

The ecology of reintegration: An explanatory and support model for lifestyle change

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Deakin Reintegration Research

We have investigated or are investigating:

- attitudes toward the employability of ex-prisoners;
- employment and recidivism outcomes of an employment assistance program;
- indirect gains (lifestyle change) associated with employment assistance;
- effects of emotional state (anxiety, depression, and anger) on reintegration outcomes;
- community attitudes toward reintegration .

Reintegration vs Rehabilitation as explanatory and intervention models

- Rehabilitation models have been individual-focused and almost universally focused on addressing character defects and skill deficits. They tend to be program-oriented as well, not real world context-oriented.
- Desistance models are recently popular, but desistance is difficult to measure and narrow in focus.
- Reintegration models have a focus on 'people in context'; whole people and the context within which they live and strive to succeed. Resources and needs are the basic concepts.

The prison population

From 1994-2004, there was a 43% increase in the total prison population in Australia from 16,903 to 24,171 prisoners.

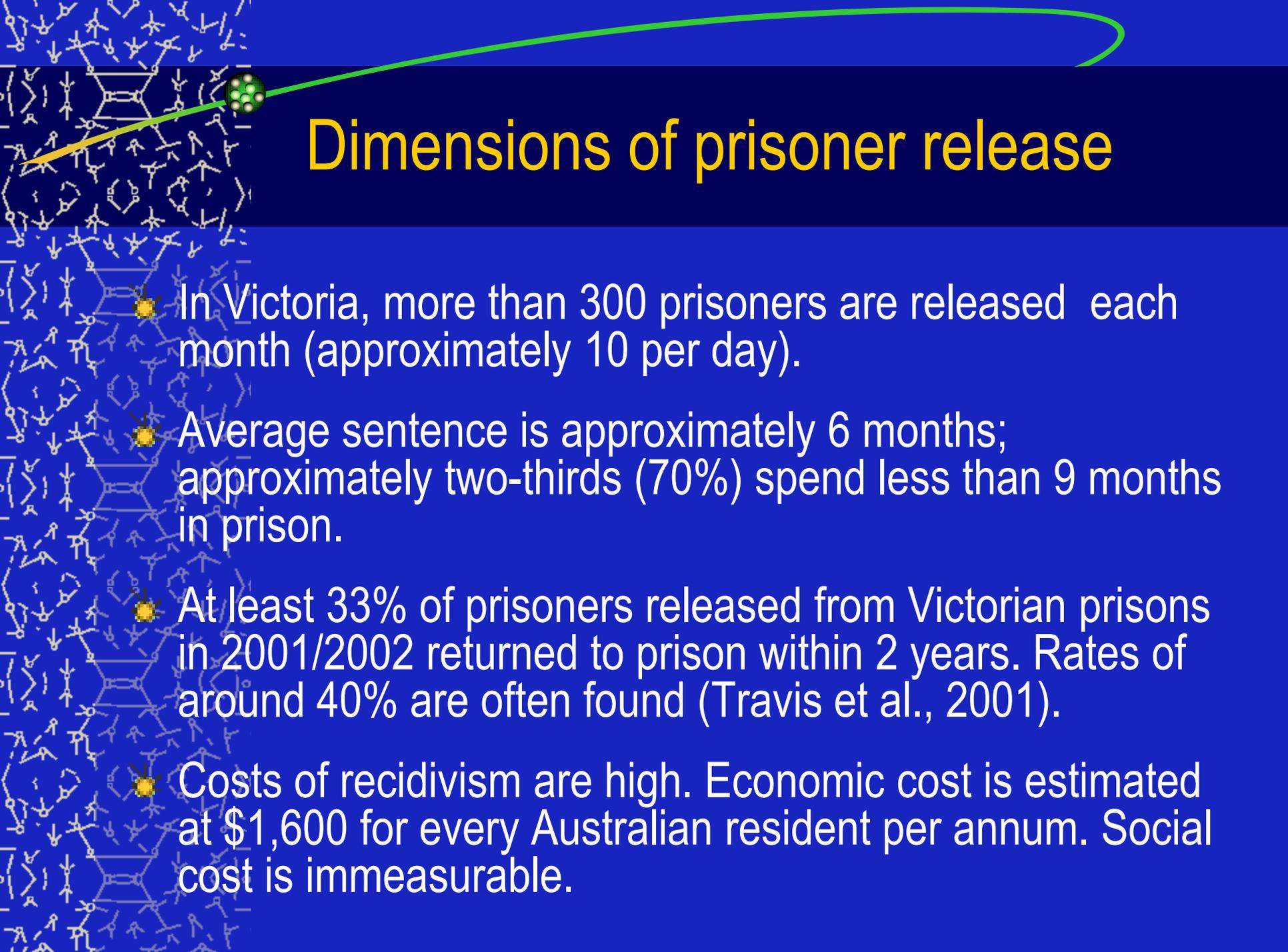
This rate of growth exceeded the 15% growth in the Australian adult population.

Most prisoners are male (90+%), but the female prisoner population and proportion is increasing significantly.

There is an increasing proportion of drug offenders among prisoners, currently between 40% - 80% of prison samples.

Currently, 58% of Victorian prisoners have been in prison at least once previously.

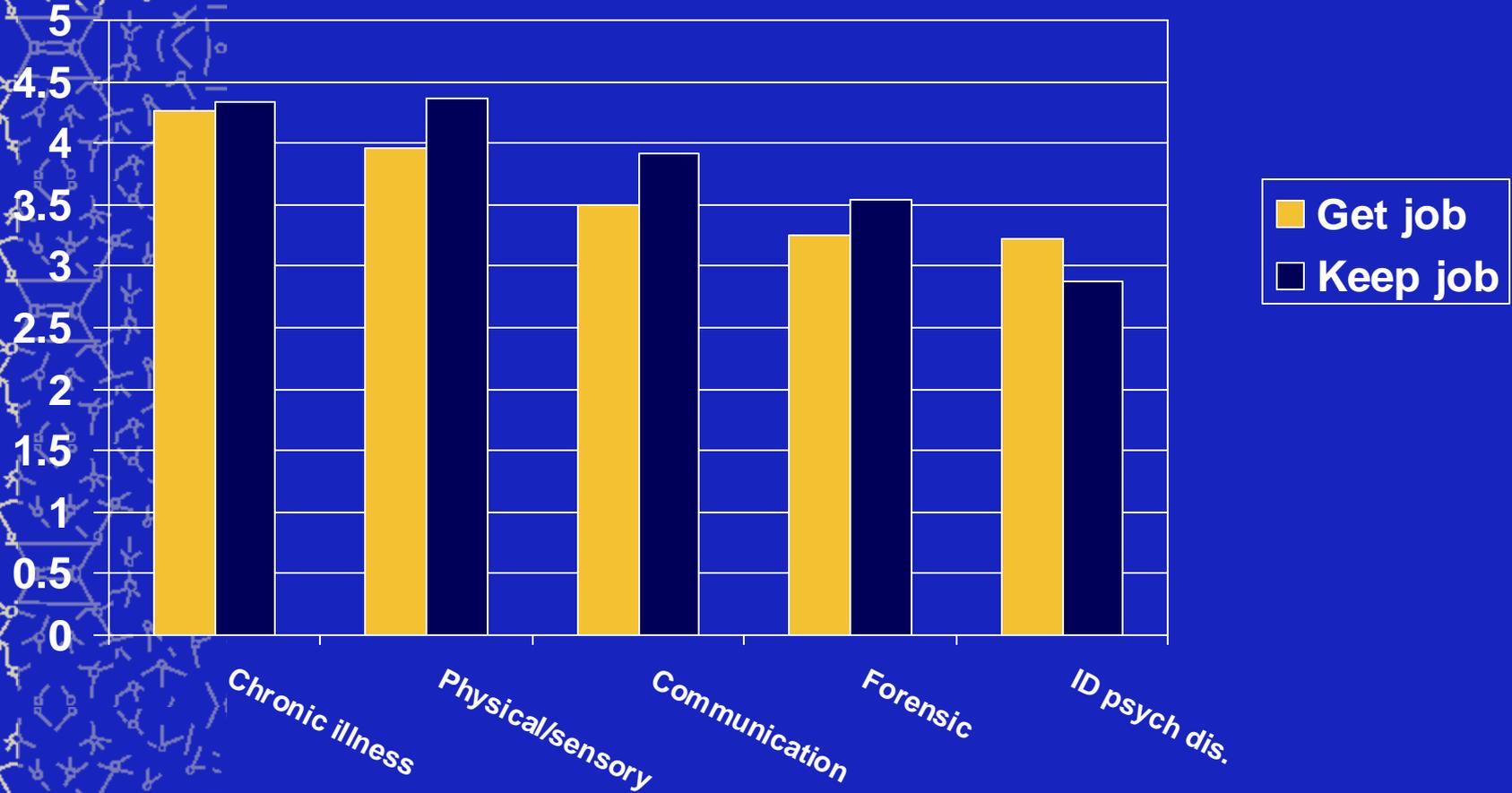




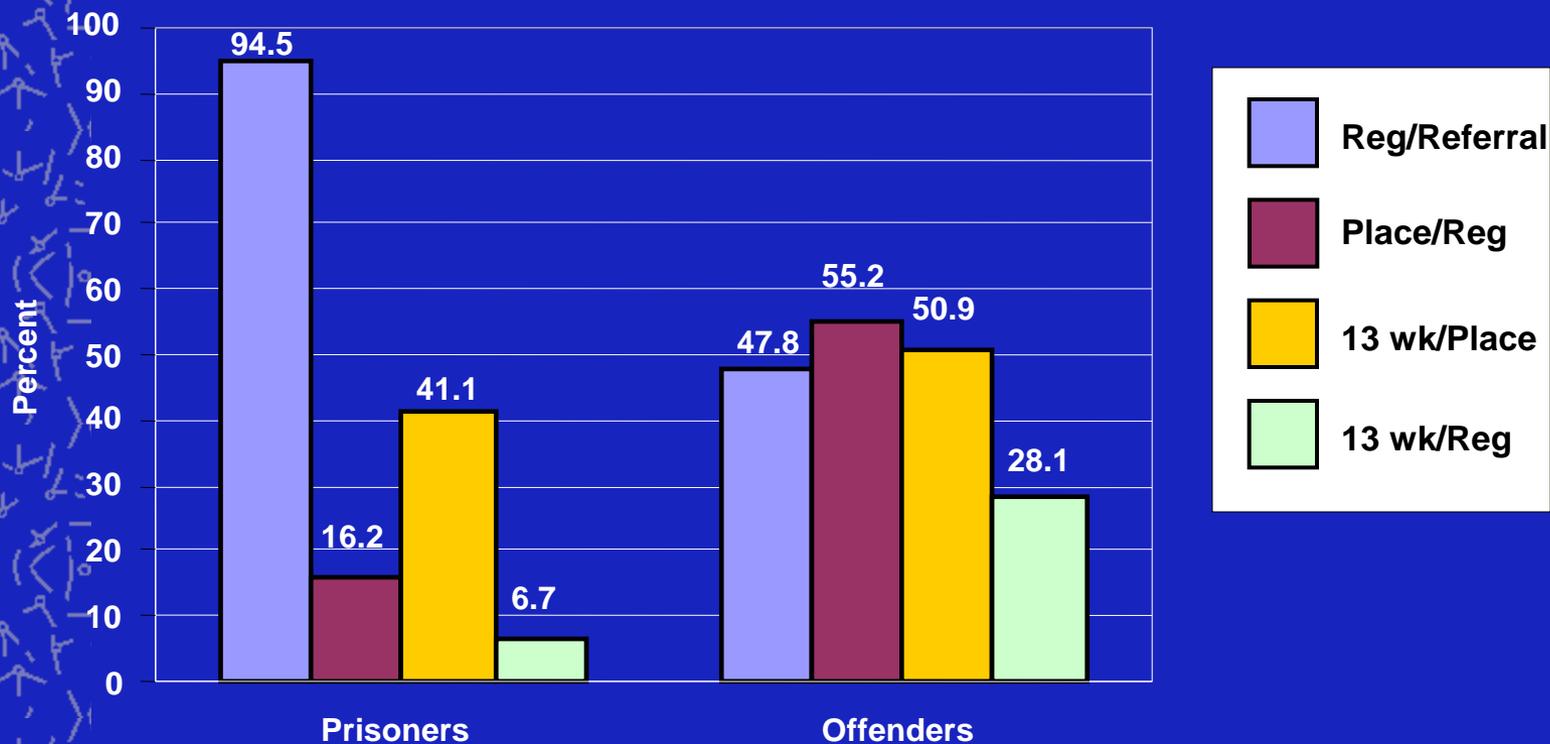
Dimensions of prisoner release

- In Victoria, more than 300 prisoners are released each month (approximately 10 per day).
- Average sentence is approximately 6 months; approximately two-thirds (70%) spend less than 9 months in prison.
- At least 33% of prisoners released from Victorian prisons in 2001/2002 returned to prison within 2 years. Rates of around 40% are often found (Travis et al., 2001).
- Costs of recidivism are high. Economic cost is estimated at \$1,600 for every Australian resident per annum. Social cost is immeasurable.

Getting and keeping a job – disadvantaged groups



Progression of prisoner & offender clients: July 2002 — June 2004



Recidivism Outcomes

Re-offending rates of CSEPP clients

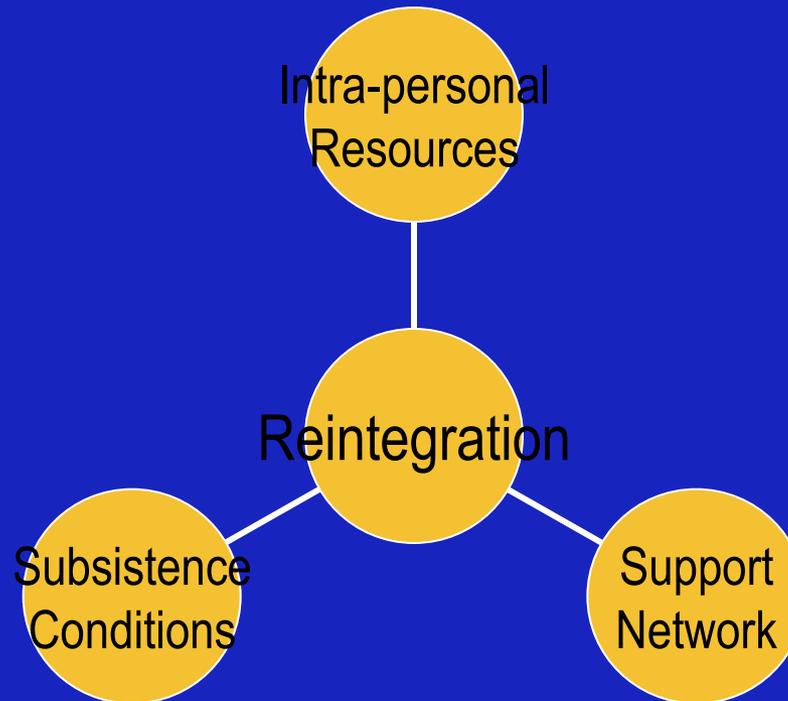
	Overall	Placed	Unplaced	Prison	CCS
Males	8.38%	7.61%	8.66%	5.82%	11.5%
Females	5.97%	2.56%	6.65%	5.21%	7.69%
Prisoners	5.69%	4.59%	5.87%	X	X
Offenders	10.98%	8.22%	12.74%	X	X
Total	7.46%	6.40%	7.73%	X	X



Community Reintegration: Understanding an Ecology

- An ecological system is a 'living system'. It is a system that sustains life, but has a life of its own.
- Communities are ecological systems; we manage, manipulate, react, and adapt to the conditions around us. We are interactive agents.
- Reintegration is best understood in terms of the compatibility of people's resources and needs and conditions within their living environment.
- Reintegration is a process, not an event. It is important to consider the whole dynamic process from pre-release through reintegration.

Reintegration as an outcome of ecological conditions



Intra-Personal Conditions

✱ *By 2020 depression alone will constitute one of the largest health problems worldwide (Burden of Disease Research Summary, VicHealth, 2005)*

✱ **Physical & Mental Health** - most report good health, but higher prevalence of chronic medical and mental health conditions.

✱ **Substance Use** is high among ex-prisoners & many are poly-drug users. Alcohol dependency is high.

✱ **Education and Skills** are low, many having left school early and having no post-school training.

✱ **Emotional State** - higher prevalence of depression and anxiety, and high anger among prisoners, plus problems in anger control & expression of anger.

Subsistence Conditions

- **Finance** - most ex-prisoners have limited finances upon release & are often in debt.
- **Employment** - low employment rates & wages, low work skills, patchy work histories.
- **Housing** - difficult to achieve stable & safe accommodation.



Support Conditions

- 🕸 **Social Support** – family and friends are critical to post-release success.
- 🕸 **Support Services** – wide ranging & variable in their effectiveness.
- 🕸 **Criminal Justice Support** - assistance and monitoring is intended to improve the post-release prospects of ex-prisoners.





An approach to integrated support

- Analysis of individual resources and support needs.
- A comprehensive support plan.
- Access to all relevant supports.
- Networked delivery of support.
- Communication and exchange of information.
- Recognition of the dynamic and interactive nature of conditions and the need for responsive support.

An integrated system of supports

