.

Supervising offenders in the community is promoted as a cost effective and efficient alternative to prison. The cost effectiveness of community supervision can be eroded if a large proportion of those offenders return to corrective services. QCS has not calculated the cost increase associated with the increasing percentage of offenders returning to the system.

### Intervention programs

Offender programs or interventions are designed to change offending behaviour and reduce the risk of reoffending. These can include programs addressing specific offender groups, such as sexual offenders or interventions aimed at addressing substance abuse. The completion of a program or participation in an intervention in itself does not provide a measure of effectiveness. Comparisons of reoffending rates against program completions may provide an indication of program effectiveness and allow QCS to identify the most effective programs and interventions to change offender behaviour. Furthermore, the identification, collation and analysis of information on previous interventions and programs undertaken by offenders returning to the corrections system may also assist in identifying effectiveness.

QCS has made little progress since 2011 in addressing the issues related to evaluation of its programs for effectiveness. The accountability and management of intervention programs is guided by the *Australian Offender Programs Standards – October 2005* and the QCS offender intervention program's evaluation framework.

QCS develops and delivers programs for sexual offenders and Indigenous offenders inside and outside the prison environment. The framework states that internal programs need to be evaluated every two years. The last time the sexual offenders program was evaluated was in 2010 and its next evaluation is not planned until 2014. This means the period between evaluations will be twice the recommended length of time. The agency's Indigenous programs have been evaluated and these are being redeveloped in 2014 in line with the guidelines.

Not evaluating intervention programs means that QCS does not know if offenders are not receiving quality intervention programs.

In addition to the QCS programs, external accredited service providers deliver programs and interventions to offenders on a contracted or referral basis. These services are not funded by QCS, but may be funded through state or federal grants, be delivered voluntarily or may require offenders to pay a fee for service. As in 2011, QCS does not evaluate the effectiveness of programs delivered by accredited external providers. It does not assess which services returning offenders had previously been exposed to, to help identify which programs are effective and which not.

Vocational and education training while in custody can be one way for QCS to contribute to the rehabilitation of offenders. Queensland's percentage of eligible prisoners completing education and training has been lower than the Australian average over the last five years.

## 2.3.2 Staffing

### Biometric reporting

Biometric reporting of offenders has been implemented in other jurisdictions, primarily in the United States, with reported success in some jurisdictions and problems in others.

QCS introduced biometric reporting as part of its effort to reduce staff workload and provide effective offender management. It was an element of the PRISM program designed to manage resources by providing more efficient supervision to low risk offenders and allowing for a redistribution of resources toward the management of high risk offenders.

Biometric reporting involves the offender scanning his or her finger print and answering a number of questions on a computer screen at probation and parole offices. This reduces the frequency of face to face meetings between the offender and case officer to result in a more manageable workload for reporting officers.

A controlled pilot of the biometric reporting system to manage the supervision of low risk offenders was conducted in eight probation and parole districts across Queensland from August 2011 to January 2012.

The trial was evaluated in April 2012 and included the initial six months of operation of the pilot. It involved 235 low risk offenders and excluded sex offenders, serious violent offenders, offenders subject to board ordered parole and other offenders who are considered to be at high risk of reoffending.

Despite limitations to the evaluation and inconclusive results, QCS implemented biometric reporting across the state. The evaluation limitations included officer discretion potentially biasing the sample and the short trial period. The evaluation report notes the significance of the short trial period:

*'Consequently, results of this evaluation only address the short-term impact of biometric reporting on re-arrest and fail to report rates, and cannot be generalised regarding long-term impacts'.*

Despite this, the evaluation recommended that expanding biometric reporting across all district offices should be considered where economically feasible, depending on a cost-benefit analysis. No cost-benefit analysis was undertaken and the basis of the decision to expand biometric reporting has not been demonstrated.

After considering available resources QCS decided not to further evaluate the system to determine long term efficiency gains or the effectiveness of its intended outcomes. Consequently any issues identified with the system post-implementation may be addressed in isolation and risks may not be identified.



## Staff mix

The audit in 2011 recommended QCS develop strategies to provide a staff mix that better reflects offender diversity.

The PRISM program consisted of a workforce planning framework to build and sustain a staff mix reflective of the diversity in the offender population. QCS has an objective within its current recruiting campaign to improve the diversity of applicant attractions and placements. At present the PRISM and recruitment programs have not been effective in changing the staff mix. It is too early to determine whether the intended changes to staff mix will be achieved.

The quality of supervision and intervention provided by corrections staff may have an influence on the chances of offenders completing their orders and also rehabilitation. This can be affected by a high staff turnover through the stability and quality of supervision provided to offenders and staff mix. In 2011, the turnover of permanent and contract operational staff within probation and parole was high at more than 15 per cent but this has shown steady improvement to be 11 per cent in 2012-13. Other factors, such as job security, may have contributed to the improvement in staff turnover rates.

## Staff training

Appropriate training ensures staff members have the required skills and knowledge to supervise offenders in the community. QCS requires its prison officers to be fully trained before supervising prisoners. It does not have a similar requirement for probation and parole officers. Probation and parole officers must have a degree level qualification in a field relevant to human services or criminology. Prison officers are not required to have tertiary qualifications or have achieved a set education standard.

The audit in 2011 identified that new probation and parole officers were supervising offenders without training with some waiting up to 12 months before being trained. There are still instances where newly appointed reporting officers are waiting for in-person training for longer than six months. In that time they are supervising offenders in the community, some who may have come from the prison system.

The development of the practitioner development program (PDP) during 2012 has improved staff training times. This is an entry-level program for probation and parole staff responsible for the supervision of offenders. The PDP includes online training when the officer first commences work and four weeks of in-person training at the Corrective Services Training Academy in Wacol or Townsville. The academy conducts four in-person training courses per year.

Online training is intended to complement rather than substitute academy training and start from commencement of employment. 17 of 19 new staff appointed since September 2012 undertook online training within a week of commencement. This is an improvement over 2011 when some newly appointed reporting officers were not trained for up to 12 months after commencement.

## Workload of regional case managers

QCS commenced monitoring the workloads of regional case managers working with offenders under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* in May 2013. In 2011 regional case managers supervising offenders subject to orders under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* tended to have greater case loads and a more limited knowledge of relevant legislation than High Risk Offender Management Unit case managers.

QCS has developed and implemented operational practice guidelines to manage high risk sexual offenders. Specialist sexual offending risk assessment training has been rolled out to all probation and parole case managers to improve consistency between the legislative knowledge in the High Risk Offender Management Unit and the regional managers. A training plan has been developed for the next 12 months to address the risk of untrained staff managing this high risk group of offenders. QCS has also implemented regular clinical support meetings to assist the regional management of *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003* offenders.

QCS could not demonstrate any improvement in case loads for regional case managers responsible for high risk sex offenders.

# Appendices

<b>Appendix A—Agency comments</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<i>Auditor-General Act 2009</i> (Section 64)—Comments received .....	16
Comments received .....	17
<b>Appendix B—Audit details</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Audit objective .....	19
Reasons for the audit .....	19
Performance audit approach.....	19

# Appendix A—Agency comments

## *Auditor-General Act 2009 (Section 64)*—Comments received

### Introduction

In accordance with section 64 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009* a copy of this report was provided to the Department of Community Safety with a request for comment.

Responsibility for the accuracy, fairness and balance of the comments rests with the head of these agencies.

## Comments received

Response provided by the Director-General, Department of Community Safety on 24 October 2013.

Received by email 24/10/2013

File No: CSD/01506  
Ref No: 08150-2013  
Your Ref: 2013-9112P

24 OCT 2013

Mr Andrew Greaves  
Auditor-General  
Queensland Audit Office  
PO Box 15396  
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Mr Greaves

Thank you for your letter of 2 October 2013, regarding your proposed report on the follow up of *Report to Parliament No 1 for 2011: Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community*.

Staff of the Department of Community Safety (DCS) met with your audit team on Thursday 17 and Wednesday 23 October 2013 to discuss issues in the report. Accordingly, I provide the following comments.


The Department generally concurs with the assessment of the Queensland Audit Office with three exceptions. The Department believes that recommendations five and six should be considered implemented. Also comments on the regional case management workload for high risk offender management may not fully reflect the level of scrutiny given to the offenders under supervision and recent improvements in monitoring high risk sexual offenders in the community.

In relation to recommendation five that staff receive training in a timely manner, as stated in the report Probation and Parole Staff receive training on their commencement with Probation and Parole. The training provided to staff is outlined in the Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) Practitioner Development Program Management Handbook. Staff receive a five day structured induction process including an on-line component that they are expected to commence on their first day. Ideally, the handbook will complement the online training commencing on day one. Where information technology issues, such as a starting officer not having the necessary access to the DCS network, prevent an immediate start (i.e. causing delays of 1-3 days etc.), the Practitioner Development Program Management Handbook is used within the office to progress the activities and training (i.e. interviewing skills, case management skills, practice observation etc.) with the staff.

In relation to recommendation 6 on developing strategies to provide a gender and ethnicity mix that better reflects the diversity of the offender population, QCS has developed strategies including:

- Engaging Hoban Recruitment for all Probation and Parole recruitment with a key goal of improving workforce diversity, and a focus on improving the number of men and the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff;

.../2

  
Queensland  
Government  
Office of the  
Director-General  
Department of  
Community Safety

Creating a safer Queensland  
Emergency Services Complex  
Cnr Park and Kedron Park Roads Kedron  
Queensland 4031  
GPO Box 1425 Brisbane  
Queensland 4001 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 3635 3531  
Facsimile +61 7 3247 8535  
Website [www.communitysafety.qld.gov.au](http://www.communitysafety.qld.gov.au)  
ABN 19 823 962 345

## Comments received

Response provided by the Director-General, Department of Community Safety on 24 October 2013.

- Developing a Workforce Management Strategy 2011-13 which focuses on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups and a specific Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy;
- Engaging in marketing within the Department of Community Safety in career forums targeting Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders;
- Contributing to Project 2800 and the Australian Employment Covenant which aim to boost employment of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders ; and
- Each Probation and Parole Region completing a workforce plan which had standard activities to be achieved across Attraction, Retention & Development with specific activities for Diversity & Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander initiatives or other groups such as, for example in Brisbane Region, South Sea Islander and Vietnamese groups.

In relation to the case loads for staff supervising offenders under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act (DPSOA)* orders, QCS has developed a workload tool that assesses the relative case management hours that any one individual offender requires in order for effective supervision, risk identification and management.

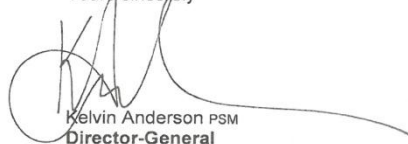
Case management hours differ between levels of service but also between offenders managed under the DPSOA. Differences in case management hours exist due to differences in reporting frequency, level of curfew, mobility within the community and acute risk factors. Senior Case managers responsible for the supervision and case management of DPSOA offenders may therefore have varying numbers of offenders on their case load however all have a caseload with a similar number of case management hours. High Risk Offender Management Unit (HROMU) have implemented a process of ensuring that the field is aware of the relative case management hours that are required to effectively manage the risk for each individual offender prior to their management being transitioned to the field. This tool is available for use by field staff to assist with case load adjustments as acute risk or other case management factors change for the individual offender.

Additionally, in 2012, QCS rolled out the use of GPS monitoring technology to improvement management of offenders subject to continuing supervision under the DPSOA. This is an additional monitoring tool that corrective services personnel use to monitor the locations of dangerous sex offenders released into the community on a supervision order, 24 hours a day seven days a week. Monitoring is conducted from the Electronic Monitoring and Surveillance Unit based in Brisbane, which deals directly with offenders where an alert is received, and coordinates responses with the Queensland Police Service where necessary. GPS monitoring is now an integral tool in the management of high risk offenders.

Notwithstanding that DCS considers recommendations five and six to have been fully implemented, I believe that, overall, the report demonstrates the progress QCS has made in improving the supervision of offenders and the safety of the community.

In closing I would like to register my appreciation of the efforts of your staff in undertaking this audit. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed report. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Kelvin Anderson PSM  
Director-General

# Appendix B – Audit details

## Audit objective

The objective of this follow up audit was to assess the current status and effectiveness of the implementation of recommendations resulting from Report No 1 for 2011: Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community which was tabled in 2011. Specifically the audit examined whether:

- recommendations have been actioned
- performance or systems issues have been addressed.

## Reason for the audit

The *Auditor-General Act 2009* provides for the Auditor-General to report observations and recommendations about matters arising from an audit. These observations and recommendations may be reported to management and those charged with governance of an agency, relevant Ministers and ultimately the Parliament.

While the Auditor-General reports to the Parliament with recommendations to improve the performance of public sector entities or enhance public sector accountability, it is not the Auditor-General's role, to enforce the implementation of these recommendations.

The primary responsibility for implementing any change resulting from the recommendations rests with the Executive and individual agencies and Statutory Bodies. Where appropriate all public sector agencies and Statutory Bodies should have systems and processes to implement the recommendations of the Auditor-General.

## Performance audit approach

The audit was conducted between May and October 2013. It involved the Department of Community Safety.

The Department was requested to self-assess its progress against the following criteria:

I - Recommendation has been fully implemented

P - Recommendation has been partially implemented

AA - Alternate action undertaken

NA - No substantial action has been taken.

The Department provided comment and supporting documentation on its progress on implementing each recommendation. A review of the self-assessment and supporting documentation identified where it was necessary to perform risk-based checks to gain assurance on agency actions.

The review process included:

- ensuring the responses addressed the intent of the recommendation and subsequent effectiveness and outcomes of the recommendations
- testing documentation for evidence consistent with agency responses
- conducting interviews to clarify responses.





# Auditor-General Reports to Parliament

## Tabled in 2013–14

Report number	Title of report	Date tabled in Legislative Assembly
1	Right of private practice in Queensland public hospitals	July 2013
2	Supply of specialist subject teachers in secondary schools	October 2013
3	Follow up - Acquisition and public access to the Museum, Art Gallery and Library collections	October 2013
4	Follow up - Management of offenders subject to supervision in the community	October 2013

Reports to Parliament are available at [www.qao.qld.gov.au](http://www.qao.qld.gov.au)