



AUSTRALIAN
INDUSTRY
STANDARDS

CORRECTIONS IRC SKILLS FORECAST

KEY FINDINGS DISCUSSION PAPER 2017

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MARCH 2017

The purpose of the paper is to provide industry stakeholders with a summary of the key findings from the recent industry intelligence gathering activities overseen by the **Corrections Industry Reference Committee (IRC)**. The key findings will be used by the IRC in the **development of the Corrections IRC Skills Forecast and Proposed Schedule of Work** for the CSC Correctional Services Training Package. Once approved by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) the Skills Forecast will replace the 2016 Corrections IRC Workplan.

Several targeted strategies were employed to collect industry intelligence about the opportunities and challenges for the Corrections workforce and any Training Package review work necessary to meet these industry needs. These included:

- A **Call for Submissions** process inviting stakeholder responses about key issues affecting skills and workforce development;
- An **IRC Skills Forecast Survey** seeking information on priority skill needs, skill shortages and issues relating to workforce training and;
- A comprehensive review of **Data and Research Sources** nominated by the Corrections IRC

Australian Industry Standards has been tasked by the IRC to collect feedback from interested stakeholders about these issues on its behalf.

HOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Stakeholders are invited to submit their comments on the findings outlined in this paper by close of business on **March 17th 2017**.

It is acknowledged that the information provided about issues in this paper is deliberately brief. The purpose of this paper is to validate and confirm the findings, which will inform the advice the Corrections IRC will provide to the AISC.

In considering the key issues and themes identified in this paper, we are keen to have any feedback that either confirms your issue has been covered, or else raises an issue you feel should be addressed in the **Proposed Schedule of Work (FY17/18–FY20/21)** for the CSC Correctional Services Training Package to be submitted to the AISC on April 28th 2017.

Responses can be emailed to enquiries@australianindustrystandards.org.au

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CORRECTIONS INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

The Corrections industry added \$3.36 billion to the Australian economy in 2016. The Corrections industry employs almost 30,000 across prisons, juvenile and immigration detention, parole services, correctional administration and management. Correctional services implement the correctional sanctions determined by the courts and releasing authorities such as parole boards.

CORRECTIONS INDUSTRY METRICS

Revenue (\$b)	5.07
Profit (\$m)	30
Average Wage (\$ per year)	80,203.92
No of Businesses	11
Employment Growth (% to 2022)	5.7

Scope: Correctional and Detention Services¹

KEY FACTS:

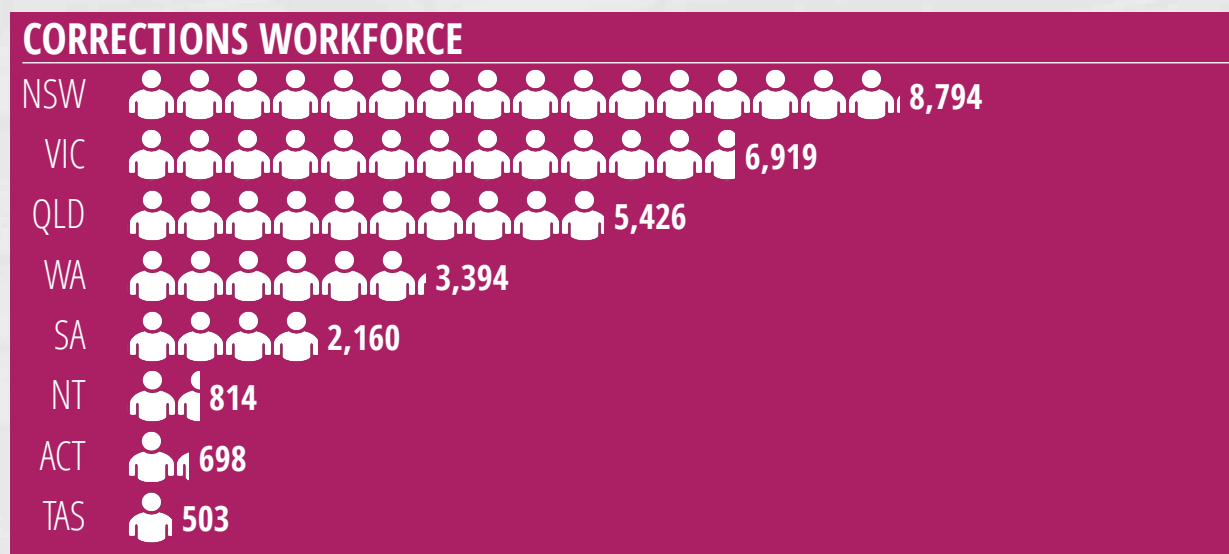
- **112 custodial facilities operating** – government and privately managed²
- **\$3.7 billion government spending** on prisons and community corrections in 2015/16²
- **63 521 offenders per day** (on average) were serving community corrections orders in 2015/16²
- **8 percent growth in the number of prisoners** in adult corrective services custody in 2016³
- **6 percent growth in the national imprisonment rate** (prisoners per 100,000 adult population) in 2015³

¹ IBISWorld Industry Reports. <http://www.ibisworld.com>

² Australian Government, Productivity Commission. 2017. *Report on Government Services 2017, Volume C, Chapter 8.*

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2016. *4517.0 Prisoners in Australia, 2016.*

CORRECTIONS WORKFORCE



Source: ABS Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, Nov 2016

CORRECTIONS SKILL SHORTAGES

75 per cent of employers reported experiencing a skills shortage in the last 12 months⁴. The occupations reported as being in shortage were:

1. Prison Officers
2. Case Management Workers
3. Educators

Employers identified the following reasons for the shortage with the most frequent response listed first.

Reasons for shortage

- Ageing workforce/current staff retiring
- Shortage of skilled/qualified personnel
- Competition from other organisations
- Geographic location of the vacancy
- Cost/time to achieve the required qualification

⁴ Australian Industry Standards. February 2017. *IRC Skills Forecast Survey*.

KEY CORRECTIONS SKILL ISSUES

INCREASED PRISON POPULATION

Australia's prison population has grown nearly 20 per cent over the past decade^{5,6}. The increasing custody rates have an impact on infrastructure and resources. It is estimated that between 2014 and 2019, there will be 10,000-25,000 job openings in the sector⁷. Rapid-build high security facilities are now being built requiring new custodial officers and community corrections – with each officer requiring appropriate training and education to perform their roles effectively^{8,9}.

Although Australia spends approximately \$4 billion on prisons a year¹⁰, there is evidence to suggest some prisons across Australia have experienced an increase in overcrowding and lockdowns. This phenomenon has been attributed to an increased prison population as well as staff shortages and inexperience^{11,12,13,14}. States are currently exploring solutions to reduce the number of individuals incarcerated, thereby alleviating pressure on prison systems¹⁵.

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Technology growth in Corrective Services is impacting the industry at a rapid pace and shows no signs of abating. With growth in the prison population comes a need for new infrastructure, much of which incorporates new systems. The existing workforce is ageing and stakeholder feedback indicates that many older workers are struggling to adapt to these new job demands. This coupled with changes in training and development methods (e.g. e-learning) compounds the challenge presented by low technology literacy among older workers. The use of satellite monitoring, GPS systems and Cloud technologies will continue to proliferate in the sector, requiring adapted training to accommodate the challenges presented by the current workforce¹⁵.

⁵ Sydney Morning Herald. 29 January 2016. *Australian prison population grows 20 per cent in last decade*. <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/australian-prison-population-grows-20-per-cent-in-last-decade-20160129-gmhdgz.html>

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2015. *4517.0 Prisoner in Australia 2015*.

⁷ Australian Government Job Outlook. 2012. Accessed August 2016. *Prison Officers*. <http://joboutlook.gov.au/jouploads/4421.pdf>

⁸ Daily Liberal. 20 February 2017. *First rapid-build prison on track at Wellington*. <http://www.dailyliberal.com.au/story/4478414/new-prison-on-track-photos>

⁹ Wellington Times. 21 February 2017. *Macquarie Correctional Centre on track to open mid-year*. <http://www.wellingtontimes.com.au/story/4475207/rapid-build-jail-works-on-schedule>

¹⁰ The Guardian. 23 February 2017. *The small town trying to shift spending from punishment to prevention*. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/feb/23/the-small-town-trying-to-shift-spending-from-punishment-to-prevention>

¹¹ ABC News. 16 February 2017. *South Australian prison lockdown ends*. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-02-16/south-australian-prison-lockdown-ends/8275968>

¹² Central Telegraph. 21 February 2017. *Fear prison overcrowding leads to 'low-risk' inmate assessments*. <https://www.centraltelegraph.com.au/news/fear-prison-overcrowding-leads-to-low-risk-inmate/3146262>

¹³ Collie Mail. 20 February 2017. *WA prison officers quit amid claims of 'dysfunctional conditions'*. <http://www.colliemail.com.au/story/4479407/wa-prison-officers-quit-amid-claims-of-dysfunctional-conditions/>

¹⁴ Courier Mail. 16 February 2017. *Premier Palaszczuk announces sweeping overhaul of parole system in wake of Townsville killing*. <http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/crime-and-justice/premier-palaszczuk-announces-sweeping-overhaul-of-parole-system-in-wake-of-townsville-killing/news-story/dbcae54943084d-8ba15b48b8a0d7cca4?csp=8405d6307f72e2df29bd51cddf44c406>

¹⁵ Government of Western Australia, Department of Corrective Services. 2016. *Annual Report 2015-16*.

KEY CORRECTIONS SKILL ISSUES

WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

60 per cent of prison officers are aged 45 or over, with a median age of 49 years (compared to 40 years for all occupations). Women make up just 27 per cent of the full-time workforce. With a large proportion of the industry coming into retirement age over the next decade, the responsibility is on corrective services providers to find a replacement workforce as well as increase the workforce size. Attracting a younger cohort of workers between the ages of 20 and 44 is ideal. With the sector male dominated, there is scope to improve female representation.

WORKFORCE ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

The Corrections industry has a high rate of staff turnover, which poses a substantial challenge to the sector. Attracting new recruits to the industry can be difficult due to the perceived and real safety risks, uncompetitive salary and staff dissatisfaction¹⁶. Providing an attractive and rewarding workplace will be a challenge for the sector. Some states have made concerted efforts to acknowledge and reward staff¹⁷. Providing professional development opportunities as well as clear career paths for young recruits will be critical, with some states already offering Vocational Education and Training (VET) training for employees in order to achieve this¹⁸.

PROFESSIONALISATION

Driven largely through a change in the demographics of prisoners as well as the increasing number of prisoners, correctional officers require a broader range of skills to manage a broad group of inmates who are struggling with drug addiction, mental illness and aggressive behaviours¹⁹. 54 per cent of prison officers have a Certificate III or IV, while 19.2 per cent have a Diploma or Advanced Diploma. There is an increasing need for skilled managers and general managers to ensure that staff and prison operations are handled in an appropriate and professional manner. The ongoing interaction of corrections staff with the legal system, community infrastructure as well as specialists such as psychologists and medical systems and emerging social media issues, underscore the relevance of managing large groups of people with complex needs. Ensuring that qualifications meet the increasing demands of corrections job roles will be critical in meeting these skill requirements.

¹⁶ NSW Inspector of Custodial Services. 2012. *The invisibility of correctional officer work*.

¹⁷ Australian Broadcasting Commission. Accessed August 2016. *Corrections Minister David Elliott wants NSW prison officer rewards after Wellington Jail disturbance*. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-15/new-south-wales-corrections-minister-wantsmore-acknowledgment/7247716>

¹⁸ Queensland Corrective Services. August 2016. *Corrections News*. <https://news.correctiveservices.qld.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Corrections-News-August-2016.pdf>

¹⁹ NSW Government, Inspector of Custodial Services, Department of Justice. May 2014. *Report No. 1: The invisibility of correctional officer work*. <http://www.custodialinspector.justice.nsw.gov.au/Documents/Accessible%20Report%20No%201%20DRAFT.pdf>

KEY CORRECTIONS SKILL ISSUES

STAFF EXPERIENCE

As prison populations grow, the need for frontline staff has also grown. As the systemic problems at some corrections centres come to light, reviews of the justice system have found that there is an overreliance on inexperienced casual and temporary staff who have little knowledge or experience working with mentally ill, violent or drug-affected detainees. The ability to work with a range of people from various cultural backgrounds, ethnicities and genders is important. Appropriate training to ensure that staff have adequate skills to perform in difficult environments such as communication and negotiation skills and resilience training will assist inexperienced staff. Ensuring that people are correctly matched to job roles that suit their experience and training is crucial.

COMPLEXITY AND DIVERSITY

The Corrections industry faces both the increasing impact of larger prisons and an expanding diversity in population. How these impact workplace and job design factors is being considered in terms of specific expertise in a broader range of skills to manage a group of inmates struggling with drug addiction, mental illness and aggressive behaviours.

The capability to work with a range of people from numerous cultural backgrounds, ethnicities and genders will continue to require diverse responses. Communication and negotiation skills and resilience training in quite specific contexts will be required.

PRIORITY SKILLS

The priority skills results are drawn from Corrections stakeholder responses to the IRC Skills Forecast survey conducted in February 2017. In order of priority to the industry, the following skills were identified as the most important for the Corrections workforce within the next three to five years.

SKILL CATEGORY

Conflict/incident management
Interpersonal
Organisational/Planning
Security
Mental health

Ranking of the 12 generic workforce skills in order of importance to the Corrections industry.

GENERIC SKILL

Design mindset/Thinking critically/System thinking/Solving problems
Technology
Managerial/Leadership
Communication/Virtual collaboration/Social intelligence
Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN)
Data analysis
Learning agility/Information literacy/Intellectual autonomy and self-management
Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM)
Customer service/Marketing
Entrepreneurial
Financial
Environmental and Sustainability

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

INDUSTRY REFERENCE COMMITTEES

New arrangements for training product development commenced in January 2016. These arrangements consider the needs of employers of all sizes, across all industry sectors, and ensure the delivery of high quality Training Packages that are nationally endorsed and internationally regarded.

Industry References Committees (IRCs):

- Provide a forum for industry engagement.
- Direct the review, development and implementation of training package content relevant to the industry sectors they cover.
- Act as a conduit for industry feedback to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) and governments on industry trends.

IRCs are composed of individuals and industry members with the experience, skills and knowledge of their particular industry sector. IRCs are supported by independent and professional Skills Service Organisations (SSO) to develop and review Training Packages, and to inform Training Package development priorities.

IRCs have a direct relationship with the AISC, and are charged with identifying industry's skills needs, developing business cases setting out the case for change, and providing the sign off on training products before they go to the AISC for consideration.

Each IRC will perform the following functions;

- Gather intelligence for their industry sectors to inform advice on Training Package development and review.
- Direct the work of its SSO in the development of industry proposals, cases for change and cases for endorsement.
- Oversight the development and review of Training Packages in line with the requirements of the AISC.
- Provide sign off for industry proposals, cases for change, cases for endorsement and other submissions for consideration by the AISC.
- Direct the work of the SSO in preparing the support materials where funding for additional activities is provided.
- Report to the AISC on progress of its work.
- Promote the use of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the sectors they represent.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

CORRECTIONS INDUSTRY REFERENCE COMMITTEE

The Corrections Industry Reference Committee (IRC) has been assigned responsibility for the CSC Correctional Services Training Package.

Interim Chair: Amanda Bannister, Tasmania Prison Service

<http://www.australianindustrystandards.org.au/committee/corrections-industry-reference-committee/>

The CSC Correctional Services Training Package provides the only nationally recognised Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications for occupations involved in: Justice services, correctional practices, administration and management. At Certificate III, IV and Diploma levels specialisations can be undertaken in 1) community and youth custodial 2) dog handling, supervision and leadership, case management and community or emergency response and 3) intelligence operations.

The CSC Correctional Services Training Package comprises five qualifications, 95 units of competency and associated assessment requirements and covers: Justice Services and Correctional Practices, administration and management.

The CSC Correctional Services Training Package is in the Scope of Registration of 30 Registered Training Organisations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

IRC SKILLS FORECAST & PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF WORK

The IRC Skills Forecasts focus on the prioritisation of the skill needs of the industry sectors each IRC has responsibility for. They are developed and reviewed annually in consultation with industry stakeholders, and submitted on behalf of the IRC to the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC) for approval.

IRCs are required to consult broadly with stakeholders to ensure a whole-of-industry view about the opportunities and challenges for the workforce and the Training Package review work necessary to meet industry needs.

The IRC Skills Forecast is submitted to the AISC inform the development of a four-year rolling National Schedule for Training Package development and review work. More information on the National Schedule can be found at: www.aisc.net.au/content/national-schedule

AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Australian Industry Standards (AIS) provides high-quality, professional secretariat services to the Corrections Industry Reference Committee, in our role as a Skills Service Organisation. AIS provide services to eleven allocated IRCs which also cover the Gas, Electricity, Electrotechnology, Aviation, Public Safety (including Police, Fire and Emergency Services, Defence), Water, Transport and Logistics, Rail and Maritime industries. AIS supports these important industry sectors using our world class in-house capability and capacity in technical writing, quality assurance, project management and industry engagement in the production of training packages.

AIS was established in early 2016, 20 years after its predecessor the Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council (TLISC) was established in 1996. More information about AIS can be found at www.australianindustrystandards.org.au

- We support industry growth and productivity through our modern innovative approach to establishing skills standards.
- We provide high-quality, professional secretariat services to help our allocated industry reference committees develop the skills that industry needs.
- We partner with industry to shape the workforce of the future.




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