

TRENDS IN CORRECTIONAL PRACTICE

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Delivered at a Meeting of the Medico-Legal Society held on 11th October, 1980 at 8.30 p.m. at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, Spring Street, Melbourne. The Chairman of the Meeting was the President, Mr P. C. Trumble.

FIRSTLY, I would like to express my gratitude to the Society for inviting me here this evening to speak about trends in correctional practices in Victoria. In general terms, the whole area of Corrections is one about which each person appears to be an expert. It is also an endeavour which excites a great deal of emotion. While no practitioner in the field can ever claim to have exclusive knowledge, it is a matter about which pet theories abound. I believe this has something to do with the fact that people have to cope in their daily lives with problems of penalties, deterrents, guidance and appropriate behaviour, and believe that there is a transferability to the correctional system.

However, like most people, I am continually amazed by the difference between my theoretical views about how I would deal with particular people in known circumstances and the degree to which I must clarify my attitudes when coming into close contact with the people concerned. In a similar way, I generally find that people coming into contact with offenders or prisoners almost always comment that the people they have met were not quite what they had expected, and they obviously clarified their views about their potential relationship with that person.

The area of Corrections is also a constant source of interest to the media, which tends to dramatise general developments or depict them, or the offenders, in black and white terms (although the advent of colour television has provided even more colourful perspectives!). In fact, the general administration of Corrections and living inside the system quickly brings the realisation that, in the main, it is more a matter of maintaining a balanced and on-going community. In recent years, Community Welfare Services (DCWS) has endeavoured, with limited resources and success, to make the general public and particular groups more familiar with the operation of correctional services in Victoria. This has been reflected in the encouragement given to the Press to visit facilities or programs more frequently. This con-

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stitutes an attempt to provide a more comprehensive viewpoint and to stimulate interest by bringing people into close contact with the variety of correctional programs. There have certainly been more people visiting prisons, particularly over the past few years, and a more deliberate policy by senior departmental officers to address interested groups about the nature of correctional practices. In these terms, I would reiterate that I welcome the opportunity of speaking to you this evening and, for a start, would like to extend an invitation to the Society to visit some of the correctional programs available in Victoria to see these at first hand.

My address this evening is essentially descriptive. I shall endeavour to outline the variety of programs available in Victoria and the people involved in these programs. I shall then briefly reflect on where we hope correctional practice is moving and some of the current problems in the system.

Victoria's prisons

Initially, I should emphasise that correctional programs within Victoria are administered by DCWS, which was previously the Department of Social Welfare. These arrangements undoubtedly reflect the particular capabilities and interests of the first Director-General of Social Welfare, the late Alec Whatmore, who, after a career as Inspector-General of Penal Establishments, extended his interests to juvenile delinquency and the general area of children and young people requiring the particular interest of the State.

The coming together of correctional and social welfare practice undoubtedly occurred at a time when there was strong emphasis on rehabilitation in correctional thinking and the view prevailed that there was a close linkage between welfare and correctional perspectives. However, it is not always recognised that until recently DCWS and its predecessor had the essential and almost exclusive role of intervening with court sanction in the rights of individuals, when society, through its court system, believed that State intervention was necessary. These individuals ranged from children who had been abused or neglected to security prisoners.

More recently, DCWS has extended its range of interests to preventative welfare modes in the community and has undertaken the responsibility of providing social perspectives in community planning development. From this viewpoint, the close integration between correctional services and general welfare services is undergoing reconsideration, as reflected in the recent Government White Paper on the future of social welfare in Victoria; but I believe that a close relation-

ship between correctional services, general welfare services and development in the community is beneficial, although corrections must be considered increasingly as part of a more closely integrated criminal justice system in the State.

I shall begin my description of correctional facilities in Victoria with the best-known "identity"—Pentridge Prison. This prison was originally built in the late 1850s, and its original design is still very much in evidence. The Panopticon principle developed by Bentham is the basis of the older cell blocks. While it is almost a commonplace that the philosophy attached to the use of the Panopticon penitentiary has long since disappeared, the buildings still survive and strongly influence the possibilities of prison practice at this time.

You will recall that the intention of penitentiaries was to isolate men as much as possible, keeping them in silence under religious influence, to allow them the opportunity of reflecting on their life and changing their views about their life-style. Hence, the facilities available in these older cell blocks do not cater for more developed community living, except where more recent alterations have provided communal facilities. Pentridge does provide large dormitory blocks, as in "F" Division where up to eighty men are placed together, but these were provided at a time when a closely regimented system did not allow for recreation or community living as a significant factor.

It is worth noting that, with the exception of developments in more recent years, the basic amenities provided for prisoners at Pentridge are inconsistent with more modern views of minimal human comfort, so that there are continuing problems in terms of providing adequate individual space, sewerage, electrical systems, etc. It is often said that prisoners are molly-coddled but, in essence, the efforts made during recent years to improve conditions have been simply an attempt to keep pace with contemporary views of minimum living standards in the general community. The provision of television has been criticised, but this has been at the prisoners' own expense and is consistent with the general trend in the community. Wireless sets had been available for many years (similarly in accord with the trend in the community at that time).

Building activity at Pentridge includes the reconstruction of "J" Division to convert dormitories to single rooms and, very recently, the building of Jika Jika security block. In both cases the underlying principle has been to provide single accommodation and community living for a small group of men, while, at the same time, providing adequate security for these prisoners, based on an estimate of their risk both in the community and within the prison system. The other recent physical development at Pentridge has been the construction of

a hospital. For the first time both out-patient and on-going treatment of sick prisoners can be provided internally rather than in external hospitals, where in the past most cases had to be sent for treatment—with, of course, the attendant risks. There have been other changes at Pentridge, including the advent of professional management and the general administrative reconstruction of this mega-prison, so that it operates as four separate units. This latter arrangement is consistent with the universally accepted principle that, as far as possible, prisons should accommodate no more than two hundred persons, since populations larger than this compound management difficulties.

Victoria has other prisons built on the penitentiary principle at Geelong, Beechworth, Bendigo, Castlemaine and Sale, and these locations generally provide for eighty to one hundred and thirty prisoners. Their location reflects the spread of population during the late gold-rush period.

Although facilities have been added to each of these prisons, their original pattern prevails and is inconsistent with the emphasis now being placed on maintaining a smaller community perspective in prison management.

In general, the classification of these prisons ranges from medium security to high security, with Pentridge being considered as a high-to-maximum security prison.

The other category of prisons in Victoria includes Won Wron, Morwell River and Dhurringile. These were developed during the fifties and sixties in response to the rising prisoner population, which included a substantial number who were considered to require from minimum to medium security, and the emphasis at these locations was on involving the prisoners in useful farming or reforestation work. Now that the number of new prisoners requiring low security is diminishing, prisons of this type are more often used for men approaching the conclusion of their sentences.

While Won Wron is a custom-built prison, Morwell River is a former forestry camp and still retains the huts provided for Forests Commission officers. Dhurringile was a farming homestead in the grand manner and a prisoner of war camp before becoming a prison. The latter provides a healthy outdoor existence, although living conditions for prisoners are cramped.

The other prison which provides substantial outdoor work and activity is at Ararat. This too is a custom-built prison and has been a medium security prison accommodating prisoners working at internal industries. Now, however, it is becoming a medium-to-high security prison as the nature of the Victorian prison population

changes, and the outer perimeter of the prison will soon be enclosed by a fence.

The only other prison in Victoria is Fairlea, which provides for women prisoners. Fairlea was previously a VD clinic, then a mental hospital. The facilities currently available are incommensurate with contemporary expectations of basic comforts, and the increasing population of women with serious criminal records is causing concern. However, a new block is being constructed which will provide single rooms and a community pattern of living for the women. An earlier development with the same principle was the construction of two villa units within the grounds of the prison about eight years ago. These provide living conditions which approximate those in the outside community as closely as the circumstances permit.

Two prisons have closed in recent years. One was the prison at French Island, which was based on the principle, evident elsewhere in Australian history, that a sound location for isolating men was an island. This underlying principle became fallacious as Phillip Island and towns along the nearby coast became developed and popular. The second prison to close—Coorimungle—did so principally because there was an over-provision of open prisons and the facilities at that location required substantial renovation.

Altogether then, the prison system in Victoria reflects a number of perspectives and overlays. The problem is to provide a range of accommodation which is consistent with the profile of the prisoner population today and which reflects current penal thinking. In essence, the latter may be described as emphasising smaller unit management with individual space, wherever possible, and flexibility in managing groups of people. The actual situation is, however, that there is more shared or dormitory space than individual space in Victorian prisons and there is a significantly higher percentage of shared or dormitory space in Victoria than in the other states.

Before concluding this broad description of the prison system in Victoria, a number of general issues need specific mention. The primary role of the prison system is to contain people—particularly people who constitute a risk to the community. The traditional mode for achieving this aim has been to lock them away in cells for the greater part of each day, to carefully scrutinise them on all other occasions and to provide perimeter security behind high walls, which have acted as a barrier to the outside world. It has always been recognised, however, that prisoners require different degrees of security and should be confined to that level of security most appropriate to the risk they present to the outside community or to other prisoners. The emphasis on perimeter security has been reiterated in recent years,

and more sophisticated forms of perimeter security have been introduced to compensate for the greater freedom that prisoners have been given within institutions. These include electronic devices, such as television surveillance, and razor ribbon which replaces the traditional barbed wire. There are, however, other security risks in the prison system which have multiplied with the spread of drug use and the development of more viable forms of explosives. The problem remains that of enabling optimum freedom of movement and contact with the outside world, while maintaining an adequate balance of security. This has resulted in the introduction of detection equipment and dog squads, while consideration is being given to legislation which would enable urine analysis for the detection of drug use.

Another important parameter in the prison world is employment. In prisons, as elsewhere, idleness breeds mischief, and the sad fact is that insufficient employment of a meaningful and gainful nature is available for prisoners. Discovering useful work in prisons is a universal problem. Difficulties are encountered in adequately training prisoners, equipping industries and containing union or industrial pressure. Another hazard in the successful operation of prison industries is the potential for sabotage. The prison industries available in Victoria range from the traditional mat-making to the recent innovation of a computer-programming enterprise. Current prison industries cater for general public service needs, as is exemplified by the number plate trade at Pentridge and work undertaken for the Government Printer within the printing industry at Pentridge. There is a growing prospect that prisons will be able to provide adequate meat and vegetables for departmental institutions, while the reforestation work in Gippsland has virtually redecorated the face of large portions of that countryside. Invaluable work done by prisoners in various State Forest reserves is rarely recognised. The daily rate of pay for prisoners is essentially a token payment, although the introduction two years ago of an incentive scheme based on production has boosted delivery significantly in some trades.

The educational, religious and recreational programs in prisons have also grown during recent years in a general attempt to normalise prison existence as far as possible. There has been increased emphasis on assisting prisoners to maintain relationships with family and community. This trend has been reflected in the augmented leave program, the introduction of contact visits and the greater use of volunteers for educational and recreational purposes.

The major ingredient in any enterprise is the security, training and dedication of staff. Failure to recognise this factor in a prison system, where there is an ever-present threat, can easily upset a delicately

balanced system or undermine even the best-intentioned policies. There has not yet been an appropriate degree of success with the continuing training and retraining programs for prison officers, although a necessary prerequisite has been securing adequate senior management for prisons so that rational and consistent change can be introduced. The anxiety of staff has been reflected in industrial action and, while training would erode some staff qualms, regard must always be given to the physical circumstances and quantity of staff and resources available when change is implemented. I have previously emphasised the need for the public to be aware that prisons are public institutions since this awareness provides security for both prisoners and the community. It is also necessary that prisoners with complaints have adequate opportunity for airing these before an objective tribunal. The traditional mechanism here was the Visiting Magistrate to the prison, or a senior officer, or the respective Minister. These opportunities have been augmented in recent years by the presence of the Ombudsman. There is no doubt that the opportunity to address complaints to the Ombudsman has provided a safety-valve for prisoners and also, on several occasions, given the public an assurance about allegations of alleged prison mismanagement.

Attendance centres

Attendance centres were introduced by legislation in Victoria during 1973, although the first centre did not open until four years ago. The attendance centres provide an opportunity for courts to keep a person in the community who would otherwise be sent to prison for up to twelve months. However, it is required that the person first be sentenced to imprisonment before being offered the opportunity for this disposition.

There are currently four attendance centres in Victoria, with a legislated ceiling of forty persons per attendance centre. Each centre has operated at near capacity during the past few years. The recent State Budget provided for two new attendance centres, and the ceiling at facilities will be raised to sixty persons. The attendees undertake community work on one day of each weekend and are required to attend the attendance centre on two evenings each week for participation in programs designed to ensure their integration into local communities. In some circumstances, attendees have been excused from evening sessions, provided they undertake approved courses of education. It will be recognised that this program provides a direct alternative to imprisonment.

I can safely predict that legislation relating to community work orders will be introduced before the Spring session of Parliament is completed. This scheme was considered by the Sentencing Alternatives Committee, which was convened by the Attorney-General under the Chairmanship of Mr Justice Nelson, and has a mandate to consider all sentencing dispositions, among other matters. The scheme provides for people to undertake community work for a specified number of hours as an alternative to imprisonment, but, unlike the case where a person is committed to an attendance centre, the convicted person is not sentenced to imprisonment beforehand.

The probation system was introduced into Victoria in 1956 and requires that a person placed on probation be supervised for that period and avoid any further offence. There has been continuing criticism about the failure to provide adequate supervision. This has always been an ailment of the system in Victoria since, generally speaking, the use of probation grew more quickly than the resources available. Hence, there has always been a significant number of probationers who receive minimal supervision. The utilisation of honorary probation officers (HPOs) preceded the advent of stipendiary officers and continues to be a factor in supervision in this State. However, resources have limited the opportunity for adequate expansion and support of honorary officers, although the great value of community participation in probation work has always been recognised. It is now estimated that up to ninety per cent of people placed on probation could be supervised by HPOs with adequate support and training, and the general approach to supervision is being rearranged on this basis.

The other mode of direct community supervision available in Victoria has a coeval history with probation, as legislation for a parole board and the parole system was introduced coincidentally with probation supervision. The Parole Board has changed in profile on several occasions and currently comprises the Chairman who is a Judge of the Supreme Court, a Permanent Member and three other members, including the Director-General of Community Welfare Services.

The Permanent Member was added to the Parole Board to assist in making the Board's decisions explicit to prisoners. It is continually argued, using foreign experience as evidence, that parole systems are fickle and outmoded. However, the Parole Board in Victoria has always endeavoured to make the principles used in its decision making known to prisoners and the community in dealing with maximum/minimum sentences pronounced by courts rather than indeterminate sentences, and has not seen itself as a re-sentencing agency. It is likely

that the community would always demand that such an agency give full consideration to the risks attending the release of a prisoner and the Parole Board sees this as a foremost principle in exercising discretion about releasing a prisoner at the time of minimum sentence.

I have deliberately avoided referring to the correctional interests of the Children's Court, but the disposition that court shares with adult courts is the possibility of detention in a youth training centre. The authority of an adult court in this regard relates to young persons between the age of seventeen and twenty-one years. The Department provides two facilities for trainees at Malmsbury and Langi Kal Kal (near Beaufort), while Turana Youth Training Centre provides accommodation for this age range during the period of classification. It is assumed that courts by using this disposition rather than imprisonment, which is equally available for people in the same age range, have concluded that signs of immaturity are still present and that, with proper handling, further criminality can be avoided. The emphasis in youth training centres is on encouraging personal growth through a variety of educational, training and recreational pursuits, with considerable attention to encouraging young people to recognise the basis and result of their actions, and their responsibilities in the community.

Prisoners

The first profile of client population I offer relates to prisoners. It has been the practice in DCWS to undertake a census of prisoners every second year, although some variables are maintained on a yearly basis and are described in the Annual Report of the Department. The last census of prisoners in Victoria reflected the turn-about in prisoner population in this State. At the time of the first census in October 1970, the total prison population stood at 2,340 persons. By the end of December of that year, the number had fallen to 2,287. This decline in numbers during the Christmas period occurs regularly each year and is followed by an increase in the following February, when the courts resume. All through 1971 and until the middle of 1972, the number of people in custody was well above 2,300, and on 4 September 1971 an all-time high was recorded when 2,436 persons were in prison custody.

In July 1972 a downward trend developed in the number of people imprisoned. By October 1973, when the second census was held, the number of prisoners was down to 1,897 i.e. four hundred and forty-three fewer people were imprisoned than at the time of the first census, representing a decline of 18.9%. The downward trend con-

tinued until the beginning of 1975, when, after the seasonal increase in numbers during February and March, the population steadied around the 1,600 level. In October 1975 it was down to 1,544, i.e. seven hundred and ninety-six fewer than in 1970, a decline of thirty-four per cent. During 1976 a tendency towards smaller numbers was still noticeable, but weakening. In 1977 the prison population steadied around 1,500, and it seems that this was the end of the decline, at least for the present. On the night of the fourth census in October 1977, 1,476 persons were detained—a decline of 37.3% relative to 1970. During the first half of 1978 an upward trend in the Victorian prison population began to take shape, and this has continued to the present time, with the population at 30 June 1980 being 1,784 prisoners. This figure does not include one hundred and forty-seven persons at attendance centres. Another factor worth noting here is that, according to the figures available for June 1980, the remand population has continued to fall, and therefore the number of sentenced prisoners is proportionately greater.

An interesting sidelight related to growth in prison numbers, although still relatively insignificant, is a trend upwards for female prison numbers.

The population of prisoners in Victoria is still far below that of other States when measured as a ratio per 100,000 of population. The number of prisoners per 100,000 of population in Victoria is 46.3, compared with a national average of 67.5 and averages in NSW Queensland and SA of 66.8, 75.4 and 68, respectively. However, Victoria's prison population is now showing a relatively faster increase than is occurring in other States. The prison census during 1978 provides the most recent analysis of the main offences for which persons were imprisoned and underlines the fact that the number of persons already held for offences in the categories "against person" and "driving" was increasing. The number of those held for murder and attempted murder rose from ninety in 1970 to one hundred and forty-eight in 1978. Instead of representing a mere 4.2%, as was the case in 1970, they represented 10.2% in 1978. In other words, in 1978 one in every ten prisoners was in prison for murder or attempted murder. The number in prison for manslaughter fell slightly—from thirty-eight in 1970 to thirty-six in 1978, but, because of the overall decline in the prison population, they became a higher percentage of the convicted prisoners, i.e. 2.5% in 1978 compared with 1.8% in 1970.

The number of prisoners convicted for assault varied over the years from one hundred and sixty-three in 1970 to two hundred and nine in 1978. While in 1970 they represented only 7.7% of the con-

victed prisoners, their percentage was 14.3% in 1978. In 1978 the number of prisoners who had been convicted for rape stood at sixty-four. This was the same figure as in 1970, but, because of the decrease in the total number of convicted prisoners, the percentage of such prisoners had risen from 3% to 4.4%. If one combines the homicide, assault, robbery and rape cases, i.e. prisoners whose main offence indicates a propensity towards violence, one notes an increase in their number and, more particularly, in the percentage they constitute of all convicted prisoners. In 1970 they numbered five hundred and twenty-four (24.7%). In 1978 they numbered six hundred and forty-two (44.2%). To put the same thing in another way, while at the time of the 1970 census only one in every four prisoners was convicted for a violent offence, in 1978 almost every second prisoner was potentially violent.

The number of offenders convicted on drug charges also increased from seven in 1970 to forty in 1978, and their percentage from 0.3% to 2.7%. There was a sharp increase in the number of those in prison for driving while disqualified or unlicensed: from thirty-seven in 1970 to ninety-six in 1978. Their percentage among the convicted prisoners rose from a mere 1.7% in 1970 to 6.6% in 1978.

Another statistic which requires attention as one of the factors currently influencing planning for the prisoner population in Victoria is length of sentence. In 1970 at the time of the census, four hundred and fifty-four people were in prison with sentences of less than six months. In 1978 the number was down to two hundred and forty-four. The number of those in prison for six months, but less than one year, fell from four hundred and twenty-one in 1970 to two hundred and sixty-six in 1978. The number of prisoners with sentences between five and ten years increased marginally during the same period, but the number with sentences of ten years and over moved from seventy-four in 1970 to one hundred and ten in 1978. The increase is more spectacular when seen as a percentage of all convicted prisoners, for it was 3.5% in 1970, 5.8% in 1973, but 7.6% in 1978. The number of those serving a life sentence or awaiting the Governor's pleasure more than doubled, and their relative percentage more than trebled. In 1970, there were forty persons so imprisoned, representing 1.9% of the population, while in 1978 there were ninety-five persons serving life sentences or awaiting the Governor's pleasure, which represented 6.6% of all convicted prisoners. The total number in this category now appears to be growing at a rate of approximately thirty persons per year.

In overall terms, then, the prisoner population is increasing at a relatively rapid rate, with a significantly higher proportion of people

being imprisoned for offences against the person. It would seem that longer sentences are a direct influence here, together with the relatively rapid growth in the number of persons imprisoned for indeterminate periods. This trend is inducing strain, since the overall population is quickly approaching the current ceiling of prisoner accommodation in the State. The profile of accommodation available indicates that a relatively large proportion of space in open prisons is shared accommodation. This is inconsistent with space requirements for a prisoner population of more violent persons who are serving longer sentences and must be regarded as community risks.

For some time there had been a steady decline in the number of escapes from Victorian prisons, and this compared very well with other mainland States in Australia. Moreover, the number of prison incidents had stabilised, despite the increase in population. However, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of escapes within Victoria since the beginning of June this year. Consequently, there is an urgent need to build additional security space within prisons, or to convert space which is currently available for prisoners with lower security ratings into accommodation which provides greater security.

In this regard, it is perhaps appropriate to analyse the population of persons admitted to Victorian prisons with sentences of less than six months. As I have previously indicated, the census in 1978 demonstrated that the number of such persons had fallen significantly from four hundred and fifty-four in 1970 to two hundred and forty-four in 1978. This trend has persevered, but an examination of persons received by the prison system between 1 July 1979 to 30 June 1980 shows that, of the 5,428 people received into prison during that period, 3,987 (66.9%) were to serve sentences under six months. It will be appreciated that this turnover factor alone requires considerable resource investment.

An analysis of the prisoner population with sentences of less than six months in 1978 indicates that one-third were imprisoned for driving offences, one-third for property offences and one-third for other offences, including offences against the person. However, of the admissions previously described for the year ending 30 June 1980, 300 persons with sentences less than six months had no previous convictions. It seems that many of the persons imprisoned for sentences less than six months are in prison because courts believe in the principle of deterrence, but it is worth emphasising that 60% of the men so imprisoned have been imprisoned on previous occasions.

The introduction of dispositions which provide alternatives to imprisonment will, hopefully, quickly erode the strain of short-term imprisonment on the prison system, which needs to give more careful

consideration to persons regarded as serious risks to the community. However, the experience with probation and parole services since their inception in the State must be taken into account here. The average number of persons placed on probation in Victoria is 77.9 per 100,000. This compares with a national average of 135.5. Metropolitan courts, particularly in recent years, have expressed lack of confidence in the probation service fulfilling its desired role in Victoria, although quite recent analysis demonstrates there is now a slow upturn in the number of persons being placed in this disposition.

As I have indicated, the probation service in the State is being redirected through engaging more volunteers in probation supervision, and this trend will hopefully persist as courts develop more confidence in probation. It is likely that the legal provisions relating to probation need re-examination alongside court expectation, but the overall lesson reflected in both probation and parole is that, if alternatives to imprisonment are to work successfully in diminishing the short-term prisoner population, they must be reputable services which inspire confidence, particularly with members of the Bench.

Attendance centres appear to have inspired such confidence and, when available, they have quickly filled to capacity. It should be remembered, however, that legislation stipulates a manageable workload at these facilities, whereas probation has been an open-ended disposition which quickly flooded the resources available. It is interesting to analyse the relative costs of various dispositions of persons admitted to the correctional systems of the State at the present time. In approximate terms, the cost of imprisonment per person is \$250 per week, the cost per attendee is \$45 per week, and the anticipated cost for a person placed on a community service order disposition is \$11 per week.

Future directions

I recently had the opportunity of attending the UN Congress on the "Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders" in Caracas, Venezuela, where the general theme of "De-Institutionalisation of Corrections and Its Implications for the Residual Prisoner" was the subject of considerable discussion. The major theme reflected in the report of the sub-committee considering this issue is that de-institutionalisation should proceed as quickly as possible, but that the particular problems presented by a residual prisoner population need careful consideration to ensure that regimes do not develop which might prove subversive to the objectives of humane, civilised treatment of offenders. In this regard, it was recognised that the imple-

mentation of the UN standard minimum rules for prisoners need review, with particular consideration being paid to their observance around the world. The rules generally relate to the nature of accommodation, services, staff, grievance mechanisms and other features of prison systems.

A review of the implementation of the rules in Australia is now undertaken on a regular basis. Victoria generally performs well in most areas, except the quality of accommodation available for prisoners. The rules, although reflecting a framework for the adequate care and treatment of prisoners, do not succinctly identify management principles. These principles were articulated with great common sense by Professor Isaac Dinitz during the John Barry Memorial Lecture earlier this week, when he addressed the issue "Are safe and humane prisons possible?" He expanded on the theme that prisons should be lawful, safe, industrious and hopeful. In preparation for this address tonight, I too had endeavoured to identify some basic management principles. Those I identified were fairness, security, work, humaneness and help when needed, but I concede that the Professor has probably identified essential management perspectives more accurately.

The local wisdom about future perspectives for correctional services closely resembles the world-wide emphases and is essentially contained in the Government White Paper on "The Future of Social Welfare in Victoria". There is merit in this context in reflecting on the proposals in that Paper. The Government therein considered that the primary functions of the State's correctional system are social control and deterrence. However, it also recognised that the principles of rehabilitation and restitution are highly significant. It further recognised that conditions for imprisonment should be humane and should not involve unavoidable loss of dignity. It is therefore necessary to work towards achieving UN minimum standards for prisons within the Victorian prison system. The paper agreed with the view expressed by the community that corrections should continue to be integrated with family and community services, but that the special nature of correctional services should be acknowledged by the appointment of a Commissioner for Correctional Services within DCWS. It further provides that remand prisoners and minor first offenders should be protected against sustained contact with confirmed criminals, and that first offenders who have sentences of less than 12 months should be separated from other offenders. The Government also supported an increased range of non-institutional penalties, including expansion of the attendance centre program, the introduction of a community service order scheme and the establishment of a

work/fine option program, with special reference to people who may otherwise be imprisoned because of inability to pay fines. The document emphasised that the social control aspects of probation and parole should be clearly defined, and that adequate resources should be available for both probation and parole programs, while adequate pre-court advice should be available to courts for sentencing purposes. Further support was given to the need to develop pre-release programs, including a work release program for all prisoners with prison terms of 12 months or more, so that prisoners can adjust to the community before release. The White Paper also drew attention to the need for an industrial corporation, comprising departmental staff, representatives of outside industries, other government departments and unions to oversight prison industrial and farming enterprise. A committee comprising representatives of employers, unions and government departments is currently considering the nature of a corporation for this purpose.

The concluding paragraphs relevant to corrections in the paper reiterate that prisons are necessary to protect public safety and to reduce fear of crime, that the government will give close attention to the classification of prisoners, taking the maintenance of public safety as the most important criterion, and that high security accommodation will be expanded as appropriate. There has been movement in many of these areas, although it should be recognised that White Papers generally reflect future desiderata rather than programs for short-term achievement.

In my opinion, however, a number of particular matters relating to Corrections still need consideration alongside the general flow which I have endeavoured to describe during this address.

For one thing, there needs to be co-operation and planning between particular arms of the criminal justice system so that there is closer integration in their related pursuits. From this viewpoint, it is pleasing to note that a Correctional Services Council has just been initiated. The Council includes representatives from the various parts of the criminal justice system, as well as community participation and will report jointly through the Attorney-General and the Minister for CWS to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Justice and Public Protection Policy. An essential beginning to overall criminal justice planning is adequate data, and there have been tentative beginnings here with representatives of the police, the legal system and correctional services considering the best mode of collecting integrated statistics in the future. There also needs to be closer contact between courts and shared information about the success or otherwise of sentencing options, so that sentencing remains a responsible and meaningful exer-

cise. Where a range of sentencing alternatives exists, it is important that these be appropriately utilised or modified, if, over a period of time, it appear necessary to vary them.

I am impressed by the handbook available to courts in Great Britain, which characterises the particular goals of sentencing dispositions. I noticed during a recent visit to Great Britain that there is increased emphasis on training members of the Bench in sentencing, and, although informal networks and individual discussion must always remain, there does seem purpose in expanding the opportunity for training of this kind in Australia also.

The public must become more involved in crime prevention and criminal justice programs. I have already discussed the expanded use of volunteers that is proposed in relation to probation, and volunteers are also used at other points in the criminal justice system. However, this mode probably needs comprehensive re-examination, and I believe that there is now much to be gained by creating local regional committees to consider problems relating to crime prevention and offenders in their local communities. The obvious reward is the active participation of community members, and therefore living communities, rather than over-reliance on professional advice and expertise.

A matter which has received consideration in Great Britain during the past few years has been the length of sentences for imprisonment. A Commission report recommended that maximum sentences be revised to lower ceilings since, in general, there was limited approximation to the maximum sentences stipulated by legislation. While this report is still under discussion, the issue does deserve consideration in Victoria also and the Sentencing Alternatives Committee is currently examining the report.

Since the abolition of capital punishment in Victoria, persons who previously would have been given a commuted sentence have been sentenced to life imprisonment and I anticipate that the indeterminate nature of this disposition will eventually create problems. The British report previously mentioned recommended that the court decide the length of sentence for this class of prisoner, except where the nature of the offence merits an unspecified period, but that the maximum period be safeguarded by alternative means. There is, of course, a tendency for longer sentences to be seen as an antidote to reducing crime, but this premise appears to warrant serious re-examination.

Another disposition which requires further consideration at this stage is that which provides that a person found not guilty because of mental instability be detained at the Governor's pleasure. It has been noticeable that, since capital punishment was abolished, the number of persons in this category has declined significantly, which suggests

that those now placed in this way require particular reconsideration. People who are detained at the Governor's pleasure are prisoners, and, although safe custody is often warranted, I frequently wonder whether imprisonment is the most desirable disposition. This issue is currently being re-examined.

In conclusion, I would like to re-emphasise that, in my view, Corrections have reached a watershed in Victoria, and careful planning to meet future needs based on general predictions of the future correctional population is vital, if economic and purposeful management is to be the keynote. On this basis, DCWS is finalising a developmental plan for Corrections which gives due regard to these factors. I would hope that some of the necessary features can be developed quickly and accurately, since the time for manoeuvre is quickly foreshortening.