ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT

Evaluation of Indigenous Justice Programs
Project B: Offender Support and Reintegration

Final report

January 2013

CULTURAL & INDIGENOUS RESEARCH
CENTRE AUSTRALIA

in collaboration with

ANNE MARKIEWICZ AND ASSOCIATES

Head Office (Sydney): Level 1, 93 Norton St, Leichhardt NSW 2040
Melbourne Office: Level 14, Como Centre, 644 Chapel St, South Yarra VIC 3141
ABN: 30 065 353 951

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Acknowledgements

The Cultural and Indigenous Research Centre Australia (CIRCA) would like to acknowledge and thank the program participants, Aboriginal community Elders and stakeholders who gave up their time to be interviewed and share their knowledge and stories with us.

We would like to acknowledge the contribution of Anne Markiewicz and Associates to preparing the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the evaluation and contributing to the framework for analysis and the lessons for good practice.

CIRCA would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr Troy Allard for preparing the review of literature and prior evaluations for this project.

CIRCA would like to acknowledge Dr Ian Patrick for conducting the site visit for the Roebourne DECCA Program and preparing the chapter relating to this program.

We would also like to thank the many people we contacted throughout the process who provided advice, suggestions and contacts that were critical in allowing the evaluation to happen.

Executive summary

It has been more than 20 years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. In that time all Australian governments have introduced initiatives to act on the recommendations of the Commission. However, despite concerted effort and resources being invested, the fact remains that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are still significantly over-represented in the criminal justice system, both as victims and offenders.

In 2009 the Australian Government announced funding of $2 million for a major evaluation of 26 initiatives that aimed to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system. The aim was to build on the evidence base of what works in tackling crime and justice issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The evaluations also aimed to support work under the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework, endorsed in 2009 by the former Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (now the Standing Council on Law and Justice). The evaluation is comprised of five projects (A to E), of which Project B considers programs relating to Offender Support and Reintegration. This report presents the findings of the evaluation of Project B, covering eight programs across four states.

Structure of the report

After a summary of the programs in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 describes the methodology adopted, which involved consultations with program managers and staff to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework; a comprehensive literature review; consultations with program managers, program staff, stakeholders, Elders and in some cases program participants; and a review of documentation and monitoring data for each program. Following the literature review in Chapter 4, the report presents evaluation findings for the eight programs (for detailed findings on each program see the relevant chapter):

- **Dthina Yuwali Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Program (NSW):** a structured and staged alcohol and other drug program for young offenders focusing on the relationship between substance use and pathways to offending; it aims to motivate young people to change their substance use and offending – Chapter 5.
- **Local Justice Worker Program (Victoria):** a program that aims to increase the likelihood that Aboriginal offenders sentenced to mandated community work will successfully complete their orders; it does this by identifying and implementing culturally appropriate worksites, providing on-the-job management, assisting Aboriginal adults to meet obligations related to outstanding fines, and contributing to the development of positive relationships between the local Aboriginal community and justice-related agencies – Chapter 6.

- **Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria):** a program that aims to assist offenders who are fulfilling the requirements of Community Corrections Orders; it does this by ensuring Elders and respected persons are involved in the program so they can provide community-based local support, advice and cultural connection to offenders, as well as by supervising offenders undertaking mandated community work and identifying and establishing culturally appropriate worksites – Chapter 6.
- **Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program (Victoria):** a week-long program that seeks to enable prisoners and offenders to develop greater awareness and understanding of their cultural identity, increase their self-confidence and re-examine their responsibilities to self, others and the community; it also aims to provide a gateway to offence-specific programs – Chapter 7.
- **Marumali Program (Victoria):** a licensed five-day model of healing that was developed to support members of the stolen generations to recover from longstanding trauma; it aims to affirm and strengthen participants' identity and contribute to their rehabilitation by encouraging a positive direction and by acting as a gateway to offence-specific programs – Chapter 7.
- **Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria):** an adaptation of a mainstream cognitive skills program developed for Aboriginal prisoners; it is intended as a foundation program and is designed to prepare and motivate offenders for participation in moderate or higher intensity, more targeted offence-specific interventions – Chapter 7.
- **Roebourne DECCA Program (Western Australia):** a work training program with a range of training modules focusing on work preparation and pre-vocational and vocational options; it seeks to provide prisoners with recognised skills relevant to securing employment on release – Chapter 8.
- **Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania):** two three-day camps on Aboriginal cultural specific land, with a focus on improving participants' health and wellbeing by using Aboriginal culture, outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy with the aim of enhancing their integration into society after release – Chapter 9.

Finally, Chapter 10 provides a description of key lessons learned and strategies for achieving good practice across all programs.

Building an evidence base

The aim of this evaluation was to increase the number of robust evaluations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Offender Support and Reintegration programs, by determining whether and on what basis these programs could be considered good practice. The evaluation developed a conceptual framework that was applied to each of the eight programs. Ten common good practice themes were identified based on literature that provides a reasonable consensus as to aspects of good practice in

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Offender Support and Reintegration, and on consultations with stakeholders from the programs. These themes were arranged according to three components: 1) What is a good intervention? 2) What is a good model? 3) What is a well-managed and delivered program? Programs were assessed against the good practice themes on a scale of 'excellent to very good practice', 'adequate practice' or 'poor practice'. The assessment of all programs against the good practice themes is outlined in Chapter 10 (Table 10a).

Summary of findings

Dthina Yuwali Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Program

The Dthina Yuwali Program responds to a need for programs for Aboriginal young people that relate substance use with pathways to offending. Dthina Yuwali was developed by Aboriginal Juvenile Justice staff in consultation with Aboriginal Elders and community members, and operates within a cultural framework with a strong emphasis on culture and history.

Dthina Yuwali is delivered in three modules, but program data indicates that the majority of participants only complete Stage 1 (76% of 129), with 3% completing Stages 1 and 2 and the remaining 21% completing all three stages. Completion rates are very high for individual modules, with 88% of participants completing the module they are offered.

Qualitative data, based on consultations with a range of stakeholders, including program managers, counsellors, Juvenile Justice Officers, Youth Officers, Elders and respected community members, identified numerous short-term outcomes for participants. The outcomes included improved self-awareness about the connection between substance use and offending, and exposure to the notion of group work and counselling in this context. Analysis of participant feedback indicates most participants found Dthina Yuwali helpful (87%, 69 participants). Most also noted that the program either exceeded their expectations (61%) or met their expectations (31%). Analysis of data from pre- and post-assessment tools also suggests there were positive outcomes in terms of increased motivation to reduce substance use or to stop offending in the short term. However, there were concerns about the reliability of this data due to low completion rates and the use of potentially complex and ambiguous language.

Local Justice Worker Program and Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program

These programs address an identified need to support Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders to successfully complete their orders. Limitations in monitoring data collected, as well as challenges associated with identifying an appropriate control group, precluded a quantitative assessment of the relationship between program participation and the completion of Community Corrections Orders and reoffending. However, qualitative feedback and statewide data on improved

completion rates of orders by Aboriginal offenders suggest that the programs may be making a contribution to these improved rates.

These programs are focused on building relationships between Aboriginal communities and justice agencies with a view to improving justice-related experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians, and the programs have achieved considerable outcomes in relation to these aims. The programs have facilitated the payment and resolution of a substantial number of outstanding fines and warrants through initiatives developed in partnership with local Sheriff's Offices. They have also improved the competence and confidence of justice agencies to work effectively with Aboriginal communities.

The programs have a strong emphasis on culture and community support and strive to engage program clients with programs and services that address underlying factors associated with offending. Evaluation feedback indicated that the assistance and support provided is highly valued, particularly in relation to the support provided during court appearances, the linkages made with other support services and programs, and the enhanced understanding of justice-related processes.

Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program and Koori Cognitive Skills Program

All three of these programs operate within a cultural framework and have a clear focus on Aboriginal culture and history. In particular, the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program are specifically designed to increase participants' understanding of their culture and the historical, cultural and social factors that have affected and affect the lives of Aboriginal people both historically and now. The evaluation found that the Aboriginal-specific programs delivered by Corrections Victoria fulfil a need for culturally relevant corrections programs for Aboriginal offenders.

The three programs are intended either as preparatory programs for Aboriginal offenders to participate and engage in offending behaviour programs or as programs designed to teach participants skills such as problem-solving. Participation in all cultural programs is voluntary, and completion rates for the programs are high. Under the current data management system, Corrections Victoria does not have the capacity to track and monitor individuals' program participation centrally in order to measure outcomes in terms of facilitating participation in other behavioural and offence-specific custodial and community-based programs. As a result, it is not possible to accurately measure the programs' success in achieving this central program outcome. The evaluation also identified opportunities to evaluate the results of participant testing undertaken as part of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program in order to assess overall program outcomes, particularly in relation to motivation and skills acquisition.

Evaluation feedback as well as participant feedback forms completed following program participation indicate program participants experienced positive personal outcomes in improved engagement and increased motivation to seek further assistance as a result of their participation in the programs. Participants experienced a stronger sense of identity, pride and belonging and increased confidence from participating. Improved communication and problem-solving skills, patience and coping strategies

were also cited as benefits, and the programs were generally felt to be empowering and successful in terms of instilling cultural pride, improving cultural identity, promoting respect and increasing a sense of community responsibility.

Roebourne DECCA Program

The DECCA model is focused on increasing employment of Indigenous prisoners, as well as building a set of complementary skills and capacities which promote successful reintegration. Although some information in relation to employment of DECCA participants following release from prison was available, it did not result from systematic and regular recording and follow-up and as a result limitations were evident in data accuracy and availability. Program records indicate that between 2007 and 2011 around a quarter of DECCA participants moved directly into employment when released from Roebourne Regional Prison (RRP), although it was suggested that these results underestimate employment outcomes. Such discrepancies highlight the need for consistent and careful recording of this vital performance indicator, and attention to coordination on sharing and management of data.

Qualitative feedback and analysis of DECCA Program records suggest that those attending DECCA have increased their level of technical skills in areas that are highly relevant to the mining and construction sectors, and more generally to maintenance and related tasks in Aboriginal communities. Increased work readiness and orientation, together with improvements in self-esteem, motivation and self-responsibility, were also cited as important skills gained.

Program data indicates that, of the 84 participants in the three-year period 2007 to 2009, 33% had returned to custody in Western Australia within two years. The result was similar for Aboriginal participants, where 32% of the 75 Aboriginal participants from 2007 to 2009 had returned to custody in Western Australia within two years. While total participant numbers are low, these figures compare favourably with the overall recidivism rates of around 42% in the prison population in Western Australia when recorded over a two-year period. However, caution needs to be taken when drawing conclusions on this data as a recidivism analysis was not conducted that matched DECCA participants with an appropriate comparative control group in relation to age, gender, offence type, offending history and location.

Aboriginal Reconnect Program

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program is focused on building protective factors that may assist with reintegration by improving participants' health and wellbeing through the use of Aboriginal culture, outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy activities. The program reaches small numbers of offenders overall and is not run frequently enough to include all Aboriginal prisoners who may want to participate. In total, 32 Aboriginal offenders participated in nine camps between 2006 and 2011. Around two-thirds of participants (13 out of 19) who participated in a first camp went on to complete a second camp.

The current project aim is to be a vehicle for longer term support through Aboriginal-specific prisoner throughcare programs. While overall qualitative feedback indicates program participants experienced positive personal outcomes in engagement and motivation to participate in Aboriginal-specific throughcare programs, there is limited data available to support this. For example, participation in these throughcare programs among participants of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program is not tracked.

Qualitative feedback suggests that the Aboriginal Reconnect Program has the potential to provide a range of benefits for participants. Stakeholders consulted throughout the evaluation cited numerous examples of short-term outcomes for participants, such as greater awareness of participants' culture and identity; improved self-discipline, self-expression, confidence and self-esteem; achieving goals by working solely and as a team; increased motivation; and increased social interaction.

Key lessons

The evaluation came up against a lack of comprehensive data with which to conclusively measure outcomes. Despite this, valuable lessons have been learned from evaluating the programs against the good practice themes. The following summarises the key lessons in relation to good practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Offender Support and Reintegration programs for each of the overarching components: What is a good intervention? What is a good model? What is a well managed and delivered program?

What is a good intervention and model?

Cultural appropriateness and inclusion are important for program success

All programs were operating within a cultural framework and were based on the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in program design and delivery, and this principle was affirmed as a key foundation for achieving program outcomes.

Developing monitoring and evaluation functions is important to participant outcomes

Due to the absence of performance management systems able to generate robust monitoring data, the programs were not able to identify their progress against intended intermediate-level outcomes. This hindered their capacity to identify their achievements and successes, which also hampered their capacity to modify and adjust their program design in light of findings about what works and what does not.

All of the programs could have benefited from adopting an increased focus on monitoring and evaluation. Measurement of program success should focus more on intended intermediate and long-term program outcomes such as the development of skills, acquisition of competencies, placement in work or community settings, or increased motivation and capacity for program participants to successfully access and utilise other related and necessary support services or programs.

Assessing individual outcomes depends on the availability of robust data

Data gaps prevented the programs from establishing recidivism trends or making progress in accessing other treatment programs, support services or opportunities for participant groups, and additional effort is needed to ensure robust data on program participants is collected and able to be disaggregated by program, region and Aboriginal status. The programs, according to qualitative feedback received, appeared to have made a contribution, along with a range of related programs and interventions, to positive participant outcomes that would support offenders not to reoffend. These perspectives would have greater validity if outcome data was collected and analysed through qualitative evaluation methodologies such as case studies that track client progress or the Most Significant Change technique, a technique involving the collection of stories of significant change to capture participants' experiences of the impact of programs. This is a very important consideration given the challenges of relying on long-term quantitative measures to assess program outcomes.

Service partnerships play a critical role in program success

Effective service partnerships formed a basis for all programs, though this was an area that needed improvement for the Dthina Yuwali Program and the Aboriginal Reconnect Program. The Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program and the DECCA Program demonstrated success in this area as there was community support in place and there were strong links with services and programs to address other needs and underlying issues associated with offending behaviour. The partnerships developed for these programs expanded the reach and impact of the programs, their level of acceptance and the availability of resources.

Capacity for systems advocacy and individual advocacy is important

Programs should ideally have the capacity to influence the service system in order to enable greater access to mainstream services and supports for their clients, and to improve relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and justice-related agencies. For some programs, such as the Local Justice Worker Program, systems advocacy was a part of their core business, but this capacity was not available in the remaining programs. It appears to be important for programs to have some capacity for systems advocacy and/or capacity for the promotion of the unique needs of their target groups; some programs were able to undertake these roles, while others were significantly limited in doing so by lack of resources.

What is a well managed and delivered program?

Effective governance and management are important for program success

There was a need for all programs to develop clear and realistic program intent through program logic mapping (or similar) so that they could have a clear direction. This was particularly important for

programs, such as the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, the Marumali Program, the Koori Cognitive Skills Program and the Aboriginal Reconnect Program, that intended to operate as a gateway to other programs, in order to ensure that a tiered and progressive approach to intervention was adopted and followed through. All programs needed to develop robust monitoring systems, including capacity for client tracking and follow-up post intervention. There was a need for all programs to prioritise this monitoring function and to develop appropriate data collection systems and processes that could easily generate this data. This was seen by the evaluation to be a critical finding for Project B in regard to programs developing an outcomes focus to their work.

Ensuring sustainability in program funding is important for program success

Most of the programs were challenged by a lack of adequate, stable and ongoing funding, and this worked to limit their success (this was true for all programs except the Local Justice Worker Program and the Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program). The lack of funding underlined many of the performance issues identified in this evaluation. The capacity of the programs to undertake performance monitoring to establish client outcomes, develop collaborative service partnerships and undertake systems advocacy were all limited by such constraints. There was also a need for adequate funding for the system as a whole in order to provide complementary programs and services.

Strategies for achieving good practice

The key lessons arising from the evaluation have revealed a number of challenges for achieving good practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Offender Support and Reintegration programs. The following strategies were identified both in terms of program design and funding/support of programs.

Programs should develop a valid design and undertake program planning

Programs should focus on planning functions, including a comprehensive program design document, attention to program objectives, specifying expected outcomes, and regular reporting of progress in relation to intent, processes and critical issues.

Programs should be adequately supported to develop monitoring and evaluation capacity

Programs should develop their monitoring and evaluation capacity to ensure continual quality improvement of the services they provide and their capacity to evolve to meet changing needs. This will require initial and continued training and adequate resourcing so that appropriate and customised performance management systems can be implemented. It could be beneficial for programs to develop a framework to guide the collection of monitoring and evaluation data. This, however, would require expertise and resources, possibly beyond those normally dedicated to service delivery functions. It may be beneficial, therefore, to nominate that approximately 10% of a program's budget be dedicated to monitoring and evaluation functions. This is also advisable so that resources do not appear to be taken away from service delivery. Alternately, clusters of programs could be brought

together to share monitoring and evaluation activities. Monitoring and evaluation capacity could be improved by the adoption of data systems that include program and participant identifiers in order to enable access to and comparisons with criminal justice data collected by key government departments and agencies, taking into account ethical and privacy requirements. In other words, evaluation needs to be built in as a core component of program design and not left to ad-hoc, one-off evaluation processes.

Programs should conduct research and use evidence-based interventions

Some of the programs, such as the Dthina Yuwali Program and the Koori Cognitive Skills Program, were based on evidence-based models and were able to clearly articulate their theoretical foundations, while others were not. Ideally, all programs should be in a position to deliver evidence-based interventions known to be effective in addressing offending behaviour. However, while the body of research is growing in this field, there remain substantial gaps in such evidence. When developing program designs, a theory of change model or program theory approach could be used to outline the expected trajectory of progress and outcomes from intervention models.

There should be adequate resourcing to achieve program aims and objectives

All programs required increased levels of staffing and resources and a more consistent and stable funding base for their initiatives. Programs experienced challenges in ensuring adequate program resources and sustainable funding.

Conclusion

The evaluation of the eight programs within Project B indicated a range of positive outcomes in terms of Offender Support and Reintegration. While lack of comprehensive data makes definitive findings on longer term goals such as reducing recidivism difficult, many significant positive outcomes were identified. In one program, for example, participants turned up to volunteer on a project even after completing their orders. In another, prisoners expressed a desire to become spokespeople for their community after their release from prison so they could educate young Aboriginal people about not following the same path. And across the programs the evaluation highlighted that participants found the programs approachable and beneficial, and that local communities as a whole benefited from involvement. Importantly, all of the programs were found to be achieving outcomes in line with their original intent, although the degree to which this was being achieved varied, and these achievements could be improved with attention to the key lessons and strategies identified in this report.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are dramatically over-represented in the criminal justice system. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are 14 times more likely to be in prison than non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults (ABS, 2012). Similarly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are significantly over-represented in the juvenile justice system. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are 14 times as likely to be under community-based supervision and 18 times as likely to be in detention (AIHW, 2012).

A range of justice responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has attempted to address this over-representation and to respond to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) (1991). Over the more than 20 years since the Royal Commission, most Australian states and territories have introduced initiatives in this area.

The Australian Government's allocation of $2 million (announced in August 2009) prompted an evaluation of Indigenous Justice Programs to build an evidence base to support the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework (the Framework). The Framework was endorsed by the former Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (now the Standing Council on Law and Justice (SCLJ)) in November 2009. Five major projects or themes are being examined in these evaluations, with a total of 26 Indigenous justice programs considered within them:

- Project A: Aboriginal Sentencing Courts and Conferences
- Project B: Offender Support and Reintegration
- Project C: Diversion Programs
- Project D: Night and Community Patrols
- Project E: Residential Drug and Alcohol Programs.

This report relates to Project B: Offender Support and Reintegration. The approaches examined, and the findings of the evaluation, will provide information for the Standing Council on Law and Justice as it considers future whole-of-government Indigenous justice initiatives, and for all governments and service providers as they plan and implement programs and policies to reduce Indigenous interaction with the criminal justice system and improve community safety.

There are five interrelated goals identified in the Framework:

1. Improve all Australian justice systems so that they comprehensively deliver on the justice needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a fair and equitable manner

2. Reduce over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders, defendants and victims in the criminal justice system
3. Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples feel safe and are safe within their communities
4. Increase safety and reduce offending within Indigenous communities by addressing alcohol and substance abuse, and
5. Strengthen Indigenous communities through working in partnership with governments and other stakeholders to achieve sustained improvement in justice and community safety.

1.2 Report overview

All programs selected for the evaluation were identified by state and territory justice departments as having attributes of good practice. The purpose of the current evaluation is to assess whether or not, and on what basis, these programs can be considered to be 'good practice', in order to assist in identifying the best approaches to tackling crime and justice issues in Indigenous communities. This particular evaluation on Offender Support and Reintegration is similarly focused on identifying good practice and aims to assess the effectiveness of eight program models designed to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders to successfully reintegrate into the community, all with different approaches to addressing this challenge. These are:

- A summary of the programs evaluated (Chapter 2).
- The evaluation framework and methodology (Chapter 3). This chapter describes the good practice themes applied to each of the eight programs in order to identify common good practice principles. The methodology is summarised in this chapter, although the detailed methodology for each individual program is included in the relevant program chapters.
- A review of literature and prior evaluations (Chapter 4). This chapter provides an overview of the evidence base for Indigenous Offender Support and Reintegration programs, outlines the different models of Indigenous offender support and reintegration, examines what has been shown in the literature to constitute good practice, and highlights some of the challenges associated with assessing program impact.
- Individual program findings (Chapters 5–8). Each of the programs has been assessed against a common set of themes to determine whether or not, and on what basis, they can be considered good practice. Evaluation information for these assessments was based on document analysis, secondary analysis of monitoring and evaluation data, and qualitative fieldwork with program participants and stakeholders. Given the disparate nature of the programs in size and scope, available data varied considerably across programs.

- Overall lessons about good practice (Chapter 10). This chapter outlines what works, and what does not, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Offender Support and Reintegration programs generally. Within this context, the chapter draws on the literature and individual program findings to describe the attributes of *a good intervention*, the attributes of *a good model* for delivering that intervention, and the attributes of *a well managed and delivered program*.

1.3 Terminology

The terms 'Indigenous', 'Aboriginal', 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' and 'Koori' are used interchangeably in this document, depending on context. It is recognised that many Aboriginal people from NSW, Victoria and Tasmania often use the term 'Koori' instead of the European term 'Aboriginal' to refer to themselves as Indigenous people. It is also recognised that many Aboriginal people in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia often use the term 'Aboriginal' to refer to themselves, rather than 'Indigenous'. The term 'Torres Strait Islander' refers to the Indigenous people of the Torres Strait in Queensland.

The term 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people' in this document is used as an inclusive term to describe Indigenous Australians generally, rather than Aboriginal people from a certain state or territory. Like 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people', the term 'Indigenous' encompasses all Indigenous Australians. Literature is referred to throughout this document, and in a number of cases it refers to international studies relating to first nations peoples from a particular country. When referring to the literature or specific policy frameworks, the term 'Indigenous' is used to refer to first nations peoples from a particular country, including Australia.

2. Summary of the programs

This chapter outlines the aims, location and focus of the eight programs studied as part of Project B.

Dthina Yuwali Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Program (NSW)

Dthina Yuwali is an Aboriginal-specific, structured and staged alcohol and other drug program focusing on the relationship between substance use and pathways to offending. The program was officially launched in 2008, and to date approximately 100 staff have been trained to deliver it. It is considered suitable for Aboriginal young people who offend under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, offend to procure alcohol and other drugs, and engage in the use of alcohol and other drugs in the context of other criminogenic[1] needs. The program has been delivered with young people in both juvenile justice centres and community locations, as it has been designed to be used in both settings.

The goals of the program are to motivate young people to change their substance use and offending, with the aim of reducing the harm associated with substance use and related offending. The program is based on cultural learning and includes participation of Aboriginal Elders and respected community members. The program also involves the use of learning circles, stories and Aboriginal representations of key concepts to facilitate learning.

Local Justice Worker Program (Victoria)

The Local Justice Worker Program is an initiative aimed at diverting Koories from more serious contact with the criminal justice system. The program, which is spread across 10 locations in Victoria, aims to improve justice outcomes by increasing the likelihood that offenders sentenced to mandated community work will successfully complete that work and meet obligations related to outstanding fines.

The program also aims to contribute to local efforts made by justice-related agencies and business units to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal people. Local Justice Workers provide support to Aboriginal offenders and clients and aim to contribute to the development of positive relationships between the local Aboriginal community and the Sheriff's Office so that people with outstanding fines can negotiate restoration of those fines. It also promotes improved relationships between justice-related service provider agencies and local communities.

Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)

The Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program aims to assist Aboriginal adults on Community Corrections Orders to successfully complete their orders by providing a planned community response and ensuring Elders and respected persons are involved in order to provide community-based local

[1] 'Criminogenic' is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as 'causing or likely to cause criminal behaviour'.

support, advice and cultural connection. The program is voluntary and is open to suitable adults in certain localities who are on a Community Corrections Order. It is designed to reduce breaching of Community Corrections Orders. Measures include training and matching mentors to Aboriginal offenders to support them to successfully complete their orders, and creating pathways and mechanisms which allow Koori offenders to experience positive contact with the justice system.

The program operates in five locations, catering to adults, both men and women, who are the subject of parole or an order. A range of supports may be made available to participants. These might be provided by the program deliverer (a community organisation) or via referrals to appropriate external service providers. For each participant, the Program Coordinator will work with Community Correctional Services to develop a case management plan.

Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program (Victoria)

The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program is an intensive week-long program that encourages Aboriginal prisoners to connect (or reconnect) with their culture, and helps them strengthen their identity as Aboriginal people and re-examine their responsibilities to themselves, others and the community. The program was developed to promote connections to culture for Aboriginal offenders and to address offending behaviour through spiritual and emotional healing by focusing on cultural identity using music, art and rites of passage.

Although the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program is not an offence-specific program, it acts as a foundation program for such programs. By providing a culturally specific support mechanism, it helps Aboriginal offenders move into offence-specific programs where they can get additional support. The aim of the program is to address the lack of cultural connection that Aboriginal offenders (male and female) have with their culture and to address reoffending behaviour. The program is run when funding permits, and typically is run at least three times each financial year across Victorian prisons.

Marumali Program (Victoria)

The Marumali Program uses a specific licensed healing model in which external facilitators are engaged to deliver the program. It is an intensive program, run over five days, focusing on healing longstanding trauma and loss associated with stolen generations issues such as dispossession from land and enforced removal from families and communities. The program also deals with ongoing issues of loss of identity and a number of underlying issues such as education, employment and health outcomes.

The program has been identified as 'good practice' and one of few culturally appropriate approaches for supporting people affected by forcible removal practices. Ongoing funding has not been secured for the program and it runs when funding permits. Typically, each program runs at least three times

per financial year across Victorian prisons and Community Corrections. Since 2002 over 20 workshops have been conducted with a total of more than 250 prisoners.

Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)

The Koori Cognitive Skills Program is an adaptation of a mainstream cognitive skills program designed to be more relevant for Aboriginal prisoners and offenders. It is a problem-solving program based on cognitive behavioural therapy. Adaptation of the mainstream program on which it is based was completed in partnership with Aboriginal community experts. The program is delivered via a dual facilitation model, involving both an Aboriginal Elder/respected person and a Corrections Victoria clinician. The program is delivered across prisons and more recently in Community Correctional Services locations.

Roebourne DECCA Project, Pilbara (Western Australia)

The DECCA Project aims to reduce Aboriginal recidivism through providing employment. Since October 2006, prisoners from Roebourne Regional Prison have been engaged in refurbishing a former communication facility, DECCA Station, 20 kilometres east of Roebourne. Officially launched in May 2007, the project seeks to provide recognised skills relevant to securing employment once released. Male and female Aboriginal prisoners, as well as some non-Aboriginal prisoners, are assisted throughout the project, with minimum-security prisoners being the main target. It currently incorporates the Rio Tinto Work-Ready program, which prepares 12 trainees for job placement with Rio Tinto. DECCA has also become the base for any major projects Roebourne wishes to carry out. When prison officers are available to provide supervision, DECCA has the capacity to train up to 30 minimum-security prisoners at a time.

A wide range of training modules has been provided, focusing on work preparation and pre-vocational and vocational options. The Prisoner Employment Coordinator establishes job placement links for DECCA workers and provides post-release support for trainees.

Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program commenced in 2006 and is run in partnership with the Department of Sport and Recreation Aboriginal Outdoor Recreation Program and the Tasmanian Prison Service. The program is open to Aboriginal pre- and post-release prisoners who meet the Tasmanian Government's 'Aboriginality criteria' and have a minimum security rating if still in prison. The program involves completing two three-day camps on Aboriginal cultural specific land, with the aim of enhancing prisoners' integration into society after release. An Aboriginal cultural advisor attends both camps.

The focus of the program is on improving participants' health and wellbeing by using Aboriginal culture, outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy. The first camp involves participants being put through a series of challenges to teach them survival skills, teamwork and trust. It aims to engage them in a range of cultural and outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy workshops to assist their personal growth, teach the value of identity and culture, and give them the underlying skills and knowledge required for the second camp, which is held a few months later. The second camp is a more challenging three-day trek into the wilderness, visiting a cave of Aboriginal significance. Successfully completing the second camp is the most mentally and physically challenging part of the program.

3. Evaluation framework and methodology

Eight programs were selected for examination within Project B: Offender Support and Reintegration. All programs selected had been previously identified as being either 'good practice' or 'promising practice' and included in the Good Practice Appendix to the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework. These programs are diverse in nature, variously aiming to strengthen cultural identity, promote healing, build personal skills, develop employment skills, deal with substance abuse issues, increase compliance and prosocial behaviours, and forge pathways to using ancillary services.

3.1 Objectives and framework

The overall purpose of the evaluation was to assess whether or not, and on what basis, these programs can be considered good practice, in order to assist in identifying the best approaches to tackling crime and justice issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The evaluation also explored barriers to good practice.

The evaluation developed a conceptual framework for Project B that was applied to each of the eight programs in order to identify common good practice principles. The three components of the investigation were:

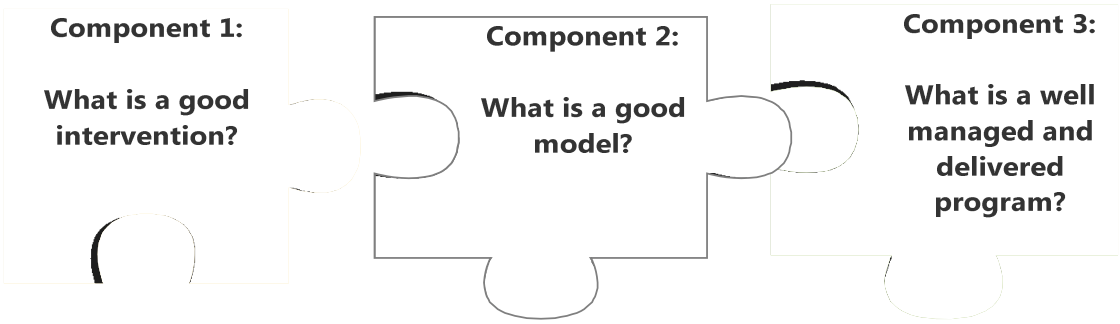
- **What is a good intervention?** (effective evidence-based intervention and treatment models)
- **What is a good model?** (effective and appropriate program design and delivery)
- **What is a well managed and delivered program?** (including adoption of a Results Based Management[2] approach that includes integrated planning, monitoring and evaluation functions).

The core concepts of what makes for good practice for Project B have been represented in Figure 1.

[2] Framework for strategic planning and management based on defining expected results, monitoring and evaluating progress towards achievement of results, integrating lessons learned into management decisions and reporting on performance.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for good practice for Project B

The three components of the conceptual framework for Project B are:



Within these three components, 10 good practice themes were developed which formed the basis of the evaluation of the programs. These were based on literature that provides reasonable consensus as to aspects of good practice in Indigenous offender support and reintegration, and on consultations with stakeholders from the programs. The programs were assessed against these themes on a scale from 'excellent to very good practice' to 'adequate practice' or 'poor practice'. Table 3a outlines the 10 themes.

Table 3a: The 10 good practice themes for Project B

What is a good intervention?	
Theme 1: Focusing on crime prevention and aiming to reduce over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system	**Evaluation focus:** Does the program provide an evidence-based response to intervention and/or is it based on research about what does or does not work, for whom and under what circumstances?
What is a good model?	
Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap	**Evaluation focus:** Does the program fill a service gap and meet needs which otherwise may be inadequately met or neglected in the service system?
Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation	**Evaluation focus:** Is the program culturally appropriate based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander empowerment, self-determination and community ownership?
Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent	**Evaluation focus:** Does the program meet its stated aims and objectives?
Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement	**Evaluation focus:** Does the program sufficiently engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all stages/aspects, and is its model responsive to local needs?
Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration	**Evaluation focus:** Does the program provide an integrated response to the needs of participants?
Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders	**Evaluation focus:** Does the program contribute to advocacy and systems reform and raise the profile of the unique needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders within the justice system?
What is a well managed and delivered program?	
Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes	**Evaluation focus:** Does the program have well-defined and effective structures of management and governance with: • Results Based Management (RBM) that links planning functions with monitoring and evaluation and is outcomes focused • Stability and continuity of funding and appropriate resourcing levels • Strong leadership and skilled, committed and stable personnel?
Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent	**Evaluation focus:** Is the program model clear about the program's aims and objectives, and realistic in scope?
Theme 10: Sustainability of the program/s over time	**Evaluation focus:** Is there evidence of ongoing support and resourcing for the program?

3.2 Methodology

The methodology included:

- Consultations with program managers and staff to develop the monitoring and evaluation framework
- A comprehensive literature review
- Consultations with program managers and staff, stakeholders, Elders and in some cases program participants, and
- A review of documentation and monitoring data for each program.

The evaluation commenced in early 2011, with the fieldwork conducted from late 2011 through to September 2012.

In developing the methodological approach, a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (MEF) was developed in partnership with Anne Markiewicz and Associates, based on a series of workshops with representatives of all programs. The workshops were used to develop the common project-level program logic, identify common project-level evaluation questions, develop an individual program logic for each program, and identify data to be derived from routine monitoring and complemented by evaluation data collected through this evaluation. Out of these workshops came a set of good practice themes relating to Offender Support and Reintegration programs that formed the basis of the evaluation.

The evaluation methodology for the programs varied depending on the nature of each program and the availability of monitoring data. The specific methodologies used for the programs are detailed in Chapters 6–10, but overall the evaluation methodology incorporated the following components:

- Literature review on the evidence base for the relevant Indigenous Offender Support and Reintegration programs.
- Review of existing program documentation, such as manuals, guidelines and funding reports.
- Review of monitoring data that included specific participation-level data as well as outcomes data where possible; in particular, data was reviewed to assess the feasibility of conducting recidivism analysis for each program.
- Qualitative consultations with program staff, management, Elders, other key stakeholders and in some cases program participants. CIRCA worked very closely with the relevant program staff in developing the consultation approach, and staff were critical in the implementation of the qualitative research. Site visits were conducted for each program, as well as additional consultations via telephone. Semi-structured in-depth interviews, mini-groups and focus groups were also conducted.

In terms of analysis, quantitative and qualitative components were used to confirm and/or corroborate findings within the evaluation (Creswell, 2003). In keeping with the strengths of qualitative approaches, analysis was conducted using Strauss and Corbin's systematic approach (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Specifically, thematic analysis incorporated initial theoretically sensitive coding, followed by the development of themes and sub-themes and further verification by the research team.

Methodological considerations

The programs considered within Project B are diverse and cannot be directly compared; therefore, this evaluation has considered them against attributes of good practice that can be applied to all programs. While the programs differ in terms of size, scope and intent, many focus on criminogenic needs and responsivity characteristics that have been shown in the literature to reduce offending behaviour.

Some of these behaviours are not directly related to offending but interact with the treatment environment and impact on offenders' ability to engage in and respond to treatment; they include antisocial attitudes and beliefs, antisocial peer associations, substance misuse and dependency, poor self-management and problem-solving skills, familial conflict and dysfunction, and multifaceted cultural barriers. In measuring the achievement of program outcomes, this evaluation has attempted to use indicators that are closely matched to program intent. A blend of qualitative and quantitative measures has been used to assess programs in order to better understand why certain results were achieved or not achieved, explain unexpected outcomes, and inform key lessons derived from each of the programs. Where possible, recidivism analysis was conducted, but issues such as sample size, lack of appropriate control groups and data collection integrity inhibited such analyses for some programs.

The quality of available data across the programs varied considerably, especially as effective monitoring often requires access to data from a range of sources that cannot be accurately matched. Where relevant, considerations in relation to data quality are discussed in the individual program chapters.

In assessing program outcomes and impact on reoffending, it is important to acknowledge that people offend for complex reasons, and it is generally beyond the scope of a single program to respond to, address and impact the complex and multilayered issues faced by offenders in relation to reintegration and reduced offending. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders face unique circumstances which exacerbate many of these issues. Therefore, the approach in this evaluation has been to consider the outcomes for the individual programs in terms of how the program operates within a suite of interventions, with the understanding that often there is more than one factor that contributes to the likelihood of recidivism.

Comprehensive qualitative consultations were also conducted, providing a depth of understanding of each program and its perceived outcomes and context. This approach included gathering feedback from program participants where possible, but it is worth noting that participant numbers were often

small and participation voluntary, and these factors may have positively skewed the results. However, the feedback from program participants provides an important voice that is often not heard in such evaluations, and is an aspect of the methodology that could receive far greater weight in future evaluations.

4. Review of literature and prior evaluations

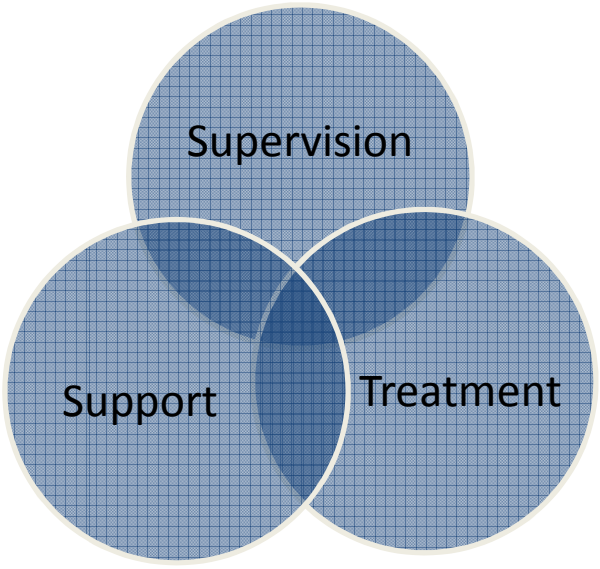
Indigenous over-representation is one of the most important public policy and social justice issues facing criminal justice systems throughout Australia. Despite representing less than 2.5% of the population, Indigenous people accounted for one-quarter (27.3%) of prisoners in Australia as at 30 June 2012 (ABS, 2012). The policy response through the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework highlights the need to increase the scope and availability of effective rehabilitation and transitional support programs (SCAG, 2009). The need for these programs is highlighted by suggestions that many Indigenous people experience increased difficulties complying with the conditions of court and parole orders, and by findings which indicate that Indigenous prisoners are more likely than non-Indigenous prisoners to reoffend once released (Jones, Hua, Donnelly, McHutchison & Heggie, 2006; QCOSS, 2009; Select Committee, 2009; Willis & Moore, 2008). Moreover, recent modelling in NSW highlights the central role that support and reintegration programs must have in any strategy which aims to reduce Indigenous over-representation. If programs are presumed to have a similar efficacy, those that aim to prevent Indigenous recontact would be twice as effective at reducing Indigenous over-representation in the courts as programs targeting people appearing in court for the first time (Beranger, Weatherburn & Moffatt, 2010).

This chapter provides an overview of the evidence base for Indigenous Offender Support and Reintegration programs and examines how this evidence base could be improved through future impact evaluations. First, the different models of Indigenous Offender Support and Reintegration will be examined. Second, what constitutes good practice will be highlighted, including the characteristics and types of interventions that are most effective for reducing reoffending, the elements of effective program delivery, and the elements of effective governance and management processes. Third, the challenges assessing program impact will be highlighted and recommendations made to facilitate future assessments of impact.

4.1 Models of Indigenous offender support and reintegration

Programs that provide support to offenders and help them integrate back into the community include a broad range of activities which may have quite divergent goals. Conceptually, these programs may be classified into three separate models that aim to provide offenders with *supervision*, *support* or *treatment*, though there is often overlap between the models and few programs incorporate elements of just one model (Figure 2). This section will provide an outline of these models and discuss possible variants within each model.

Figure 2: Models of Offender Support and Reintegration



Supervision

The first model aims to increase the level of offender supervision and frequently has the goals of *reducing reoffending and increasing community protection and safety.* This model is based on the premise that contact, oversight and controls on behaviour increase the level of deterrence or restrict an individual's capacity or opportunity to engage in criminal behaviour (Sherman et al., 1997). Within community settings, supervision may be provided through community service and bail programs, probation and parole, as well as intensive variants of these programs. Offenders on these programs must typically report to and have visits from criminal justice personnel, refrain from certain activities such as substance use and offending, abstain from having contact with certain individuals or other offenders, and undergo testing for substance use (Geerken & Hayes, 1993). More intensive levels of supervision may be provided through community restraint programs such as curfews, home detention, electronic monitoring and half-way houses (Sherman et al., 1997). Evidence indicates that interventions that are based on a supervision model typically have no impact on recidivism or are criminogenic (Aos, Miller & Drake, 2006; Drake, Aos & Miller, 2009; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino & Buehler, 2003). The effectiveness of each model is assessed in 4.2 below ('Effective intervention models and types of interventions').

Support

The second model aims to increase the level of practical support provided to offenders. This may be provided with the goal of *assisting offenders to comply with the requirements of various court or parole orders*, such as bail, probation or parole. Frequently, offenders must report to criminal justice

personnel as a condition of their order, pay restitution or perform community service. It has been suggested that people from disadvantaged backgrounds experience greater difficulties complying with the conditions of their orders, resulting in more technical breach offences. These technical breach offences could be reduced by providing support to aid compliance with orders, such as arranging flexible fine repayment systems or providing transportation (QCOSS, 2009; Select Committee, 2009). Evidence indicates that providing support to assist offenders to comply with order requirements may increase completion rates and reduce reoffending (Henderson & Associates, 2008; Northern Ireland Office, 2006; Ross, 2009).

Wider levels of support may be provided that aim to *help offenders overcome common challenges*, such as finding suitable accommodation, improving their level of education and training, and finding suitable employment. It is argued that these wider supports are necessary because unemployment, lack of suitable accommodation (e.g. homelessness and over-crowding) and low levels of education are risk factors for offending (Dodson & Hunter, 2006; Hunter, 2001; Weatherburn, Snowball & Hunter, 2006, 2008). Evidence indicates that these risk factors are more acute for Indigenous peoples. The Select Committee (2009) noted that there was a lack of housing, and substandard housing, in many rural and remote communities, which was viewed as having negative impacts on health and education. Research findings indicate that about two-fifths (37%) of Indigenous prisoners had not completed Year 9, compared with one-fifth (21%) of non-Indigenous prisoners (Willis, 2008). Lack of formal qualifications and training is considered a barrier for Indigenous peoples to gaining meaningful employment, with unemployment rates three times higher for Indigenous peoples than non-Indigenous peoples and particularly problematic in remote communities (ABS, 2005; Alford & Jones, 2007). Jones, Masters, Griffiths and Moulday (2002) argue that unemployment is closely related to boredom, an excess of unstructured time, alcohol abuse and more frequent use of public space, resulting in over-policing; furthermore, these risk factors interact with and exacerbate each other. However, the direction of causality is debated, as interaction with the criminal justice system reduces educational and employment opportunities (Borland & Hunter, 2000; Cunneen, 2006; Hunter & Schwab, 1998). Evidence indicates that addressing risk factors for offending through the provision of support or through a combination of supervision and support can reduce offending by up to 20% (Aos et al., 2006; Drake et al., 2009; Visher, Winterfield & Coggeshall, 2006; Wilson, Gallagher & MacKenzie, 2000).

Treatment

The third model aims to provide treatment for and to rehabilitate offenders through providing psychologically orientated interventions that have the goal of *changing cognition, emotion or behaviour to reduce the likelihood of reoffending* (MacKenzie, 2006; Wormith et al., 2007). While there is a range of treatment frameworks, the following focuses on the Risks-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model, frameworks that promote prosocial behaviour (Good Lives Model and Therapeutic Communities) and those that emphasise the importance of culture.

Risks-Needs-Responsivity

The RNR model is the dominant evidence-based model of offender rehabilitation in criminal justice settings (Aos et al., 2006). The model is based on the use of scientifically rigorous evidence to guide practice and evaluate programs, with the aim of determining the level, targets and types of treatment interventions offenders should receive based on their characteristics (Littell, 2008; Losel, 2001). It emphasises the need to consider individual and contextual factors when planning and administering treatment and has been found to result in significant reductions in recidivism, particularly when programs adhere to the risk and responsivity principles (Andrews & Dowden, 2006; Lowenkamp, Latessa & Holsinger, 2006; Vieira, Skilling & Peterson-Badali, 2009).

According to the RNR model, there are three general principles that can be used to classify offenders and guide the provision of effective treatment: risk of recidivism, criminogenic needs and responsivity (Andrews, Bonta & Hoge, 1990). The model requires that an offender's risks, needs and responsivity be regularly assessed to inform decisions about what interventions are appropriate and necessary.

According to the *risk principle*, the offender's risk of recidivism should be the basis for matching them with appropriate rehabilitation programs. Risk factors related to recidivism are viewed as an indicator of clinical treatment needs, with higher risk individuals requiring more intensive treatment services (Andrews & Bonta, 2006; Ward, Melser & Yates, 2007). Risk factors related to offending are derived from research findings and include both dynamic and static factors (Cottle, Lee & Heilbrun, 2001; Weatherburn, Cush & Saunders, 2007). Dynamic factors are amenable to change; they include antisocial personality, having delinquent peers, interpersonal conflict, substance abuse, lack of social achievement and personal distress (Gendreau, Little & Goggin, 1996). Static factors include criminal history, offences committed, age, sex, race, family background, socioeconomic status and intellectual functioning (Gendreau et al., 1996). International findings indicate that similar risk factors are related to offending for Indigenous and non-Indigenous offenders (Andrews et al., 1990; Bonta, 1989; Bonta, LaPrairie & Wallace-Capretta, 1997; Bonta, Lipinski & Martin, 1992). The higher incidence of these risk factors and greater extent of needs may explain much of the higher rates of recidivism among Indigenous peoples (Bonta et al., 1997; Day, 2003).

The *needs principle* stipulates that treatment should target criminogenic needs or individual characteristics that predict offending behaviour, in order to reduce its reoccurrence. According to Andrews (1995), these needs include antisocial attitudes and beliefs, antisocial peer associations, a propensity for violence, deviant sexual interests, substance abuse and dependency, poor self-management and problem-solving skills, familial conflict and dysfunction, and psychiatric disorders. Treatment typically involves behaviour modification, which aims to change observable behaviours related to offending, or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which aims to simultaneously change dysfunctional cognitive (thoughts, beliefs, attitudes), emotional and behavioural patterns (Pearson, Lipton, Cleland & Yee, 2002). Behavioural techniques are based on operant learning principles and

include contingency management, modelling, aversive conditioning, shaping, systemic desensitisation, positive reinforcement, extinction, flooding and graduated extinction (Hoge, 2001). In addition to these techniques, CBT aims to modify cognition through techniques such as self-instructional training, self-praise, problem-solving skills training, aggression replacement training, solution-orientated therapy, rational emotive therapy, functional family therapy and stress inoculation therapy (Hoge, 2001). Programs are typically psycho-educational in nature and target various aspects of functioning relating to offending. Programs aim to properly socialise offenders and promote self-confidence and healthy decision-making. There is considerable variation in program content: it may include improving life-skills, social skills, personal development and healthy relationships, or it may address specific behavioural problems such as sexual offending or substance abuse. Cognitive-behavioural programs may incorporate a range of modules, such as motivation for change, problem-solving, consequential thinking, assertiveness training, dealing with emotions, belief systems and rationalisations, perceptions and reality, communication and relationship skills, love and family dynamics, peer-refusal skills, victim awareness, anger and stress management, and addiction and relapse prevention (Heseltine, Sarre & Day, 2011; Josi & Sechrest, 1999).

Within the RNR model there is an emphasis on the need to consider factors that are not directly related to offending but which interact with the treatment environment and impact on an offender's ability to engage in and respond to treatment (Andrews et al., 1990; Bonta, 1995). Consequently, the *responsivity* principle requires the style and mode of treatment to be matched to the learning styles and abilities of individuals (Andrews & Bonta, 2006). Factors which may impact on how responsive an offender is to treatment include age, sex, race, culture, cognitive learning style, reasoning or communication skills, motivation for treatment, substance abuse, psychopathology (e.g. depression or anxiety) and intellectual impairment. With respect to race and culture, it is commonly accepted that programs need to be adapted to take into account cultural differences in the expression of needs and to ensure that the delivery format is appropriate (Day, 2003; Jones et al., 2002). As noted by the New Zealand Department of Corrections (2009), characteristics of culturally enhanced programs include:

- A holistic philosophy that validates and integrates spiritual, emotional, cognitive, physical and wider social dimensions of functioning
- Culture-based activities such as language and traditional ceremonies, teachings, traditions and practices
- An emphasis on developing cultural identity as a foundation for a new (non-offending) lifestyle
- An emphasis on interpersonal ties to family, community, tribal group and reintegration back to these groups, and
- Collaboration with community-based agencies and individuals such as tribal members and Elders, and the inclusion of culturally appropriate staff, such as tribal Elders, within the program.

Other treatment models

While the RNR model is the dominant evidence-based model of offender rehabilitation, some propose that its focus on risk factors is unduly pessimistic or that it is based on Western notions of the self and the world, failing to consider culture-specific needs which operate at multiple levels (Jones et al., 2002). Other frameworks exist that promote prosocial behaviour, such as strengths-based approaches or therapeutic communities. Strengths-based approaches, such as the Good Lives Model (GLM), aim to equip offenders with the skills to lead productive, satisfying, meaningful and prosocial lives, a by-product of which is reduced recidivism (New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2009). Treatment involves developing a 'good life plan' for the individual based on their health, knowledge and readiness for treatment, and aimed at facilitating "achievement in work and play, independence, inner peace, friendship and creativity" (New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2009:38). Another treatment framework that promotes prosocial behaviour involves the use of therapeutic communities – intensive, highly structured and prosocial residential communities where members positively influence other participants' perceptions, attitudes and behaviours in order to promote change (New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2009).

Another treatment framework, one which falls outside the RNR model, targets cultural factors. While there is some evidence that Indigenous-specific risk factors may stem from having a 'compromised' cultural identity and the effects of being a member of the stolen generations, these have not yet been proven to be effective intervention targets (Hunter, 2001; Marie, Fergusson & Boden, 2009; Weatherburn et al., 2006, 2008). Programs targeting cultural values "encourage participants to embrace values, motivations and social commitments derived from the traditional Indigenous culture of the offender group. There is an expectation that these values and motivations will be incompatible with a criminal lifestyle" (New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2009:41).

Conclusion

The three models outlined provide a basis for conceptualising the diverse goals and activities of programs that aim to support and reintegrate Indigenous offenders. It was apparent that surveillance-orientated programs often aim to reduce reoffending and increase community protection or safety. Programs that provide support may aim to assist offenders to comply with the requirements of orders or address risk factors for offending by helping them to overcome common challenges such as finding suitable accommodation, improving their level of education and training, or finding suitable employment. Treatment-orientated programs typically target criminogenic needs and involve psychological interventions to change cognition, emotion or behaviour and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Other treatment frameworks emphasise prosocial behaviour or target cultural factors. The next section will examine the evidence base and what constitutes good practice for programs that aim to support and reintegrate Indigenous offenders.

4.2 Good practice for Indigenous support and reintegration

Despite the fact that programs may have different goals and activities, an evidence base has been established that may be used to guide practices that aim to support and reintegrate Indigenous offenders. This section will provide an overview of how interventions can be targeted and the models and types of interventions that are most effective for reducing reoffending, the elements of effective program delivery, and the elements of effective governance and management processes.

Targeted and evidence-based interventions

Effective interventions should have a crime prevention focus and be based on evidence about what works, for whom and in what circumstances. The evidence base for interventions is largely derived from the findings of studies that have explored the characteristics and types of effective treatment-orientated interventions based on the RNR model. While these studies could have assessed a range of outcomes, most have focused on the impact of interventions on reoffending. Unfortunately, much of this research has been conducted overseas and has not explored how effective interventions are for Australian Indigenous offenders. As such, the applicability of findings frequently has to be inferred. This body of research indicates that interventions with certain characteristics are more likely to be effective for reducing reoffending, as are interventions based on particular intervention models.

Characteristics of effective interventions

Evidence indicates that interventions need to be matched to the offender's risk of reoffending and target criminogenic needs (Andrews, 2001; Andrews & Bonta, 2006; Andrews et al., 1990; Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2009; Sherman et al., 1997; Ward et al., 2007). Many Indigenous offenders are viewed as having a higher incidence of risk factors and greater needs (Jones et al., 2002). Because of this, they require more intensive programs or services that are longer in duration and involve more sessions and meaningful levels of contact. Consistent with international accepted practice, Heseltine et al. (2011) propose that treatment-orientated interventions need to be at least 100 hours in duration to have an optimal effect on reoffending. Additionally, intensive programs should adopt a holistic approach that targets multiple risk factors that operate in several domains simultaneously (Caldwell & Van Rybroek, 2005; Dowden & Andrews, 1999, 2000; Lipsey, 2009; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Matthews, Hubbard & Latessa, 2001; Sherman et al., 1997).

Findings indicate that interventions with certain characteristics may be more effective for reducing reoffending. Interventions that are highly structured, focus on developing skills and use behavioural or cognitive behaviour methods appear the most effective (MacKenzie, 2000). Interventions that operate in community settings rather than custodial settings have proven to be more effective for reducing reoffending, because the intervention occurs in the environment in which the person normally functions (Andrews et al., 1990; Hoge, 2001; Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; Lipsey, 1999, 2009;

Lipsey & Cullen, 2007; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Matthews et al., 2001; Sheidow & Henggeler, 2005). When interventions are provided in a custodial setting, they are more effective at reducing reoffending if they include throughcare or an aftercare phase in the community (Andrews, 2001; Heseltine et al., 2011; New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2009).

One barrier to rehabilitating Indigenous offenders is that many either do not participate in treatment or are less likely to complete interventions (Jones et al., 2002; Day, 2003; Howells et al., 2004). In response to this, preparatory or motivational interventions may be used which provide an introduction to group-based therapy, improve awareness of problems and increase motivation to change behaviour (Heseltine et al., 2011). These interventions have been found to increase readiness to participate in treatment and to improve program completion rates (Day, Casey, Ward, Howells & Vess, 2010).

Despite the existence of alternative treatment frameworks to the RNR model, such as strengths-based approaches and those that target cultural factors, there is minimal evidence indicating that these approaches reduce reoffending (New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2009; Whitehead, Ward & Collie, 2007). However, there is some evidence suggesting that cultural programs may result in improved cultural outcomes (Correctional Service Canada, 2008; Nathan, Wilson & Hillman, 2003). Additionally, there is some evidence that culturally enhanced programs that are based on the RNR model can reduce reoffending by Indigenous offenders (Macgregor, 2008; Singh & White, 2000). While quantitative scientific evidence is lacking regarding whether culturally enhanced programs are more effective than standard programs, Doone (2000) proposes that culturally enhanced programs may be more effective because they:

- Build cultural knowledge, self-image and pride
- Create a sense of identity, belonging and confidence
- Improve retention in programs
- Break down barriers to learning and give a sense of achievement
- Enhance willingness to learn other skills
- Build positive attitudes towards program providers and the wider society.

Effective intervention models and types of interventions

In addition to the characteristics highlighted above, evidence drawn largely from meta-analyses which summarise the findings of international studies indicates that particular models and types of intervention are also more effective for reducing reoffending. Interventions that focus predominately on providing supervision or restraint have little or no effect on reoffending. At best, intensive forms of probation and parole that provide enhanced surveillance have been found to reduce recidivism by 4% for youth and 2% for adults (Aos, Phipps, Barnoski & Lieb, 2001). However, most meta-analyses indicate that supervision-orientated probation/parole has no impact on recidivism (Aos et al., 2006; Drake et al., 2009). Programs which restrain adult offenders in the community, such as electronic

monitoring, have also been found to have no impact on reoffending (Aos et al., 2006; Drake et al., 2009). Programs that emphasise structure and discipline, such as boot camps, have been found to have no impact on reoffending for adults, while these programs may increase reoffending among youth by up to 10% (Aos, et al., 2001; Bottcher & Ezell, 2005; Drake et al., 2009; MacKenzie, 2006; Sherman et al., 1997). Deterrence-orientated programs for youth, such as Scared Straight and prison visitation programs, have been found to be criminogenic and to increase reoffending by up to 26% (Aos et al., 2001, 2006; Drake et al., 2009; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino & Buehler, 2003). While there is an absence of evidence from meta-analyses regarding the impact of interventions that provide support to help offenders comply with the conditions of court or parole orders, there is some qualitative evidence indicating the benefits of such programs, and one study found a reduction in reoffending. However, it must be noted that these programs also aimed to improve access to services and provide treatment aimed at addressing the underlying causes of offending. For example, the Victorian Bail Support Program, which provided referral to treatment and access to legal, welfare and housing services, was found to have reduced the number of people in remand because of unsuitable housing and to have increased bail completion rates (Henderson & Associates, 2008). Likewise, the Bail Supervision and Support Scheme in Northern Ireland was found to have helped some people adhere to bail conditions (Northern Ireland Office, 2006). A program operating in Victoria, the Court Integrated Services Program, was a pre-trial program that used an individualised case management approach and aimed to help offenders comply with conditions of orders and address the underlying causes of offending (Ross, 2009). The program emphasised therapeutic interaction with offenders and responding to offenders' various levels of need. Findings indicate that the program reduced the number of people who reoffended by 14% (Ross, 2009).

Evidence from meta-analyses indicates that supporting offenders through education or vocational, education and training (VET) programs reduces reoffending. Education programs reduce reoffending by 18–19% for youth and by 7–8% for adults (Aos et al., 2006; Drake et al., 2009). VET programs aim to enhance skills, improve employment prospects, and improve opportunities for meaningful work through improved access to potential employers (Visher, Winterfield & Coggeshall, 2006). Evidence indicates that VET programs reduce reoffending by 6–20% for adults, while employment programs reduce reoffending by 2% (Aos et al., 2006; Drake et al, 2009; Visher et al., 2006; Wilson, Gallagher & MacKenzie, 2000). It has been noted that educational programs are most effective when they are well designed and relevant to the offender and their employment prospects (New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2009). Additionally, educational and VET programs may be more effective when they are combined with CBT-style interventions (Lipsey, Landenberger & Wilson, 2007).

A review by Graffam and Shinkfield (2012) of Australian employment interventions for Indigenous offenders suggests that several strategies may improve effectiveness, although some barriers were noted. Seven strategies for effective practice were suggested:

(i) Being culturally appropriate by incorporating cultural knowledge and practices and by including Indigenous peoples in program delivery

(ii) Having a long-term focus, of at least one year in duration

(iii) Adopting a strong case management approach to ensure tailored, individualised support

(iv) Using throughcare principles with programs commencing in prison and continuing post release

(v) Adopting a holistic approach and addressing other risk factors simultaneously

(vi) Incorporating on-the-job work experience and providing support such as through the use of mentors, and

(vii) Appropriate consultation with and inclusion of family and local employers in the community.

However, four barriers were also noted:

(i) Inadequate or short-term funding arrangements

(ii) Lack of coordination between agencies and/or lack of integrated services

(iii) Poor uptake of, and retention in, appropriate programs, and

(iv) Reduced availability of appropriate programs/services in rural and remote areas.

Combining supervision with treatment or providing treatment also typically reduces reoffending. Intensive-treatment-orientated probation/parole reduces adult reoffending by 17–18% (Aos et al., 2006; Drake et al., 2009). CBT reduces reoffending by 2–3% for youth and 6–8% for adults (Aos et al., 2001, 2006; Drake et al., 2009). For youth, more effective programs include behaviour modification or counselling/psychotherapy, which have been found to reduce reoffending by 8–40% and 17–19% respectively (Aos et al., 2006; Drake, et al., 2009; Gottshalk, Davidson, Mayer & Gensheimer, 1987; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998). Evidence indicates that individual counselling is more effective for reducing reoffending than group counselling (32% versus 8% reduction) (Lipsey & Wilson, 1998). Therapeutic communities reduce reoffending by 6% for adults, while guided group interaction has no impact on reoffending for youth (Aos et al., 2001, 2006; Drake et al., 2009). Interventions targeting illicit substance abuse have largely proven effective; drug courts reduce reoffending by 4% for youth and 8–9% for adults, while drug treatment programs reduce reoffending by 0–9% for adults (Aos et al., 2001, 2006; Drake et al., 2009). Programs targeting sex offenders reduce reoffending by 10–11% for youth and 7–10% for adults (Aos et al., 2001, 2006; Drake et al., 2009). Life skills education programs

reduce reoffending by 3% for youth but have no impact on adults (Aos et al., 2006; Drake et al., 2009). With respect to programs that aim to reduce violent behaviour, aggression replacement training has been found to reduce reoffending by 7-8% for youth (Aos et al., 2006; Drake et al., 2009). While some domestic violence interventions have reduced reoffending by adults, evidence from meta-analyses indicates that overall they have minimal or no impact on re-offending (Aos et al., 2006; Babcock, Green & Robie, 2002; Drake et al., 2009).

Other treatment programs have also proven effective for youth. For low-risk offenders, diversion from court to services reduces reoffending by 3%, while diversion to restorative justice programs reduces reoffending by 8–9% (Aos et al., 2006; Drake et al., 2009). Juvenile wilderness challenge programs, which immerse youth in activities that challenge their skills and self-concepts, reduce reoffending by 0–18% (Aos et al., 2006; Drake et al., 2009; Gass, 1993; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Wilson & Lipsey, 2000). However, challenge programs have no appreciable impact on reoffending unless they are paired with therapeutic components such as counselling or therapeutic group sessions (Wilson & Lipsey, 2000). Mentoring programs which match youth with mentors and support the relationship over time reduce reoffending by 0–29% (Drake et al., 2009; Tolan, Henry, Schoeny & Bass, 2008). The mentoring relationship is viewed as particularly effective for at-risk and disadvantaged youth, as it provides a prosocial and healthy role model (Spencer, 2006). Evidence indicates that the most effective mentoring programs match youth to appropriate mentors and involve frequent contact, emotional closeness and longevity, trust and effective communication, with the mentor displaying respect and empathy towards the youth (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine & Cooper, 2002; Sipe, 1999).

Family intervention or multi-modular programs also reduce reoffending by youth. Family interventions aim to improve parenting practices and promote the development of solutions to problems within the family that may be causing or maintaining maladaptive behaviour (Farrington & Welsh, 2006). Most target the risk factors for offending and incorporate behavioural training for parents and education techniques that aim to modify social contingencies in the family environment. Family interventions have been used as the basis for providing throughcare for youth in detention and with probation populations, reducing reoffending by 10–18% (Aos, et al., 2006; Drake et al., 2009). Other family-based therapy and interventions have reduced reoffending by 12–30% (Aos et al., 2001, 2006; Drake et al., 2009). Another form of intervention that also typically focuses on the family is multi-modular programs (based on the principles of multi-systemic therapy), which are typically used with high-end or serious repeat offenders. These programs adopt an ecological and holistic approach, with broad-ranging treatment objectives and targets to address problems experienced in multiple domains simultaneously (Lipsey & Cullen, 2007). The overarching principle is that individuals are situated within complex interconnected systems that interact to shape behaviour. Treatment is tailored to address the developmental needs of individual youth and their families, and is focused on addressing risk factors related to offending in home, school and community settings (Henggeler, Melton & Smith, 1992). Evidence indicates that multi-modular programs reduce offending by 8–46% (Aos et al., 2001, 2006; Curtis, Ronan & Borduin, 2004; Drake et al., 2009; Littell, Popa & Forsythe, 2005).

Effective and appropriate program delivery

The literature also provides significant guidance about how interventions which are based on the RNR treatment-orientated framework, or which operate in community settings, should be delivered. The RNR principles of effective program delivery are based on the findings of quantitative research that has been found to reduce reoffending. However, the evidence for effective program delivery for community-based programs is often based on the perceptions, experiences and recommendations of practitioners and researchers who have participated in a limited number of evaluations (Australian Government, 2003). As such, these findings may be useful for providing guidance about what should be considered when implementing a program or for assessing whether a program may be effective, but they should not be taken to infer that a particular intervention would be effective for reducing reoffending.

The RNR model of offender rehabilitation stipulates that interventions should have a high degree of program integrity and adhere to the principles of effective program design and intervention, because these factors are required to establish an evidence base or have been shown to impact on how effective interventions are for reducing reoffending (New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2009; Goggin & Gendreau, 2006; Howells & Day, 1999; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Losel, 2001; Lowenkamp et al., 2006; Sherman et al., 1997). These principles include:

- Clearly articulating program intent and targeting risk factors amendable to intervention that are theoretically and empirically related to reoffending
- Having a program manual outlining content and procedures
- Having appropriately qualified and trained staff involved in implementation and delivery, ideally including program developers, mental health practitioners and people with experience working with offenders
- Providing high levels of support and training to staff
- Monitoring staff delivering the program and offenders' progress, and
- Ensuring that a high proportion of offenders complete the program.

Significant guidance is also provided about what constitutes good practice in program delivery for community-based programs. Research findings highlight the importance of effective coordination and collaboration across government and non-government agencies (AIC, 2012; Calma, 2008; Stacey and Associates, 2004; Stewart, Lohoar & Higgins, 2011). The need for effective coordination and collaboration is particularly apparent where integrated and holistic interventions are being used that involve a whole-of-government or intergovernmental approach to addressing the wide range of risk factors related to offending (Gilbert, 2012; Owen & Kokiri, 2001). Effective coordination is viewed as essential because it increases access to resources and service delivery capacity and helps the offender navigate through complex systems to the required services (Denning-Cotter, 2008; Simpson

et al., 2009). As such, interventions require effective coordination mechanisms and communication strategies that build and sustain networks (Gilbert, 2012).

It has also been suggested that interventions should meaningfully involve Indigenous peoples in the design and delivery of programs and should have strong links to the community to draw on support, guidance and expertise (Antiss, 2003; Day, 2003; Doone, 2000; Gilbert, 2012; Howells et al., 2000; Jones, 2001; Stewart et al., 2011). Community involvement may entail consultation and the development of partnerships with Indigenous peoples and organisations, but it has been argued that it should move towards community ownership and control, thereby contributing to empowerment and self-determination (Cunneen, 2001; Gilbert, 2012; Gray, Sputore & Saggers, 2001; Richards, Rosevear & Gilbert, 2011; Ryan, Head, Keast & Brown, 2006). Community involvement can increase the acceptability of the intervention and build trust and a willingness to participate, which are essential given that many interventions are accompanied by distrust of government agencies by Indigenous peoples (Doone, 2000; Gilbert, 2012). Community involvement can also ensure that interventions are tailored to meet the specific needs of the local community, which is essential if they are to be successful (Cherney & Sutton, 2007; Denning-Cotter, 2008; Hughes & Edwards, 2001; Sansfacon & Waller, 2001; Stewart et al., 2011). Yet there is considerable variation between Indigenous communities that needs to be taken into account when developing crime prevention programs, such as differences in histories, physical environments, resources, and cultural values and beliefs (Gray et al., 2001). Additionally, community involvement can ensure that interventions are designed and delivered in a culturally appropriate way (Gray et al., 2001; Owen & Kokiri, 2001; Stewart et al., 2011); interventions should recognise the importance of cultural values and norms and therefore should embrace collective values by including family and community as well as using appropriate language, concepts and imagery (New Zealand Department of Corrections, 2009; Jones et al., 2002; Willis & Moore, 2008).

Furthermore, some argue that Indigenous organisations play a much larger role than merely delivering services (Sullivan, 2010); many, for example, deliver essential services that are normally provided by government, particularly in rural and remote communities (Sullivan, 2010). As such, they are one of the vehicles through which government policy is delivered. However, Indigenous-sector organisations also provide many Indigenous people with material security and facilitate the expression of cultural and civic identity, and as such are viewed as an appropriate vehicle for modernising Indigenous civil society (Sullivan, 2010). Indigenous organisations have an important role in advocacy and in policy-making processes aimed at facilitating positive social change and reducing disadvantage (Sullivan, 2010). Nevertheless, it is argued that the "strategic importance of the sector as a whole is unrecognised in the government policy process, and the individual services that comprise the sector are under-valued" (Sullivan, 2010:7).

Good governance and management

One further aspect to be considered regarding good practice for Indigenous support and reintegration is the central role that good governance and management practices have for the success of interventions. Successful programs tend to have plans that facilitate strategic decision-making and proactive management, effective organisational structures, good record management systems, clear policies and protocols, skilled leaders and staff, adequate funding, and a focus on outcomes and continued improvement.

Good governance requires coordinated plans to be developed which should include a vision and clear mission statement, and specify long-term goals as well as more immediate aims and objectives (Cherney & Sutton, 2007; Cunnen, 2001; Gilbert, 2012). Plans facilitate effective management by outlining agreed philosophies and priorities and a shared commitment to addressing specific problems (Cherney & Sutton, 2007). Plans also facilitate strategic decision-making and a focus on outcomes, whereby progress against goals can be regularly assessed (AIC, 2012; Cherney & Sutton, 2007; Stewart et al., 2011). Additionally, plans facilitate the use of a proactive management approach that uses problem-solving to identify potential problems or needs, develop plans of action, delegate tasks and monitor progress (AIC, 2012; Cherney & Sutton, 2007; Gray et al., 2001).

Proactive management is also essential as it enables crises to be resolved and barriers to be overcome (Cherney & Sutton, 2007). Successful programs tend to have an effective organisational structure, good record management systems and clear policies and protocols. Program personnel and partners should have clearly defined roles or responsibilities and operations should not be reliant on any one person (Gray et al., 2001; Stewart et al., 2011). There should be reliable and well-documented record management systems (Cunneen, 2001). Clear policies and protocols are also required regarding management, administrative and intervention procedures, which should be accessible, easily understood and routinely enforced and abided by (Cunneen, 2001; Gray et al., 2001).

Programs require skilled leaders and staff as well as sufficient funding. Findings indicate that the inability to find skilled staff and to deal with funding constraints have limited the effectiveness of some interventions (Gray et al., 2001; Gray, Saggers, Sputore & Burbon, 2000; Stewart et al., 2011). Program leaders and personnel should be skilled, appropriately trained, supported and committed to the project so that high staff turnover does not impact on effectiveness (AIC, 2012; Gilbert, 2012; Stewart et al., 2011). Ideally, programs should be appropriately funded to ensure that the services and interventions that are needed to achieve the goals can be provided and to support effective program delivery and good management practices (Gray et al., 2001). Ideally, interventions should also not be solely reliant on any one funding source to ensure stability and continuity; reliance on one source can result in interventions being discontinued, even if they are potentially yielding positive results (Gray et al., 2000).

Finally, good practice dictates that there should be a focus on outcomes and a commitment to continually improving practice (AIC, 2012; Australian Government, 2003; Ogilvie & Allard, 2011). There is a need for a high level of commitment from program leaders to monitoring and evaluation so that activities and outcomes can be assessed (AIC, 2012). Performance measurement should be integrated into the program so that performance information can be regularly monitored to inform regular decisions about how to improve practice (AIC, 2012). Evaluation should be conducted intermittently to determine whether goals, aims and objectives have been achieved, to identify elements of good practice, and to build the evidence base of what works (AIC, 2012; Armstrong & Francis, 2003). Monitoring and evaluation, along with continuous reflection on practice, enable quality to be assessed and factors underpinning success to be identified, along with any challenges or barriers (Australian Government, 2003).

Conclusion

Taken together, these findings provide significant guidance for good practice for interventions involving Indigenous offenders. Interventions should be targeted based on the offender's risks and needs, should operate in the community or provide throughcare, and should include a preparatory intervention where necessary. While quantitative evidence is lacking, it has been suggested that programs should also be culturally enhanced to improve effectiveness. Interventions appear to be most effective at reducing reoffending when they provide support and treatment to offenders, rather than focusing solely on supervision. At the program level, experience indicates that effective coordination and collaboration, involvement of Indigenous people in program design and delivery, and strong links with community are all important aspects of program delivery. Finally, experience indicates that there is a need for good governance and management, including effective plans (to facilitate strategic decision-making and proactive management), effective organisational structures, good record management systems, clear policies and protocols, skilled leaders and staff, adequate funding, and a focus on outcomes and continued improvement.

4.3 Assessing program impact

Impact evaluations aim to address the question "how would outcomes have been different if the intervention had not been undertaken?" (Merchant-Vega, 2011). Evaluation is important because it results in greater transparency of and accountability for government expenditure and enables service providers and government to improve the effectiveness of existing interventions (Weatherburn, 2009). Moreover, impact evaluations enable an evidence base to be developed about what works, to underpin and drive policy and practice and facilitate the use of effective interventions. Unfortunately, the evidence base for what works has largely been developed overseas and the impact of interventions on Indigenous offenders who have more extensive and complex needs remains largely unknown (Allard, 2011). Additionally, the impact of adapting and refining programs to address risk factors that are unique to Indigenous peoples, or of culturally enhancing interventions to improve

participation, engagement or effectiveness, remains largely unknown. Despite the need to focus on outcomes, there are a number of significant challenges which reduce the ability to assess impact. This section will provide an overview of the four primary challenges facing impact evaluations of criminal justice interventions, and then offer recommendations on how to facilitate impact evaluations.

Factors impeding impact evaluations

Lack of knowledge

The first challenge is that there is often a lack of knowledge on the part of program implementers and evaluators about how to conduct evaluations and of the range of research designs that can be used to assess program impact. Many evaluations, for example, adopt simple pre- and post-intervention designs without control groups, and hence the validity of their findings may be questioned because other factors may be responsible for changes (Lum & Yang, 2005).

Some propose that random controlled trials (RCTs) are the 'gold standard' of evaluation because they provide the most valid findings about the impact of interventions (Campbell & Boruch, 1975; Cook & Campbell, 1979; Farrington, 1983; Weisburd, 2010). RCTs ensure equivalency of groups by randomly assigning individuals to treatment and control groups, so that any differences between the groups in outcome measures is interpreted as an effect of the intervention (Greenwood, 2008; Lipsey et al., 2005). However, concerns have been raised about the adequacy and appropriateness of using RCTs because this method raises considerable technical, practical and ethical difficulties (Black, 1996; Davies, Nutley & Smith, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Patton, 1986; Pawson & Tilly, 1994, 1997; Weiss, 1983, 1995; World Health Organisation Europe, 1998).

Others therefore use experimental or quasi-experimental research designs which infer the impact of interventions by treating one group and having a control group, and then comparing the changes on some measure pre and post intervention. Quasi-experimental research overcomes many of the difficulties of RCTs, as comparisons are made between the treatment and control groups without random assignment (Lipsey et al., 2005; Weatherburn, 2009). However, such studies aim to ensure equivalency of groups by selecting a control group that is similar to the intervention group and excluding or controlling for rival causal factors that may impact on differences between the groups (Weatherburn, 2009). While there may be significant challenges to selecting an appropriate control group, a range of techniques has been developed to assist researchers with this task of ensuring equivalency, such as propensity score matching (Caliendo & Kopeinig, 2005; Heinrich, Maffioli & Vazquez, 2010; Rudner & Peyton, 2006).

Need for reliable data

The second challenge impeding the use of impact evaluations is that there is a need for accurate, reliable and relevant data to be collected (Doone, 2000; Owen & Kokiri, 2001). Good record

management systems are central, and data is required regarding the personal details of each participant (name, date of birth, sex, Indigenous status, residential address), their current offence/s and offence history, when they commenced and completed the intervention, what activities they were involved in, and any measures being assessed. Measures need to be related to the goals of the intervention and to be assessed pre and post intervention. Importantly, interventions must have enough participants to make an impact evaluation a worthwhile activity, with larger sample sizes required where the effects of interventions are smaller (Weatherburn, 2009). Measures that cannot be retrospectively assessed need to be incorporated into program design and also need to be collected for a control group.

Difficulties selecting and collecting information

The third challenge impeding the use of impact evaluations centres on the difficulty experienced in selecting or collecting information relating to outcome measures. One of the primary measures used to assess the impact of criminal justice interventions is reoffending. This measure is an attractive outcome measure because it can be assessed retrospectively and matching techniques can be used to establish a control group. Matching techniques attempt to ensure equivalency between the treatment and control groups based on a range of potentially confounding demographic characteristics (e.g. sex, date of birth, Indigenous status) and offence characteristics (e.g. age at first contact with the criminal justice system, number of offences, number of contacts, offence seriousness and location) (Caliendo & Kopeinig, 2005; Heinrich, Maffioli & Vazquez, 2010; Rudner & Peyton, 2006).

However, using reoffending as a measure is not without its limitations and challenges. Reoffending is frequently assessed based on official sources (e.g. police charges, court appearances, convictions) rather than self-reporting. As such, it may be an inaccurate measure because of offences that do not come to the attention of authorities or due to biases in agency activity (Brown, 1984; Widom, 1989). A number of challenges also arise when assessing reoffending due to the lack of a widely accepted measurement standard. With this in mind, it has been proposed that the measure should be based on the date when the offence occurred and only be included if it resulted in a guilty plea or finding (Richards, 2011). Additionally, it has been proposed that measurement of reoffending should consider several dimensions, such as the prevalence, frequency, volume and seriousness of reoffending (Richards, 2011). Another challenge that arises when using reoffending as an outcome measure relates to the length of time over which this measure should be assessed. At a minimum, a 12-month follow-up time is required but longer periods are recommended because the impact of interventions can fade with time (Allard et al., 2009). Furthermore, assessing reoffending is itself a time-consuming task, with ethics and agency approval processes typically taking six months and data extraction processes typically taking over 12 months.

Some propose that there is too much focus on reoffending as an outcome measure and that there is a need to assess more directly relevant measures as well (Berry & Carter, 1992; Cunneen & Luke,

2007; Hughes & Edwards, 2001; Mears & Butts, 2008; Owen & Kokiri, 2001). Such measures would necessarily be related to the goals of specific interventions but may include order breaches, education/employment measures, levels of substance abuse, connectedness with culture, general health and wellbeing, and other social integration measures (Cunneen & Luke, 2007; Richards, 2011; Sherman et al., 1997). It has been suggested that additional measures should also be included which signify progress towards achievement of goals (Armstrong & Francis, 2003). These outcome measures could be considered initial or intermediate outcomes of interventions, with improvements on these measures related to the long-term outcome of reduced reoffending (Richards, 2011). In a similar vein, others have proposed that 'baskets of indicators' should be collected, including contextual indicators, key indicators related to primary goals such as reduced reoffending, and non-crime-related supporting indicators (Berry & Carter, 1992); if most indicators in the basket are moving in broadly the same direction, then the intervention can be viewed as having a positive impact and there can be more confidence in the findings.

Possible resistance to evaluation

The fourth major challenge that impedes evaluation of criminal justice interventions stems from the need for these assessments to be independent, as well as possible resistance from program administrators and personnel. Assessments about the impact of interventions should be undertaken by independent evaluators because of the potential for manipulation and human error to undermine findings (Hailey & James, 2003; Paton, 2003). This need for independence may heighten resistance from program administrators, who may believe that potential negative findings could harm ongoing funding (Merchant-Vega, 2011). Resistance from administrators could also stem from the high cost and increased data collection burdens that accompany evaluations (Hailey & James, 2003; Merchant-Vega, 2011). Evaluations can be expensive and time-consuming and consequently may occur only infrequently, due to insufficient funding or because evaluation is viewed as diverting resources which could otherwise be used for program delivery (Cunneen, 2006).

Recommendations to facilitate impact evaluations

Significant guidance is provided by the international literature about what works when supporting offenders and reducing reoffending, but it is important to develop an evidence base of how effective such interventions are for Indigenous offenders in Australia. This evidence base should be focused on identifying the characteristics and types of interventions that are most effective for achieving specific outcomes such as reducing reoffending. This evidence base is clearly required by the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework, which states that there is a need to increase the scope and availability of effective rehabilitation and transitional support programs (SCAG, 2009). Without an evidence base, there is a risk that history could repeat itself, with no reduction in Indigenous over-representation and minimal evidence on which to develop policy and practice. The following provides

an outline of what program leaders and administrators and funding bodies can do to facilitate impact evaluations – the building blocks for a solid evidence base.

Facilitation of impact evaluations by program leaders and administrators

While it is recognised that there is likely to be considerable variation between programs in the extent that monitoring and evaluation practices have been integrated into program design, there are three steps that can be taken by program leaders and administrators to facilitate evaluation.

First, it is essential that plans are developed which outline the vision, contain a clear mission statement, and specify short-term and long-term goals. Performance indicators and outcome measures need to be developed and agreed upon by stakeholders based on the goals outlined in the plan. These should include indicators which signify progress towards achievement of goals, intermediate outcomes which may be non-crime related, and long-term outcomes which may include reduced reoffending.

Second, programs should have good record management systems which facilitate the collection of accurate, reliable and relevant data. This data should include offenders' personal information, offence information and commencement and completion dates, as well as activities they engaged in and any other measures needed for performance monitoring or evaluation. Information required for performance monitoring needs to be regularly collected, while information required for program evaluation needs to be collected for offenders just before they commence the program and at a follow-up time. Importantly, a control group of people similar to those who participate in the program needs to be selected (e.g. offenders who were eligible for the program but who could not participate because of limited places), and any measures used for evaluation need to be collected for individuals in this group.

Third, program leaders and administrators should collaborate and develop strong long-term partnerships with researchers experienced in evaluation, so as to draw on their knowledge and expertise. It is recognised that many program leaders and administrators do not have the capacity or skills needed to assess impact on reoffending, so partnerships with researchers could be established with a view to undertaking outcome evaluations and obtaining additional funding through alternative funding streams.

Facilitation of impact evaluations by funding bodies

Steps can be undertaken by funding bodies to facilitate the use of monitoring and evaluation. Funding bodies could require plans to be developed and program leaders and administrators to report against these goals to demonstrate the impact of programs on outcomes or essential indicators (Cherney & Sutton, 2007). However, mandatory reporting requirements would need to acknowledge the increased burden and provide additional dedicated funding for this purpose. Funding bodies need to provide

support to and assist program leaders to undertake monitoring and evaluation. They should provide ongoing advice regarding the minimum and optimum levels of data that should be collected. Funding bodies should also consider establishing a research unit tasked with undertaking impact evaluations. Establishment of this unit would enable many of the challenges associated with assessing the impact of interventions on reoffending to be overcome. The research unit could have ongoing ethical and agency clearance so that data is provided on an intermittent basis (e.g. six-monthly) for the purposes of assessing the impact of interventions. While establishing the protocols and obtaining the necessary approvals would take time initially, it would build significant capacity and facilitate long-term assessment about the impact of interventions on reoffending.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the evidence base for Indigenous Offender Support and Reintegration programs and highlighted how this evidence base could be improved through future impact evaluations. It began by outlining three conceptual models of offender support and reintegration, based on whether programs provided supervision, support or treatment, or a mix of these. What constitutes good practice for interventions was then highlighted. Good interventions provide treatment or support, rather than focusing solely on supervision. They also are focused on the offender's risks and needs, operate in the community or provide throughcare, and include preparatory interventions where necessary. Qualitative evidence indicates that culturally enhanced programs may improve program effectiveness, and that good program delivery involves effective coordination and collaboration, involving Indigenous peoples in program design and delivery and having strong links with the community. Good governance and management involves the development of effective plans, effective organisational structures, good record management systems, and clear policies and protocols; these in turn require skilled leaders and staff, adequate funding, and a focus on outcomes and continued improvement.

The challenges that arise when attempting to have an outcome focus and to evaluate program impact were then examined. These challenges included a possible lack of knowledge about how to conduct evaluations, the need to have the required data, difficulties selecting and collecting information about outcome measures, and possible resistance from program staff. Finally, recommendations were made to facilitate future impact evaluations, with a view to developing a solid evidence base. Program leaders and administrators need to develop performance indicators and outcome measures based on program goals, ensure they have good record management systems to collect the necessary data, and collaborate and develop long-term partnerships with researchers. Additionally, it was suggested that funding bodies should require (and support) program leaders and administrators in reporting against program goals, and provide ongoing support to assist monitoring and evaluation.

5. Findings: Dthina Yuwali Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Program (NSW)

5.1 Summary of program

Dthina Yuwali (meaning 'tracking footprints' in the Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay language) is an alcohol and other drugs program targeted at young Aboriginal offenders currently in custody in NSW. It has been developed by Aboriginal staff within the Department of Attorney General and Justice, Juvenile Justice NSW, using currently available research evidence to respond to the risk factors proven to be associated with offending and substance use. The goals of the program are to motivate young people in their considerations of change around substance use and offending and reduction of harm associated with substance use and related offending.

Dthina Yuwali has been designed specifically for Aboriginal young people who offend under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, offend to procure alcohol and other drugs, and engage in the use of alcohol and other drugs in the context of other criminogenic needs. It is a structured and staged program that focuses on the relationship between substance use and pathways to offending. It is delivered in a group setting by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff, often with input from Elders and respected community members. The program encourages participants to consider that intervention and change are based on a continuum, and reinforces that all participants have something to learn and teach. Reinforcing identity and connection to culture and community is integral to this change process.

Dthina Yuwali is a multi-modal program focusing on harm reduction, increased motivation for change, and cultural learning. It begins with a core alcohol and other drugs program (Stage 1), then explores the change process, including managing emotions related to change (Stage 2), and finally focuses on relapse prevention and maintenance (Stage 3). The program can be presented in its entirety or in individual stages. The three stages are as follows:

- Stage 1, Step Out of the Shadows, is comprised of six sessions of 1.5 hours. It introduces core alcohol and other drug concepts; encourages cultural learning, harm minimisation and identifying the link between alcohol and other drugs and offending; looks at considerations in change; and introduces relapse prevention. It is recommended that this stage is run over three days with two sessions per day being delivered.
- Stage 2, Walking Different Tracks, is comprised of four sessions of 1.5 hours and focuses on strengthening commitment to change and the change process, while reaffirming culture and positive identity. It deals with risk factors and looks at what changes need to be made when addressing substance use and offending. Stage 2 also focuses on managing emotions related

to change. It is recommended that this stage is run over two days with two sessions per day being delivered.

- Stage 3, Tomorrow Today, is comprised of four sessions of 1.5 hours and focuses on relapse prevention and maintaining change. Within these sessions the following areas are addressed: safety planning, managing communication and assertiveness, and goal-setting. It is recommended that this stage is run over two days with two sessions per day being delivered.

The cultural learning built into the program involves the use of learning circles, stories and Aboriginal representations of key concepts to facilitate learning. Participation of Elders and respected community members provides participants with knowledge about culture, including area-specific culture. The program is informed by the following approaches:

- Cultural learning that supports identity, culture and being and recognises lifelong and intergenerational learning
- Evidence based practice in working with young offenders[3]
- Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Empowerment and the need to view individual problems in their social context
- Narrative approaches
- Resilience and the use of humour
- Working from a strengths-based approach
- Solution-focused/future-focused approaches
- Invitational modes whereby participants are invited rather than mandated to participate.

The program was officially launched in 2008 and to date approximately 130 Juvenile Justice staff have been trained to deliver it. Program data indicates that, at June 2012, 142 Aboriginal offenders had participated in the program. This compares with 595 Aboriginal young people on orders from 10 April 2008 to 30 June 2011, and whose Youth Level of Service Inventory (YLSI) indicated that alcohol or drugs contributed to offending.

5.2 Program logic

The following table shows the 'program logic' for the Dthina Yuwali Program. Developed with Dthina Yuwali representatives, it shows the connections between the inputs to the program, outputs of the program, and expected changes in the medium term (outcomes) and longer term (impacts).

[3] For example the program manual clearly references research that has informed various aspects of Dthina Yuwali's approach, including Prochaska et al.'s (1994) stages of change and decisional balance model. Published research that supports other aspects of Dthina Yuwali's approach are clearly documented in the manual, including research to support cognitive behavioural therapy; empowerment; narrative approaches; resilience building and the use of humour; and solution focused and future focused approaches.

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Funding Corporate Plan Personnel delivering the program Resources to deliver the program: training, materials, staffing, liaison with local community members to assist in the delivery of the program	Program developed and designed by Aboriginal staff Consultations with staff, young people and communities completed Piloting of program at a range of juvenile justice centres Implementation of therapeutic group work program Program participated in and completed by young people Referrals made Completion of pre and post assessments tracking changed knowledge and values	Increased awareness of connection between substance use and offending, and harm reduction Improved motivation and strengthened commitment to reduce or manage substance use Development of problem-solving skills and other relevant skill development in the areas of relapse prevention Increase in cultural learning and sense of belonging Increased links with Aboriginal Elders and respected community members Increased familiarity with Aboriginal learning styles and concepts Longer term changes in attitudes to offending Social connectedness Reduction or elimination of offending Increased engagement for wider program participation	Reduction in offending/recidivism under influence, procuring alcohol and other drugs, use of alcohol and other drugs in connection with other criminal activity Increased engagement for participation in a range of other program options

5.3 Methodology

The Evaluation Framework and Methodology is outlined in Chapter 3, where key themes were identified which typify good practice in the Offender Support and Reintegration area. These serve as a reference point for analysis against the good practice themes (see 5.4 below). These themes also provide a tool for assessing the program's initiatives on a scale from 'excellent to very good practice'

to 'adequate practice' or 'poor practice' (see 5.5 below).[4] Evidence for the evaluation of Dthina Yuwali was gathered through analysis of documentation and data, and through interviews and consultations. Finally, based on the evidence gained, key lessons learned were identified (see 5.6 below).

Documentation and data analysed	The literature on offender support and reintegration. Juvenile Justice policy and program documentation. Records from Juvenile Justice and Dthina Yuwali on participant numbers, participant demographics and program completion. Secondary analysis of program evaluation data, feedback relating to training data, participant surveys and feedback, and pre-post assessments. However, there were significant data gaps, with post Decisional Balance Scale (DBS) and My Motivation and Confidence Scale (MCS) data available for only slightly more than half of all participants who completed a stage of the program between 2009 and 2012.[5] There was also no way of identifying which individuals had completed stages 1, 2 or 3 of the program. A recidivism analysis was attempted, but issues such as sample size, lack of appropriate control groups and data collection integrity issues prevented this continuing.
Interviews and consultations conducted	Interviews with: Juvenile Justice Programs Branch staff and Learning and Development Unit staff. A site visit to the Western Region (Riverina JJC[6]) on 21–22 November 2011, during which consultations were held with: Youth Officers (program facilitators); Learning and Development Unit staff; Elders and respected community members. A site visit to the Northern Region (Acmena JJC and Grafton JJCS[7]) on 24–25 November 2011, during which consultations were held with: Youth Officers (program facilitators); Juvenile Justice Officers (program facilitators); Unit Supervisor (program facilitator); Programs Youth Officer. Consultations at Yasmar Training Facility on 29 November 2011 with Metropolitan Region personnel (at Frank Baxter JJC, Reiby JJC, Cobham JJC and Sydney/Surry Hills JJCS), during which consultations were held with:

[4] The evaluation of the Dthina Yuwali Program required departmental approval via a Human Services Juvenile Justice (NSW) research application. The research application was submitted, with approval granted on 17 October 2011 (Ref: 11/03752).

[5] Further detail about the appropriateness and efficacy of program-related monitoring and evaluation data discussed at 5.4 below.

[6] Juvenile Justice Centre.

[7] Juvenile Justice Community Services.

	Youth Officers (program facilitators); Juvenile Justice Officers (program facilitators); psychologists (program facilitators); alcohol and other drug counsellors (program facilitators); the Regional Project Officer (program facilitator). Additional telephone and face-to-face interviews (including with Tamworth JJCS, Lismore JJCS, Blacktown JJCS, Juniperina JJC and Orana JJC) involving: Elders and respected community members; community stakeholders; unit managers; Youth Officers; Juvenile Justice Officers; alcohol and other drug counsellors; central office personnel; Regional Directors.

5.4 Findings in relation to the good practice themes

The following is an assessment of the Dthina Yuwali program against the 10 good practice themes as outlined in Table 3a in Chapter 3. The themes are grouped under the three components: 'What is a good intervention?', 'What is a good model?' and 'What is a well managed and delivered program?'

What is a good intervention?

Theme 1: Focusing on crime prevention and aiming to make a contribution to a reduction in the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples in the criminal justice system

The Dthina Yuwali Program content makes it clear that the program is seeking to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour; in particular it is based on the relationship between substance use and pathways to offending. Dthina Yuwali focuses on the specific criminogenic needs and responsivity characteristics of Aboriginal young people who have been charged with drug- or alcohol-related offences by helping them to self-manage their behaviour, improve their problem-solving ability, recognise and avoid negative influences, practise new skills, and identify or develop positive peer associations.

Dthina Yuwali is based on both an education and behavioural model (including CBT and Stages of Change) with a view to motivating and providing skills to young people in their considerations of change around substance use and offending and reduction of harm associated with substance use and related offending. Numerous studies in the literature have found that the 'typical' juvenile education programs and juvenile behaviour modification programs result in statistically significant reductions in the recidivism rates of participants (Aos, Miller & Drake, 2006). While these studies tend not to be Aboriginal-specific, and give no indication of size and scope of the program compared with Dthina Yuwali, they indicate that the Dthina Yuwali model is based on a theoretical framework about what works in terms of reducing recidivism. One of the key strengths articulated about Dthina Yuwali is that it meets the cultural needs of participants because it is based on a model of cultural learning, with input from community Elders and respected community members, and is delivered in a culturally safe

setting alongside other Aboriginal offenders by at least one Aboriginal facilitator. The discussion of Theme 3 below examines the extent to which the cultural framework upon which Dthina Yuwali is perceived as a factor in high levels of engagement with the program among clients.

The Dthina Yuwali model incorporates many of the characteristics that have been shown in the literature to effect reductions in reoffending and recidivism, including being structured and targeted around criminogenic needs (such as substance abuse, antisocial peer associations and problem-solving skills), targeting high-risk offenders, being focused on developing skills, using behavioural methods, providing adequate training of staff delivering the program, having monitoring and evaluation processes built into the program, having a high proportion of program completers, and being of sufficient integrity to ensure that what is delivered is consistent with the planned design (Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; MacKenzie, 2000). The offenders participating in the program are offenders with higher risk of recidivism because of their known substance use issues; that is, an association has been made between their alcohol and other drug use and their offence.[8]

Given Dthina Yuwali's focus as a pre-treatment program, attributing longer term impacts such as recidivism or reoffending is challenging, given that these types of outcomes are unlikely to be achieved in isolation but rather as part of a suite of interventions. In assessing Dthina Yuwali's longer term impacts, such as impacts on reoffending, it is also important to acknowledge the complex and multilayered issues faced by offenders in relation to reintegration and reduced offending. The identification of medium to longer term outcomes is constrained by factors in the external environment, such as the home and social environment and the availability of community support structures, and issues associated with socioeconomic disadvantage such as high levels of unemployment and housing concerns. Stakeholders also highlighted the difficulty of achieving motivation and behaviour change in a short amount of time (exacerbated by the fact that most participants are only exposed only to Stage 1 of the program – see Theme 4 below). Additionally, issues associated with data quality and availability with relation to Dthina Yuwali participants, small sample sizes and difficulties achieving a matched control group prevented analysis of these longer term outcomes (by offending history, type of offence, number of offences, periods in custody, and Youth Level of Service/Case Management History (YLS/CMI-AA) scores).

While Dthina Yuwali focuses on criminogenic needs and responsivity characteristics that have been shown in the literature to predict offending behaviour and reduce its reoccurrence (Andrews et al., 1990; Bonta, 1995), the emphasis of Dthina Yuwali is on impacting motivation to change rather than providing intensive treatment. Some of the criminogenic needs and responsivity characteristics that Dthina Yuwali focuses on are not directly related to offending but interact with the treatment environment and impact on an offender's ability to engage in and respond to treatment, such as

[8] This association is made through their casework assessment, including their score on the Youth Level of Service Inventory/Case Management Australian Adaptation (YLSI/CM-AA).

antisocial attitudes and beliefs, antisocial peer associations, substance misuse and dependency, poor self-management and problem-solving skills, and familial conflict and dysfunction.

Indicators that are more closely matched to program intent include motivation to change behaviours, motivation to participate in counselling, ability to reflect on program content, and changed attitudes to substance use. This information is currently collected through the Decisional Balance Scale, the My Motivation and Confidence Scale and participant feedback. The outcomes achieved by Dthina Yuwali within this context are discussed in Theme 4 below. Other indicators that may be useful include participation in school/employment and further programs and/or counselling. At the time of the evaluation, collection of this type of information was not possible because program participation was not linked to a client on the Client Information Management System (CIMS) database. It is understood that this now occurs, which allows referral information, program participation rates, completion rates, module completion, reasons for non-completion, and pre/post assessment data to be recorded centrally and linked to a participant's unique identifier. This will now allow for participation in other Department-approved programs to be tracked. In assessing program success, a blend of qualitative and quantitative measures is required in order to better understand why certain results were achieved or not achieved, to explain unexpected outcomes, and to inform decisions about program modifications.

What is a good model?

Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap

The Dthina Yuwali Program was developed as a response to the significant over-representation of Aboriginal young people in the juvenile justice system and high rates of reoffending in NSW. It was also developed in response to evidence (from the NSW Young People on Community Orders Health Survey 2003–2006) identifying that young offenders initiate illicit substance use on average two years earlier than those sampled in a number of national surveys.

The program responds to a need for programs that relate substance use with pathways to offending. It is the only Juvenile Justice program specifically targeting Aboriginal young people that addresses both these issues and focuses on their specific criminogenic needs and responsivity characteristics within an appropriate cultural framework.

Piloted on five occasions with both young men and women from urban, rural and regional locations, the program is designed to run in all Juvenile Justice Regions across NSW in both community and custodial settings.

There is a strong focus on program integrity and fidelity, and the program content and approach to delivering the content are clearly defined and documented in a comprehensive program manual. All facilitators undergo appropriate training before delivering the program. Training prerequisites are

made clear to facilitators and adhered to. However, while there is a clearly defined framework for delivery, there is freedom within it to take the program in varying directions, with sufficient flexibility to allow participants to take ownership of different aspects of the program. This is seen as one of the key enablers with respect to participant engagement and motivation.

Analysis of participant feedback indicates most participants found Dthina Yuwali helpful (87%, 69 participants). Most also noted that the program either exceeded their expectations (61%) or met their expectations (31%). Around 61% found it easy to understand, with a further 30% finding some of it easy to understand. Stakeholder perceptions of the program suggest that the conversational and visual aspects of the model, together with the cultural framework on which it is based, make it easier for young participants to grasp concepts and engage with program content. This is important in a context of low participation of juvenile Aboriginal offenders in mainstream drug and alcohol counselling or other drug and alcohol programs. Evaluation feedback from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal facilitators (including specialist drug and alcohol staff) points to offenders' exposure to group work in this environment as being a good precursor or gateway to other group work in a rehabilitation setting.

That said, participants require sufficient maturity and cognitive ability to grasp some of the abstract concepts within the program, such as the Situation, Thoughts, Action, Consequences (STAC) model and Situation, Thoughts, Alternatives, Re-appraisal and replace (STAR) model. To this end, Dthina Yuwali has clear assessment and screening criteria which are objective and standardised.

The program utilises local Aboriginal facilitators (Youth Officers in a detention setting and Juvenile Justice Officers in the community), which allows the program to be tailored to local needs.

The Dthina Yuwali model is delivered in both custodial and community settings. Interestingly, the setting does not seem to have an effect on the completion rates of the various stages, which are very high (on average 88%) in both settings.

Given the nature of participants' detention, one of the benefits of running Dthina Yuwali in a custodial setting is that program logistics are generally less complicated insofar as not having to consider transport arrangements, venues or competing external activities. Other benefits of the custodial setting include locally trained Aboriginal facilitators often having an established relationship with the participants, opportunities to debrief and maintain contact with participants post program while they are in custody, and lack of access to alcohol and other drugs. Where relevant, most participants in a custodial setting will usually have already gone through drug and/or alcohol detoxification during their period of detention, which means they are drug and alcohol free at the time of program participation and they also understand withdrawal issues.

In the custodial context, however, issues arise around the voluntary nature of participation in the program, as well as the program competing with other activities offered by the Juvenile Justice Centres such as sporting activities, particularly in school holidays. Another challenge in the custodial

setting is that Juvenile Justice Centres draw young offenders from communities across a wide range of geographic areas. Where group participants come from a range of communities, there is difficulty identifying appropriate Elders or respected community persons who represent the range of communities participants come from and identify with within a particular group.

These issues are somewhat mitigated by running Dthina Yuwali in a community setting, where participants are much more likely to be from the local community. This means they are more likely to have an existing connection with each other, and it is much easier to identify an Elder or respected community person who has relevance to, or connections with, group participants. Additionally, as recruitment is usually through the Juvenile Justice Office, support from local Juvenile Justice Officers has usually already been established, which makes available an existing avenue for support on completion of the program. While identifying support mechanisms available to group participants is part of the Dthina Yuwali model, in reality (and particularly in the custodial context), mechanisms for follow-up with participants post release are extremely limited. Where these opportunities do exist they are ad hoc, and not built into the program design (irrespective of whether Dthina Yuwali has been delivered in a community or custodial setting). It is acknowledged by Juvenile Justice staff that the limited avenues for contact with offenders once orders have been completed is a challenge for all Juvenile Justice programs, and not specific to Dthina Yumali.

There are some issues associated with running programs in community settings, including young people being disengaged and the difficulty in getting them to commit to the program and attend regularly. Additionally, participants often have competing appointments with Centrelink, job agencies, courts and so on. Where a commitment is made, program facilitators generally have to be hands-on in terms of encouraging participants to attend, such as transporting them to and from the venue, particularly where there is a need to travel significant distances. Another challenge in the community setting is young participants returning to their home environment at the end of the day, where they may be exposed to external factors and stressors that can increase the likelihood of substance use and relapse.

Program facilitators at a local level have attempted to overcome these challenges in several ways. One strategy has been to identify a mentor or support person from the community to pick participants up from home in the morning and take them home after their session, and to be available for general support that facilitators may not be able to provide. This also allows sufficient time for facilitators to debrief and complete the required assessment and evaluation tasks required by the model. The workload of completing the assessment, screening and evaluation tasks for facilitators is discussed below (Theme 10).

One Juvenile Justice Region has conducted parts of the Dthina Yuwali Program in a camp setting over several days. While logistically more complex, time-consuming and costly to organise, this is believed by stakeholders to aid group cohesion as participants are together in one place and remain in the

group environment, with facilitators, counsellors and peers more readily available to participants for debrief and support. Additionally, participants do not have access to alcohol and other drugs and are away from an environment where external stressors and influences may impact on their capacity to fully engage with the program. The camp setting also allows for participation in other culturally relevant activities, such as fishing and boating, thereby enhancing the cultural impact of the program. The camp setting itself is felt by facilitators to be a culturally appropriate venue for running the program, lending itself to cultural learning practices such as learning circles and storytelling.

In relation to conducting Dthina Yuwali in custodial and community settings, there are challenges and advantages of both and there is no ideal fit in terms of setting. Within the constraints outlined above, the program has sufficient flexibility to allow it to be adapted to setting, geographic location and group make-up.

Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation

Dthina Yuwali was developed by Aboriginal Juvenile Justice staff in consultation with Aboriginal Elders and community members. It was developed as part of Juvenile Justice's five-year Aboriginal Strategic Plan to better address the needs of young Aboriginal people in the juvenile justice system. The plan established a platform for well-coordinated and targeted interventions that promote both improved responsiveness and improved outcomes for young Aboriginal people.

The cultural framework on which the program is based contributes to it being a 'safe' space for offenders, particularly around disclosure, which helps to increase self-awareness and reflection. Intrinsic to this is narrative therapy, which seeks to take a respectful strengths-based, non-blaming approach which places an offender as the central expert in their own life. This approach also views problems as separate from people and assumes that participants have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives.

A co-facilitation approach is taken to the delivery of the program, with a requirement that at least one facilitator is Aboriginal. The program manual also highlights the importance of facilitators having a working knowledge of appropriate and relevant support services available in the local communities and having the ability to locate resources that complement and reinforce the program content to distribute to participants.

Dthina Yuwali incorporates various Aboriginal teaching approaches. Learning circles allow for program content to be delivered in a more holistic, non-linear and less structured way, and for delivering information the program has a focus on visual representations and storytelling. It adopts cultural representations of core concepts and includes cultural tools such as the message stick, which allows for group rules such as respect and listening to be established in a culturally appropriate way.

Elders and respected community members participated in the development and piloting of the program and are also involved in its delivery. This involvement is seen as one of the key factors contributing to the program's success and integral to setting a tone of cultural respect and providing the platform for a safe and comfortable environment for young people to disclose and share issues.

As part of the program, Aboriginal Youth Officers and Juvenile Justice Officers generally engage with community members and identify and approach appropriate Elders and respected community members to participate in the program. Prior to the program being run, they visit the Elder or respected community member to discuss the program outline and content and the Elder's role in the program.

Feedback indicates that Elder involvement elicits high engagement from participants and contributes to the cultural component of the program. Elders and respected community members provide a welcome to and acknowledgement of country and in some instances facilitate the learning circles and provide participants with certificates on completing the program. Evaluation feedback suggests that the involvement of Elders and respected community members is a very powerful part of the program for participants. Facilitators consistently noted that participants tended to be both highly engaged and respectful when Elders were present. Facilitators and Elders noted that many participants, for a variety of reasons, did not have close links with the local Aboriginal community and by extension the cultural supports that such links can provide. They discussed the valuable role of Elders in helping to contextualise the individual within their local Aboriginal community through knowledge of family members and other people known to participants.

The program's structure allows for gender-specific issues to be addressed in a culturally appropriate way. Group facilitators are instructed that they need to be aware that some topics are not suitable to be discussed by a facilitator of a particular gender, or that it may be necessary for them to leave the room during such discussions.

Youth Officers and Juvenile Justice Officers can run the program with the assistance of an Aboriginal facilitator. Numerous examples were provided of staff feeling that their cultural competency had increased in terms of their capacity to provide culturally effective interventions to young Aboriginal people both in a custody and a community setting.

Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent

The emphasis of Dthina Yuwali is on motivation to change. The program focuses on the relationship between substance use and pathways to offending in the context of individual criminogenic needs and responsivity characteristics. It is, as already noted, delivered in three modules (Stage 1: Core Concepts, Stage 2: Strengthening Commitment to Change, and Stage 3: Relapse Prevention).

Despite the voluntary nature of the program, completion rates are very high for individual modules, with 88% of participants completing the module they are offered.[9] However, program data also indicates that the majority (76%) only complete Stage 1 (with 3% completing Stages 1 and 2 and the remaining 21% completing all three stages). This is largely due to the limited time that many juvenile offenders are in custody, and to Community Corrections Orders expiring. Given that most participants are not completing the full program, it would be expected that there would be limited achievement of outcomes. That said, Dthina Yuwali appears to have achieved some short-term outcomes around consideration of change and increased motivation and confidence among some participants.

There are a number of monitoring and evaluation activities built into the program design. Firstly, there are pre and post assessments conducted for each of the three stages, namely:

- Decisional Balance Scale, Alcohol and Other Drugs (DBS AOD) – a measure of participants' self-reported views about the pros and cons of reducing substance use
- Decisional Balance Scale (Adolescent Offending) (DBS Offending) – a measure of participants' self-reported views about the pros and cons of stopping offending, and
- My Motivation and Confidence Scale (MCS) – a measure of participants' self-reported motivation and confidence in reducing substance use and not offending.

Secondly, there are session evaluation forms – to be completed after each session (Stage 1 has six sessions, Stage 2 has four sessions and Stage 3 has four sessions). And finally there is an overall program evaluation form.

Data analysis was conducted on the DBS and MCS data to assess changes pre and post program participation. There were significant data gaps, with post DBS and MCS data available for only slightly more than half of all participants who completed a stage of the program between 2009 and 2012 (76–80 out of a total of 142 participants). There was also no way of identifying which individuals had completed Stages 1, 2 or 3 of the program.

Outcomes relating to the Motivation and Confidence Scale (MCS) data – pre and post

T-tests for significant pre/post differences were applied to the MCS data. Initial analysis of the effect size for the whole sample showed no change pre/post in self-reported motivation and confidence. However, the data is positively skewed towards people who self-reported that they were highly confident or motivated (answered 6–10 on a 10-point scale) to reduce substance use or to stop offending. Of these, unusually high numbers self-reported the highest possible score of 10 on a scale of 1 to 10 about their confidence/motivation. This is indicative that it may not be a particularly good measure, and that consideration should be given to whether this measure needs revising.

[9] Based on analysis of program data outlining completion rates of participants from July 2009 to June 2012, (n=129).

When data was transformed into dichotomous variables, grouped by participants with lower MCS scores on the MCS pre test (i.e. answered 1–5 on the 10-point scale) and participants with higher MCS scores on the MCS pre test (i.e. answered 6–10 on the 10-point scale), there were positive outcomes for the lower MCS group (i.e. those who had poorer motivation and confidence pre-program). Paired sample t-tests were conducted to ascertain pre/post differences among participants. These results suggested an increase in motivation and confidence at the completion of the program among those who began the program with lower MCS scores. While the sample sizes are small, these differences are significant (see Table 5b over page).

Outcomes relating to AOD and Offending Decisional Balance Scale data (pre and post)

The DBS data suggests some positive outcomes for participants in terms of their consideration of change; the analysis of DBS data is presented in Table 5a. The mean scores both pre and post program were very high for the pros of stopping offending scales (i.e. the pros for both self and others for not offending). The data still suggests a slight increase in participants' perception of the benefits for both themselves and others of not offending at program completion, despite the scores being very high to begin with. There was no shift in participants' views in pre and post assessment about the cons of not offending.

Table 5a: Paired sample t-test – pre and post Decisional Balance Scales (DBS)

DECISIONAL BALANCE SCALE	PRE MEAN	POST MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE RESULTS
Pros for self of stopping offending n=74	36 (SD 8.1)	39 (SD 6.7)	p=0.001, 95% CI is 1.00 to 3.94
Pros for others of stopping offending n=74	35 (SD 6.1)	37 (SD 5.5)	p=0.028, 95% CI is 0.18 to 3.17
Cons of stopping offending n=72	17 (SD 5.0)	17 (SD 6.1)	No change
Pros of alcohol or other drug use n=74	22 (SD 7.0)	22 (SD 6.3)	No change
Cons of alcohol or other drug use n=70	28 (SD 7.1)	30 (SD 6.5)	p=0.027, 95% CI is 0.18 to 2.90

The mean scores for this scale were lower in comparison to the other scales (i.e. participants did not display as negative an attitude to not offending), and this remained the same in the post assessment. Participants' perceptions about the cons of alcohol and drug use also increased slightly at program completion. There was no change in terms of participants' views on the pros of alcohol and other drug use. This is not surprising given that external factors such as the widespread use and social acceptability of alcohol use in the community are still present despite participation in the program.

Table 5b: Paired sample t-test pre and post motivation and confidence among those participants with lower motivation and confidence scores (self-reported 1–5 on 10-point scale) on My Motivation and Confidence Scale

MCS QUESTIONS	PRE MEAN	POST MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE RESULTS
MOTIVATION TO REDUCE SUBSTANCE USE (Score 1–5 on pre assessment) [n=29]			
Motivation to reduce substance use	4 (SD 1.2)	6 (SD 2.3)	p=0.003, 95% CI 0.96 to 2.90
Confidence to reduce substance use	5 (SD 2.2)	6 (SD 2.5)	No significant difference
Motivation to stop offending	6 (SD 2.1)	6 (SD 2.8)	No significant difference
Confidence to stop offending	6 (SD 2.4)	6 (SD 2.9)	No significant difference
CONFIDENCE TO REDUCE SUBSTANCE USE (Score 1–5 on pre assessment) [n=26]			
Motivation to reduce substance use	5 (SD 2.1)	6 (SD 2.3)	p=0.001, 95% CI 0.85 to 2.69
Confidence to reduce substance use	4 (SD 1.1)	6 (SD 2.3)	p=0.001, 95% CI 0.71 to 2.44
Motivation to stop offending	6 (SD 2.3)	7 (SD 2.5)	No significant difference
Confidence to stop offending	5 (SD 2.2)	6 (SD 2.5)	p=0.030, 95% CI 0.10 to 1.82
MOTIVATION TO STOP OFFENDING (Score 1–5 on pre assessment) [n=22]			
Motivation to reduce substance use	4 (SD 1.9)	6 (SD 2.4)	p=0.039, 95% CI 0.06 to 2.12
Confidence to reduce substance use	5 (SD 2.3)	6 (SD 2.7)	No significant difference
Motivation to stop offending	4 (SD 0.9)	6 (SD 2.7)	No significant difference
Confidence to stop offending	5 (SD 1.5)	6 (SD 2.8)	No significant difference
CONFIDENCE TO STOP OFFENDING (Score 1–5 on pre assessment) [n=22]			
Motivation to reduce substance use	5 (SD 2.0)	6 (SD 2.2)	p=0.003, 95% CI 0.54 to 2.37
Confidence to reduce substance use	4 (SD 1.8)	6 (SD 2.3)	p=0.007, 95% CI 0.38 to 2.16
Motivation to stop offending	5 (SD 2.0)	6 (SD 2.6)	p=0.015, 95% CI is 0.29 to 2.44
Confidence to stop offending	4 (SD 0.9)	6 (SD 2.4)	p=0.006, 95% CI is 0.51 to 2.59

Despite the positive outcomes in terms of consideration of change, a number of stakeholders expressed concern about many of the questions, which they felt were not understood well by participants. It appears that the wording of a number of the questions used in the DBS is ambiguous and complex, and the use of double negatives results in poor comprehension of some questions.[10] It is noted that it is probably the intention for some items to be worded in a manner that is reversed, in order to discourage response bias, but what is achieved is poor comprehension. Additionally, the value of scales which result in the distribution of the data being strongly skewed towards the highest or lowest possible scores is also questionable. Within this context, consideration should be given to reviewing the efficacy and validity of the DBS questions as an outcome measure.

Other short-term outcomes

Dthina Yuwali aims to achieve a number of other short-term to medium-term outcomes for individuals, namely awareness of the connection between substance use and offending and harm reduction, development of problem-solving skills and other relevant skills development in the areas of relapse prevention, familiarity with Aboriginal learning styles and concepts, cultural learning and sense of belonging, social connectedness and links with community-based support, and engagement for wider program participation.

While Dthina Yuwali was generally well regarded by stakeholders in relation to its capacity to contribute to outcomes for individuals in these areas, the absence of reliable monitoring data in line with program intent means that much of the evidence for these outcomes is qualitative. Stakeholders consulted throughout the evaluation, for example, mentioned numerous short-term outcomes for participants, including improved self-awareness about the connection between substance use and their offending, and the impact this has on themselves and others.

One of the goals of Dthina Yuwali is to develop problem-solving skills and other relevant skills in the areas of relapse prevention. Stage 3 has a lot of focus on this, but, as discussed, only 21% of participants have completed Stage 3.

Stakeholders provided anecdotal accounts of changes in some participants after completing the program. Examples were cited of individual participants being more assertive rather than aggressive, appearing more confident, having improved negotiation skills, appearing to be more thoughtful about their actions and choices, and reflecting on their behaviour. However, the monitoring and evaluation data collected through Dthina Yuwali does not capture this type of information, so it is not possible to measure the extent of these additional outcomes across participants. Given that the majority of participants only complete Stage 1, it could be inferred that this may not be a widespread impact.

[10] Examples of questions on the DBS scales that are ambiguous or unclear include: "If I stop my offending ... the people I love will be embarrassed if I got help"' "If I stop my offending ... my family will not be accepted by the community."

Despite the majority of participants only completing Stage 1, feedback from stakeholders suggests that participation in Stage 1 is still a worthwhile exercise, and there is a general perception among stakeholders that participants gain from the experience.

Similarly, Dthina Yuwali's monitoring and evaluation systems only collect staff feedback and participant pre and post DBS and MCS data while participants are engaged in the program. There is therefore no mechanism or resources within current systems to measure DBS or MSC outcomes (or other outcomes such as use of problem-solving or other skills) at follow-up periods in the medium or longer term.

Also, there is limited scope for participants in custodial settings to practise the strategies and skills learned in the program, in particular strategies relating to drug and alcohol use, while they are engaged in the program.

Anecdotally, a key outcome of Dthina Yuwali is the level of engagement with the information and concepts presented, in an environment of low emotional literacy among many participants. This was felt to have been achieved by building a familiarity with Aboriginal learning styles and concepts, such as learning circles, storytelling and the use of a message stick.

The program was seen by facilitators to help offenders improve connections with the cultural aspects of their identity; it helps 'join the dots' in relation to participants' Aboriginal identity. This was considered very important for young offenders who had a history of being in out of home care, resulting in them often being disconnected from both family and culture.

Across the evaluation, stakeholders felt that the involvement of Elders was a key contributor to gains made with regard to increased cultural learning, respect and sense of cultural belonging.

However, the fact that the provision of follow-up support to participants is ad hoc and opportunistic, rather than part of the program, is a key limitation of the Dthina Yuwali model. Factors such as measuring outcomes in relation to increased links with Elders and respected community members, increasing community support and increasing social connectedness are all affected by the lack of follow-up with offenders after they have completed their orders. This issue is discussed further in Theme 6 below.

Lack of follow-up also limits Dthina Yuwali's capacity as a gateway program or as a precursor to wider program participation. Some stakeholders felt that the program had scope to increase participants' willingness to engage with other counsellors and psychologists. This was mainly due to its providing an opportunity to think and talk about substance use and offending issues in a cultural context, as well as an opportunity to build relationships with clinical staff. Many stakeholders commented that the program builds awareness of the relationship between substance use and offending, introduces offenders to group work, and provides them with skills they can build on. In this way Dthina Yuwali

was seen as having potential as a gateway program to other interventions relating to substance use and offence pathways. It was generally felt that exposure to group work in this environment is a good precursor for group work in a rehabilitation setting and a good introduction to available mechanisms for support.

Despite difficulties in measuring the results of the program, the evaluation found that the program is generally well regarded in terms of producing positive shorter term outcomes, particularly in building awareness about the relationship between substance use and offending and introducing participants to the notion of group work and counselling in this context. However, limitations in relation to performance monitoring information meant that the evaluation was not able to quantify these outcomes. While the MCS and DBS data does indicate positive outcomes in terms of motivation and consideration of change in the short term, within a Juvenile Justice framework measuring the sustainability of outcomes is extremely difficult. Revision and refinement of these instruments, as well as improvements to data collection processes, would improve data quality and therefore the efficacy of this information. Additionally, systems need to be developed whereby program outcomes are analysed and communicated to the Juvenile Justice Regions in order to facilitate discussion around program value and continuous program quality improvement.

Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement

The impact of Aboriginal culture is a central component of the program's design. The strengths-based approach used clearly acknowledges the impact of culture as a key strength for individuals and attempts to position culture as a resource for participants' empowerment. Feedback from facilitators and Elders suggests this is one of the key strengths of the Dthina Yuwali model.

The program requires at least one of the facilitators to be Aboriginal and tries to ensure that, when the program is run in a custodial setting, the custodial/support staff are also Aboriginal. Evaluation data indicates these aims are carried out in practice, which results in a range of benefits. The Dthina Yuwali model provides for comprehensive training for program staff in terms of both skills development to deliver the therapeutic aspects of the program and understanding of the aims of the program. For non-Aboriginal Juvenile Justice staff, the training provides greater insight into the unique issues and external stressors faced by young Aboriginal offenders, and the central role that culture and community can play in supporting young Aboriginal offenders. Aboriginal youth officers trained in the Dthina Yuwali Program have reported that it gives them skills that could contribute to career progression, and helps to fulfil their TAFE requirements for the Certificate IV in Youth Work. It also helps to strengthen working relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff.

The program's design and delivery, as articulated in the program manual, ensure sensitivity to gender differences, and the use of cultural representations in the delivery of the program acknowledges the impact and importance of culture on program design and methods of delivery. Yet fewer females participate in the Dthina Yuwali Program, with only 9% of participants being female compared with

females representing 17% of young Aboriginal people who met the criteria for Dthina Yuwali but had not participated in the program. From July 2009 to June 2012 no females participated in Stages 2 or 3 of the program.

As noted in Theme 3 above, Elders and community members throughout NSW are involved in the development, piloting and running of the program. Both facilitators and Elders were very positive about their roles in terms of program delivery, particularly in terms of the program providing an opportunity for young offenders and Elders to re-engage with each other. In this respect, Dthina Yuwali was seen by stakeholders to be a vehicle for community strengthening, social inclusion and connectedness.

There are no clear guidelines or protocols within the Dthina Yuwali model for selecting, briefing or training Elders and respected community members for their role within the program. The process for this is informal and opportunistic, differing depending on the Juvenile Justice Region in which the program is run and the availability and skill sets of Elders and respected community members. Monitoring and evaluation data indicates that there is considerable variation in the role that Elders play in program delivery – ranging from welcoming and presenting certificates to participating in learning circles, debriefing and support. Elders consulted were satisfied with their level of involvement with the program, which suggests the program has sufficient flexibility to allow Elders to feel comfortable with their contribution irrespective of the role they play. Program facilitators highlighted the challenge of finding appropriate Elders given other demands on their time and their suitability (or lack of it) for the role.

While the Elders and respected community persons consulted felt adequately prepared for their participation in Dthina Yuwali, opportunities exist for greater standardisation of their briefing and training. In terms of training, there are opportunities to better prepare Elders in terms of their understanding of justice issues, particularly in relation to substance-use-related offending, relapse prevention and risk factors for reoffending. Elders should also be sufficiently briefed about the program's approach and intent, privacy and confidentiality issues, program parameters, and the role of group work. This would enhance the capacity-building effect of the program for Elders and potentially increase their capacity for participation in the program. Yet these opportunities need to be balanced with flexibility – responding to local needs and appreciating the variations across and within communities in terms of the skills and available pool of Elders and respected community persons willing to take on these roles.

The program also encourages family and community engagement as well as the development of community links and protocols. The extent to which the families of the participants and other community members participate in or are engaged with the program is very ad hoc, however. A number of stakeholders commented on the value for participants of engaging family members prior to and during the program, particularly in terms of family members understanding the type of therapeutic work participants are doing and the impact the home environment can have in terms of sustaining

program outcomes. In practice, this level of involvement is not always appropriate, given high levels of family dysfunction, logistical barriers and so on. However, where it is appropriate and the opportunity exists, it is considered to be worthwhile.

Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration

The literature highlights the importance of effective coordination and collaboration that builds and sustains networks for good practice interventions across government and non-government agencies (AIC, 2012; Calma, 2008; Stacey and Associates, 2004; Stewart, Lohoar & Higgins, 2011; Gilbert, 2012). Effective coordination is viewed as essential because it increases service delivery capacity and access to resources, as well as helping offenders navigate complex service access systems.

Dthina Yuwali aims to provide a holistic and integrated response to the needs of participants, linking young people with community services by providing resources, information and contacts with community service providers. However, in practice this occurs on ad hoc basis and is individualised rather than programmatic. Where participants are linked with community-based services and support, this is generally opportunistic and a result of the effort of individual facilitators or Elders outside of the program setting.

These issues may also be compounded by the fact that the majority (76%) of participants between 2008 and 2012 only completed Stage 1. While Stage 1 includes a component whereby participants identify supports available to facilitate and maintain change, and where they develop and plan and a 'support map' for change, there is no mechanism for following up this plan apart from completing Stages 2 and 3. In particular, if participants did complete Stage 3, which has a focus on relapse prevention, they would be exposed to more intensive discussion about how and when to access their identified support structures. The implications of participants only completing Stage 1 and possible programmatic responses are discussed in more detail in Theme 4 above and Theme 8 below.

There are structural limitations which inhibit the program's capacity to undertake service linkage roles (e.g. the short amount of time available to be with many young people in detention, the voluntary nature of the program, and limited structures for contact with offenders after completion of orders). However, opportunities may exist for formal collaboration between the program and Juvenile Justice to enable ongoing work with individuals around concepts addressed through the program.

Some of the Aboriginal Youth Officers consulted during the evaluation believed that the opportunity for non-Aboriginal youth officers and professionals (e.g. alcohol and other drug counsellors, psychologists) to work alongside Aboriginal youth workers to deliver the program helps break down perceived misconceptions among Aboriginal offenders about the extent to which mainstream alcohol and other drug programs are applicable to them or able to meet their needs. Through participation in the program, participants have opportunities to develop relationships with clinical staff. Dthina Yuwali may also be able to increase connections between Aboriginal offenders and alcohol and other drug

programs, as well as other community support services such as housing, employment, welfare, education and training. Another opportunity could involve Dthina Yuwali staff providing referral as part of aftercare (particularly in relation to Stage 3); that is, rather than just providing information on local services, they could also facilitate referral and coordinate care. However, it is less realistic to expect that the program will act as a gateway to other mainstream or Aboriginal-specific alcohol and drug programs in a community setting. Perhaps a more pragmatic goal would be to work on facilitating access to smaller community-based connections and support structures, with access to mainstream alcohol and other drug services a much longer term goal.

Given the issues outlined above, there are opportunities for Dthina Yuwali to improve its service collaboration and coordination function in order to better link young people with community support and help them to identify support networks to provide a more holistic and integrated response to the needs of participants.

Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders

Systems advocacy and reform is not a key focus of the Dthina Yuwali Program, so it is limited in its capacity to contribute to a reduction in barriers in the criminal justice system.

To a limited extent the opportunity for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff to work alongside each other in delivering the program raises the profile of the skills and capacity of Aboriginal staff among their colleagues and the importance of their cultural knowledge in improving relationships with young Aboriginal offenders.

Additionally, the non-Aboriginal convenors consulted for the evaluation felt that participation in the program resulted in them reflecting on their own practice with Aboriginal clients generally. In particular it helped them to have a more value-neutral perspective and to contextualise the offending of Aboriginal young people through having greater empathy and a better understanding of the community, familial and cultural circumstances faced by young Aboriginal offenders.

Both Aboriginal staff and Elders reflected on the capacity-building effect of delivering Dthina Yuwali with specialist staff in terms of enhanced skills and understanding with relation to alcohol and other drug issues and treatment.

This program also exposes young Aboriginal offenders to positive interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal convenors, providing a demonstration for the young people of mutual cultural respect. Stakeholders consulted cited several anecdotes that illustrated increased confidence and improved relationships between young offenders and Juvenile Justice staff and counsellors.

Where representatives from other agencies attend the program – such as Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers, Police and Aboriginal community groups (e.g. men's groups) – there is potential to

improve relationships between Aboriginal people and justice agencies through increased confidence and rapport-building. However, as discussed previously, these opportunities tend to be ad hoc rather than part of the program.

What is a well managed and delivered program?

Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes

Dthina Yuwali operates through the efforts of dedicated Aboriginal staff. The program and its staff are supported through the Programs Branch and Learning and Development Branch of Juvenile Justice. These staff are well regarded by participants and other stakeholders in terms of commitment and achievements. At a senior management level the program is reportedly well regarded and supported. The program has a strong sense of inclusiveness for Aboriginal people, both in terms of program staff and the number of Aboriginal facilitators trained to deliver it. The Director General of the Department of Juvenile Justice was a key supporter of the initiative and an advocate for establishing a platform for well-coordinated and targeted interventions that promote improved responsiveness and outcomes for Aboriginal people. The main constraints on the program have been limited funding at a regional level for program delivery and the small number of central office personnel involved. Increasing the available resources would support the further development of management systems and tools.

Program staff reported varying degrees of support from regional management, with insufficient staff resources being available to undertake pre and post assessments, and the time taken to complete these often being underestimated by regional management, which has affected assessment completion rates. Staff backfill is only allocated for the facilitation of the program, with not enough time allocated for preparation, pre and post assessment and debriefing. It is generally expected that these tasks are conducted around staff's usual caseload; however, ongoing program monitoring tasks are lengthy and therefore tend not to be fully completed. Either backfill needs to be available for both preparation and assessment activities and facilitation, or some program redesign around preparation and assessment requirements should be considered to ease the administrative burden on facilitators.

There is also perceived pressure on facilitators from management in some Juvenile Justice Regions to condense the program so it is delivered over fewer days. There is strong resistance to this centrally and among frontline staff because of the resulting compromise to program integrity and fidelity. There is a departmental position on programs being delivered in the manner in which they are intended, and this needs to be reinforced at a regional level.

As already discussed, Dthina Yuwali has three stages. However, due to structural limitations associated with fast-moving populations in a remand setting and lack of contact with offenders after supervision finishes, three-quarters of participants are only completing Stage 1. Some program redesign is required to address this, to ensure participants are experiencing the program as intended and to provide more opportunities for achieving individual outcomes.

The Dthina Yuwali training was well received and considered both comprehensive and worthwhile, albeit demanding. The content was felt to be challenging, both in terms of the volume and the concepts and techniques covered. Despite this, those who had undergone training in the program did not suggest changes to the content, style or length of the training. The documented benefits of staff receiving training in Dthina Yuwali indicate that the training is valuable on both personal and professional levels. Staff indicated that the knowledge gained in training enhances their consideration of Aboriginal client history and needs outside of the standard cultural awareness packages delivered in the agency. Prerequisites for training eligibility relating to necessary skill sets and previous training are clearly articulated and adhered to.

The evaluation revealed inconsistencies in relation to the number of facilitators trained and the number of facilitators who have delivered the program: to date, over 130 staff have been trained, while only 35–40 have delivered the program. In some Juvenile Justice Regions management require that one facilitator be specialist staff. Consideration needs to be given about whether this is an efficient use of resources. It is understood that processes are in place to ensure selection of staff for training is more targeted at those who have the capacity to deliver the program in a timely fashion after completing the training. There was also a reported hesitance among some trained facilitators to run the program, particularly when they did not have an opportunity to facilitate the program soon after being trained. This issue might be addressed through better program scheduling, providing refresher training, or providing an opportunity for trained facilitators to sit in on a program prior to facilitating. Centralised supervision for facilitators may also assist.

Overall, with limited resources, the Programs Branch and Learning and Development Branch has shown a high degree of commitment to developing a well-coordinated and targeted initiative that provides a culturally appropriate and effective intervention for young Aboriginal people. In this context, evident limitations in management practices are understandable but should be addressed.

Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent

The Dthina Yuwali Program clearly articulates its intent and provides an evidence-based intervention and treatment model that uses techniques and methods supported by research evidence about what works, for whom and under what circumstances. The objectives as stated in the program documentation make it clear it is seeking to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour based on the relationship between substance use and pathways to offending.

Dthina Yuwali has a clear intention to deal with underlying substance use issues and offending based on a focus on individual criminogenic needs and responsivity characteristics. A very comprehensive program manual has been developed that details the strategies the program uses to achieve such ends and its expected outcomes. The manual also clearly articulates the program's aims and objectives, provides a rationale and evidence base for the model, and outlines how the program was developed. The manual is regarded by facilitators as both comprehensive and straightforward.

The manual provides all of the resources required to deliver all 14 sessions of the program over three stages. It also clearly outlines the prerequisites for the program, planning and pre-group preparation information and resources, pre and post assessment and evaluation tools, and debrief requirements.

The program has faced a range of resource and staffing constraints, particularly in relation to the Manager of Aboriginal Programs position, which has been unfilled for some time, and in relation to staff resources for monitoring and evaluation data analysis and giving feedback to the Juvenile Justice Regions. Addressing these issues would provide greater guidance for program planning and a firmer base for monitoring, evaluation and continuous program improvement.

Theme 10: Sustainability of the program/s over time

Juvenile Justice Centres and offices operate in an environment of tight budgets and limited resources. Limited funding is provided to the Juvenile Justice Regions by the Department, and this impacts on the resources available to deliver the Dthina Yuwali Program. Juvenile Justice Regions vary in terms of their level of commitment to the program, and there is no requirement by regional managers to deliver it. Given there is no allocation of funds specifically for Dthina Yuwali, there will continue to be disparities in program delivery across the Juvenile Justice Regions and uncertainty about whether or not it is to be run. Within this context opportunities exist, however, to consider quarantining budgets for Aboriginal programs.

The program design stipulates that training must be conducted by Aboriginal trainers. In the past this has been undertaken by the Manager of Aboriginal Programs and the Learning and Development Officer (Aboriginal). Given the Manager of Aboriginal Programs position is currently vacant, the capacity of the Department to conduct training is limited. It is understood that a train-the-trainer manual is currently being developed to address this resource gap.

The Dthina Yuwali model incorporates a number of processes for continuous program improvement. The program manual is continually revised to ensure it remains up to date, and is currently in its third version.

The model includes comprehensive pre and post assessment activities, including a pre-group interview tool, the pre and post DBS AOD, the pre and post DBS Offending, the pre and post MCS, session evaluation forms (to be completed after each of the 14 sessions across the three stages), and an overall program evaluation form. While there is general recognition of the value of these types of mechanisms (both clinically, to show participants the change in their responses following participation in the program, and for evaluative purposes), there was also widespread concern regarding the administrative burden they placed on both participants and facilitators. Limited resources are available to release staff from their caseloads or floor duties in order to complete pre and post assessment activities with participants. As described above, stakeholder feedback also suggests that there may be issues with participants' comprehension of the DBS items in particular, largely due to the use of

repetition, double negatives and complex language, and this may affect the reliability and internal validity of the data. Others felt these assessment activities facilitated contact prior to attending the course and, although arduous, helped with rapport-building from the outset and assisted in building the skills of facilitators to engage with clients and maintain that engagement.

There are poor completion rates of the pre and post assessment tools, with only 50% of the post assessments completed. Very few session feedback forms are completed, although there is reasonable completion of overall participant feedback forms. These poor completion rates hamper the capacity of the program to measure participant outcomes in line with program intent, and hinder the gathering of sufficient information to inform continuous program improvement.

Finally, there are insufficient staff resources within Juvenile Justice to analyse this data internally, so it is not being used to inform continuous program improvement. This means that Juvenile Justice Regions are not receiving feedback about the program outcomes, nor any evidence of how the pre and post assessment information is being used. Addressing these issues will enhance the opportunity for continuous program improvement. It may also increase the motivation at the Juvenile Justice Region level to deliver the program and contribute to improved completion of pre and post assessment data.

5.5 Assessment of program against the good practice themes

The following table provides an overall assessment of the Dthina Yuwali Program against the good practice themes identified in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (see Table 3a in Chapter 3).

Good Practice Theme	Excellent to Very Good Practice	Adequate Practice	Poor Practice	Comments
What is a good intervention?				
Theme 1: Focusing on preventing crime and aiming to reduce over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system	Program makes it clear it is seeking to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour based on the relationship between substance use and pathways to offending.	Program is now seeking to track recidivism patterns among participants, although this was not built into initial program design.		
What is a good model?				
Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap	Need for programs that relate substance use with pathways to offending. This is the only Aboriginal-specific Juvenile Justice program operating under a cultural framework in NSW that addresses motivation and confidence to change in relation to substance use and offending issues. Program was piloted prior to its implementation. Program uses locally trained facilitators to respond to local needs but faces geographic challenges in coverage of NSW.	Program could do more in terms of linking offenders with other programs/services.		

Good Practice Theme	Excellent to Very Good Practice	Adequate Practice	Poor Practice	Comments
Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation	Program designed by, or with input from, Aboriginal community members and delivered or co-facilitated by Aboriginal people. Program operating within a cultural framework with strong emphasis on culture and history.			
Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent		Program focus on individual criminogenic needs and responsivity characteristics delivered through 3 modules: Stage 1, Core Concepts; Stage 2, Strengthening Commitment to Change; and Stage 3, Relapse Prevention. However, 76% of participants only completed Stage 1 due to orders expiring, which limits scope of outcomes achieved. Data gaps limit identification of client outcomes even though systems exist to enable measurement of outcomes. Insufficient staff resources to undertake pre/post assessments, with only 50% of post assessments completed. Therefore model integrity compromised at times due to limited resources. Also, ongoing program monitoring lengthy and therefore not always fully completed.		

Good Practice Theme	Excellent to Very Good Practice	Adequate Practice	Poor Practice	Comments
Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement	Program designed and implemented on a statewide basis with input from community members and clearly acknowledged impact of culture in program design.			Female modules developed and gender balance among facilitators. However, 91% of program participants are male.
Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration			Local facilitators link participants with services and supports but this is an individualised rather than a programmatic response. Structural limitations in allowing scope for the program to undertake service linkage roles post completion of orders compounded by lack of completion of stages 2 and 3 of program model, with Stage 3 specifically focusing on relapse prevention.	
Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders		Not a key focus of the program so program limited in its capacity to contribute to advocacy and systems reform. Program does raise the profile of the unique needs of Aboriginal young offenders within the Juvenile Justice system.		

Good Practice Theme	Excellent to Very Good Practice	Adequate Practice	Poor Practice	Comments
What is a well managed and delivered program?				
Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes	Program managers have shown a high degree of commitment to developing a well-coordinated and targeted initiative that provides a culturally appropriate and effective intervention to Aboriginal young people.	While there has been significant commitment to measuring participant outcomes in relation to motivation for change for both substance use and offending, limited resources have meant that there is no central data analysis capacity for data provided by regions, which impacts on data compliance by regions. Insufficient staff resources to undertake pre/post assessments, with only 50% of post assessments completed. Ongoing program monitoring lengthy and therefore not fully completed. Some program redesign necessary as based on three successive modules that are not completed in their entirety. Numbers of facilitators trained beyond capacity of program to use them.		
Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent	Program has clear intentionality in dealing with underlying substance use issues and offending based on its focus on individual criminogenic needs and responsivity characteristics. Program design based on evidence of what works, such as CBT and other behavioural modification and skill development methods, and content of manual is in step with program intent.			
Theme 10: Sustainability of the program/s over time		Funding provided to regions but funding is limited, with impact on resources available to deliver program. No requirement by regional managers to deliver the program. Numbers of facilitators trained beyond capacity of program to use them.		

5.6 Key lessons

The evaluation feedback indicates that the Dthina Yuwali Program may be an effective initiative which has been tightly focused on the relationship between substance use and pathways to offending, while also operating in a positive and culturally sensitive manner. The program provides an evidence-based intervention that uses techniques and methods supported by research about what works for effective crime prevention. The main constraints on the program have been limited funding at a regional level for program delivery and the small number of central office personnel involved. Increased resources would support the further development of management systems and tools. This section summarises key lessons drawn from its operation.

Effective culturally appropriate support is key to encouraging motivation for change

Dthina Yuwali was developed in response to the significant over-representation of young Aboriginal people in the juvenile justice system, high rates of reoffending, and a need for programs that relate substance use with pathways to offending. As the only Indigenous-specific Juvenile Justice program operating under a cultural framework in NSW addressing substance use and offending issues, it provides culturally relevant evidence-based support for offenders.

The program exemplifies how Indigenous community members can be engaged in the design and implementation of state-based culturally appropriate offender support programs. It operates within a cultural framework with a strong emphasis on culture and history. The impact of culture in program design is key to the efficacy of the program in engaging participants and facilitating positive outcomes, such as increased motivation for positive change, among participants.

Participant outcomes are limited when the program is not experienced as designed

The achievement of outcomes has been limited by the fact that three-quarters of participants are only completing Stage 1. This is largely due to the limited time that many juvenile offenders are in custody, Community Corrections Orders expiring, and lack of follow-up contact with offenders after orders or supervision finishes. Some program redesign is required to ensure that participants are experiencing the full program as intended.

Implementing monitoring and evaluation tools in program design is crucial

Dthina Yuwali has made a significant commitment to measuring participant outcomes in relation to motivation for change for both substance use and offending. There are a number of monitoring and evaluation activities built into the program design, including pre and post assessment conducted for each of the three stages, session evaluation forms and overall evaluation feedback. Such systems are key in measuring program outcomes, allow for the efficacy of the program to be monitored, and provide information to inform continuous program improvement. In relation to the other offender

support programs evaluated, the extent of these monitoring and evaluation systems was unique to Dthina Yuwali.

Other indicators that may be useful include participation in school/employment and further programs and/or counselling. At the time of the evaluation, collection of this type of information was not possible because program participation was not linked to a client on the CIMS database. It is understood that this now occurs, which allows referral information, program participation rates, completion rates, module completion, reasons for non-completion and pre/post assessment data to be recorded centrally and linked to a client's unique identifier. This will now allow for participation in other Department-approved programs to be tracked. In assessing program success, a blend of qualitative and quantitative measures is required in order to better understand why certain results were achieved or not achieved, explain unexpected outcomes, and inform decisions about program modifications.

The focus of monitoring and evaluation should be closely matched to program intent

Dthina Yuwali aims to increase motivation for change, rather than necessarily effect change itself. In this context it is more appropriate to consider it in terms of its capacity to contribute to change rather than attempting to attribute change directly to it.

Rather than trying to measure the program against the longer term impact of reduced recidivism, ongoing monitoring and evaluation should focus on indicators that are more closely aligned to program intent, including motivation to change behaviours, motivation to participate in counselling, ability to reflect on program content, changed attitudes to substance use, and participation in school, employment, further counselling and/or treatment. In assessing success, both qualitative and quantitative measures are required to provide a fuller picture of why certain results were achieved or not achieved, to identify unexpected outcomes, and to inform decisions on program modifications.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of contacting participants once orders have expired, there may be opportunities to explore mechanisms to measure whether participant outcomes on program completion are sustained beyond the life of the program.

The reliability of evaluation tools is impacted by completion rates and data quality

Only 50% of pre and post assessments are being completed for the program. Despite the implementation of monitoring and evaluation tools, the low completion rate limits the capacity of the program to measure participant outcomes such as awareness about the relationship between substance use and offending, motivation for change, increased appreciation of group work and counselling in this context, and linking participants to available support mechanisms. Addressing this would not only enhance opportunities to identify participant outcomes, but would also enhance the capacity to gather sufficient information to guide continuous program improvement.

Poor completion rates relate to the length of time taken to complete assessments and the administrative burden they place on both participants and staff. The evaluation found that inadequate time was allocated for administering these tools. It also found that limited resources are available to release staff from their caseloads or floor duties in order to complete pre and post assessment activities. The reliability of the data, affected by issues of comprehension by participants in relation to some of the measures, resulted in response bias and strong skews towards certain scores. Within this context, revision and refinement of these instruments, as well as improvements to data collection processes, would improve data quality and reliability and therefore the efficacy of this information.

Clear processes linking offenders with support leads to a more integrated response

Dthina Yuwali endeavours to link young people with community services by providing resources, information and contacts with community service providers. However, in practice this occurs on an ad-hoc and opportunistic basis, largely due to structural limitations which inhibit the program's capacity to undertake service linkage roles. This is compounded by poor exposure to the full program content (low completion rates for stages 2 and 3), so participants are not exposed to more work around accessing their identified support structures.

In this context there are opportunities for Dthina Yuwali to improve its service collaboration and coordination function in order to better link young people with ongoing community support.

The number of staff trained is beyond the capacity for them to facilitate the program

The number of facilitators trained is beyond the capacity of the program to use them, which raises questions of efficient resource use, despite positive responses from staff about the personal and professional value of training. It is understood that processes are in place to ensure selection of staff for training is more targeted to those who have the capacity to deliver the program in a timely fashion after completing the training.

Consideration may also be given to providing opportunities for refresher training, providing opportunities for trained facilitators to sit in on a program prior to facilitating, and centralised supervision for facilitators.

Consideration may also be given to offering program co-facilitation training to community organisation representatives, as this may ease the resource implications of the requirement for two Juvenile Justice staff to facilitate the program. This could assist in relieving pressure on agency resources, assist in reinforcement of messages from community members, and assist in creation of community linkages.

Standardised training and briefing for Elders will enhance the program

Opportunities exist for greater standardisation of briefing and training for Elders and respected community members to enhance the capacity-building effect of the Dthina Yuwali Program, and for greater participation in the program itself. These opportunities need to be balanced with flexibility in order to respond to variations in the skills and available pool of Elders and respected community persons willing to take on these types of roles.

Addressing resource constraints aids program planning and continuous improvement

Dthina Yuwali has faced a range of resource and staffing constraints, particularly in relation to the Manager of Aboriginal Programs position, which has been unfilled for some time. This limits the capacity of the Department to conduct training. It is understood that a train-the-trainer manual is currently being developed to address this resource gap.

There are also insufficient staff resources centrally to analyse pre and post assessment data and other monitoring and evaluation data. As a result this information cannot be used to guide continuous program improvement, and Juvenile Justice Regions and staff are not receiving feedback about the program outcomes, nor any evidence of how the pre and post assessment information is being used.

Disparity in resources contributes to uncertainty about the program

When delivering a program statewide it is necessary to bear in mind the disparity in resources available across the locations for program delivery.

Juvenile Justice Regions vary in terms of their level of commitment to the program, and there is no requirement by regional managers to deliver the program. Given there is no allocation of funds specifically for Dthina Yuwali, it will continue to operate in an environment of uncertainty at a regional level. Within this context consideration may be given to quarantining budgets for Aboriginal-specific programs.

While uniform delivery needs to be balanced with the capacity of the program to be adapted to the needs of local communities, there is also pressure in some of the regions to condense the program so it can be delivered over fewer days, and this may compromise program integrity and fidelity. The departmental position on programs being delivered as intended needs to be reinforced at a regional level.

6. Findings: Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)

6.1 Summary of programs

Program context

The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA), which was first signed in 2000, was one of the Victorian Government's responses to the 1997 National Ministerial Summit into Indigenous Deaths in Custody, which served to review federal and state governments' responses to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody five years after their implementation. The AJA is a formal agreement between Government Ministers and members of the Aboriginal community and is based on partnerships with Aboriginal communities. The agreement aims to minimise Indigenous over-representation in the criminal justice system by improving the accessibility, utilisation and effectiveness of justice-related programs and services and by maximising participation of the Aboriginal community in the design, development, delivery and implementation of all justice policies and programs that impact on Aboriginal people. The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 2 (AJA2) was launched in 2006 and marks a recommitment by the Victorian Government and Aboriginal communities to continue working together to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal people.[11] The Local Justice Worker Program (LJWP) and Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (KOSMP) are both initiatives of the AJA2.

The aims of the AJA2 are to:

- Minimise Koori over-representation in the criminal justice system by improving the accessibility, utilisation and efficacy of justice-related programs and services in partnership with the Koori community
- Ensure the Koori community, as part of the broader Victorian community, has the same access to human, civil and legal rights, living free from racism and discrimination and experiencing the same justice outcomes through the elimination of inequities in the justice system.

The AJA2 provides the framework for delivering the sixth Strategic Area for Action, 'Prevent family violence, and improve justice outcomes', within the Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework (VIAF). The VIAF is Victoria's overarching whole-of-government strategy and approach to improving

[11] The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 3 is due for release in February 2013. An evaluation of the AJA2 was published in May 2012 and can be found at: http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/resources/17fb591b-43b9-450a-a55d-67be16c6565e/aja2evaluationfinalreport.pdf.

outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians, and is aligned with Closing the Gap. The framework also outlines the partnership structure through which the Victorian Koori community and the Government work together to implement the Strategic Areas for Action.[12]

Under the AJA, the Aboriginal Justice Forum (AJF), which includes senior representatives of the Aboriginal community and representatives from justice-related areas of the Victorian Government, is the peak coordinating body responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and direction of the agreement. The Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees (RAJACs) form the foundation of the Victorian justice system's relationship with the Indigenous community under the AJA2 framework. It enables regional representatives from the community and from justice agencies to work together to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians at the regional level. The RAJACs report directly to the AJF. RAJAC executive officers are key to the RAJAC network, as they are the contact between the Aboriginal community and the business units of the Department of Justice as well as other agencies, and provide secretariat support for the RAJACs.

In locations where Aboriginal Victorians are in more frequent contact with the criminal justice system, there are also Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees (LAJACs), comprising local government and community organisation workers as well as local community members. The LAJACs promote coordination, positive working relationships and initiatives at the local level to reduce the degree to which Aboriginal community members come in negative contact with the criminal justice system.

The Local Justice Worker Program (LJWP)

Following successful piloting of the Local Justice Worker Program (LJWP) in Horsham in 2007, funding was allocated under the AJA2 for delivery of the program in 10 locations across Victoria: Bendigo, Dandenong, Drouin/Warragul, Echuca, Horsham, Lakes Entrance, Swan Hill, Geelong, Wodonga and Western Metropolitan. Local community organisations are contracted by the Department of Justice to manage the program's implementation and delivery in each site through the recruitment and supervision of a Local Justice Worker. The Koori Justice Unit's Community Programs Unit is responsible for contract management and support on behalf of the Department. Program site locations are chosen based on the daily average number of Aboriginal offenders reporting to Community Corrections Services (CCS) offices in each region.

The program aims to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians by providing support to Aboriginal offenders and community members, particularly in relation to meeting the requirements of Community Corrections Orders and meeting obligations related to outstanding fines and warrants. It aims to increase the likelihood that offenders sentenced to mandated community work will successfully complete their orders, by identifying and implementing culturally appropriate worksites

[12] The new 'Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013–2018' was released in November 2012.

and providing on-the-job management of Aboriginal offenders undertaking mandated community work. Where appropriate, the program also assists in the case management of Aboriginal clients.

The program also aims to contribute to the development of positive relationships between the local Aboriginal community and the Sheriff's Office in order to facilitate and support the negotiation of appropriate options for the repayment or resolution of outstanding fines and warrants. Local Justice Workers also promote improved relationships between justice-related service provider agencies and local communities. This is achieved through meeting regularly with justice agencies to assist in developing and implementing initiatives that improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal community members, liaising with justice agencies and service providers to ensure the best possible outcomes for clients, and informing justice agencies and service providers about social and historical factors that may be contributing to negative contacts between justice and other agencies and Aboriginal community members. LJWP service providers report to the Koori Justice Unit (KJU) on key performance measures and data monitoring via six-monthly reports.

The Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (KOSMP)

The AJA identified the need for a mentoring program for young Aboriginal women, and in 1999/2000 funding was allocated by the Office of the Correctional Services Commissioner to develop, in partnership with the Aboriginal community, a pilot program to support Aboriginal women on Community Corrections Orders. The process of developing the pilot involved consultations with the Aboriginal community, Aboriginal prisoners and offenders and other key stakeholder groups (Mohamed, 2001). This program was evaluated in 2003 (Atkinson & Kerr, 2003) and formed the basis of the Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (KOSMP). The KOSMP aims to assist Aboriginal adults on Community Corrections Orders to successfully complete their orders by providing a planned community response and ensuring Elders and respected persons are involved in the program to provide community-based local support, advice and cultural connection to offenders. The program model was first delivered in Shepparton in 2006 and funding was allocated under the AJA2 for delivery of the program in five locations across Victoria: Bairnsdale, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton and North-west Metropolitan. Program site locations were chosen based on the daily average number of Aboriginal offenders reporting to CCS offices in each region.

Local community organisations are contracted by the Department to manage the program's implementation and delivery in each program site through the recruitment and supervision of a KOSMP Coordinator. The KJU's Community Programs Unit is responsible for contract management and support on behalf of the Department. Offenders subject to Community Corrections Orders or parole are eligible for the program, and referral to the program is through CCS. A network of volunteer Elders and respected persons is developed and trained to mentor offenders. Mentors are matched to Aboriginal offenders to support them to successfully complete their orders and provide advice and cultural connection. The program aims to assist offenders who are fulfilling the requirements of Community Corrections Orders through providing supervision of offenders undertaking mandated

community work and by identifying and establishing culturally appropriate worksites. The program also seeks to build positive links between the program and justice-related agencies and community service providers, and create pathways and mechanisms which allow Aboriginal offenders to experience positive contact with the justice system.

A range of supports may be made available to offenders undertaking the program. These might be provided by the community organisation delivering the program or via referrals to appropriate external service providers. The KOSMP Coordinators work with CCS officers to develop individual case management plans for offenders, designed to operate within the framework established by an overarching CCS Case Management Plan. KOSMP service providers report to the KJU on key performance measures and data monitoring via six-monthly reports.

6.2 Program logic

The following table shows the 'program logic' that was developed for the LJWP and KOSMP. This was developed together with KJU representatives and shows the connection between the inputs into the programs, outputs from the programs, and expected changes in the medium term (outcomes) and longer term (impacts).

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Local Justice Worker Program (LJWP)			
Funding for LJWP Support in the form of steering committees Workshops for workers	Support provided to offenders sentenced to mandated community work Identification and use of culturally appropriate worksites for orders Active relations maintained with the Sheriff's Office, other justice agencies and service providers, including on cultural issues and influences on offending behaviour Case management assistance to Sheriff's Office and Community Correctional Services (CCS) provided On-the-job management of offenders on worksites provided	Increased numbers of offenders successfully completing Community Corrections Orders Increase in Koories sentenced to community work successfully completing that work. More Koories successfully meeting outstanding fine obligations. Increased use and acceptance of culturally appropriate worksites for orders Acceptance of program and approach to community orders by Sheriff's Office, CCS and other justice agencies Increased cultural sensitivity by Sheriff's Office, CCS and other justice agencies Conversion of fines to work orders or payment plans	Equitable sentencing and fines for Aboriginal community members Increased use of Community Corrections Orders as alternatives to prison Increased cultural sensitivity in justice system Decreased over-representation of Koories in criminal justice system Positive community impact (e.g. buildings completed) through work orders completed Increased level of social connectedness by clients, and visibility for Koori issues in the community

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
		Developing increased trust and respect between Koori people and Sheriff's Office, CCS and other justice agencies Increased linkages between Koori workers and clients, and a range of community services and events	
Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (KOSMP)			
Training and workshops for Elders and respected persons Funding for KOSMP Support in the form of steering committees Workshops for workers	Organisation and involvement of community Elders and respected persons Local cultural support and advice provided to offenders Development of mentoring training and resource kit Mentors trained Rollout of program to different locations Clients linked to range of other employment, education and health services	Increased numbers of offenders successfully completing Community Corrections Orders. Development of networks of Elders and respected persons who are positively committed to assisting offenders Building of personal, employment and other skills while on correctional order Increased exposure and connection to positive role models Building of positive links between justice agencies and other service providers Establishment of pathways and mechanisms to allow Koori offenders to experience positive contact with the justice system Participants linked to a range of other community services through referrals Changes in some aspects of procedural case management by Corrections staff	Reduction in offending/recidivism Diverting people from further contact with justice system Participants have more social and cultural connectedness Participants have increased respect for positive role models Participants access an increased range of community services and supports

6.3 Methodology

The evaluation framework and methodology are outlined in Chapter 3, where key themes were identified which typify good practice in the Offender Support and Reintegration area. These serve as a reference point for analysis against the good practice themes (see 6.4 below). These themes also provide a tool for assessing the program's initiatives on a scale from 'excellent to very good practice'

to 'adequate practice' or 'poor practice' (see 6.5 below).[13] Evidence for the evaluation of the LJWP and KOSMP was gathered through analysis of documentation and data, and through interviews and consultations. Finally, based on the evidence gained, key lessons were identified (see 6.6 below).

Documentation and data analysed	The literature on offender support and reintegration. KJU policy and program documentation, incl. program guidelines and training tools. Program records in relation to monitoring data and program performance measures, including six-monthly reports by service provider organisations to KJU, data consolidated by KJU from these reports, reports from annual workshops and data presented to the Aboriginal Justice Forum (AJF). Limitations in data recording processes and issues associated with the lack of appropriate comparison data precluded the conduct of a reoffending analysis. It was also not possible to develop a quantitative evidence base to analyse the relationship between program participation and the completion of Community Corrections Orders.[14]
Interviews and consultations conducted	Consultations in Gippsland on 22 Dec 2011 with exiting Local Justice Workers (Lakes Entrance) and Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program Coordinator (Morwell) Consultations at LJWP and KOSMP staff conference on 28 March 2012 with: local justice workers; KOSMP Coordinators; RAJAC Executive Officers. Consultations with KJU personnel during site visit to Melbourne on 12 April 2012. Consultations during site visit to Shepparton (KOSMP) and Echuca (LJWP) on 26–27 April 2012 with: Local Justice Worker; KOSMP Coordinators; Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative representatives; Njernda Aboriginal Corporation representatives; Sheriff's Officers; CCS staff; mentors; Police officers; Echuca Court Services Officer; program participants; Baroona Healing Centre representative; Koori Court representative. Consultations during a site visit to Melbourne (LJWP) on 1–3 May 2012 with: Local Justice Workers; Gathering Place Health Service; Sheriff's Officers; CCS staff; Magistrate; program participants; central office KJU personnel. Consultations during site visit to Gippsland (Drouin Warrigal LJWP and Bairnsdale KOSMP) on 8–10 May 2012 with: Local Justice Worker; KOSMP Coordinator; Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation representatives; Gippsland & East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative representatives; RAJAC Executive Officer; Sheriff's Officers; CCS staff; mentors; program participants. Telephone interviews conducted with CCS staff and KJU staff.

[13] The evaluation of Victorian programs required ethics approval from the Department of Justice Victoria, Justice Human Research Ethics Committee (JHREC). The JHREC granted approval on 26 October 2011 (Ref: CF/11/18137).

[14] Further detail about the appropriateness and efficacy of program-related monitoring and evaluation data is discussed at 6.4 below.

6.4 Findings in relation to the good practice themes

This section assesses the LJWP and KOSMP against the 10 good practice themes identified in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and literature review and outlined in Table 3a in Chapter 3. The themes are grouped according to three components: 'What is a good intervention', 'What is a good model?' and 'What is a well managed and delivered program?'

What is a good intervention?

Theme 1: Focusing on crime prevention and aiming to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system

The LJWP and KOSMP are clearly focused on assisting Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders to successfully complete their orders. The programs are also focused on building relationships between Aboriginal communities and justice agencies with a view to improving justice-related experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians.

The literature suggests that providing practical support to disadvantaged people through flexible fine repayment systems and providing transportation to facilitate order compliance could reduce the over-representation of Indigenous peoples in technical breach offences (QCOSS, 2009; Select Committee, 2009). The programs help Aboriginal offenders meet the requirements of Community Corrections Orders[15] through developing culturally appropriate worksites at which offenders can undertake mandated community work and through providing transport to worksites as well as appointments with CCS. Interviews with program staff, community organisation representatives, justice agency officers and program participants indicated that these supports have had positive effects and have increased the likelihood of Aboriginal offenders undertaking mandated community work.

Beranger, Weatherburn and Moffat (2010) suggest there may be scope to reduce Indigenous recidivism through initiatives that reduce the number of Indigenous offenders who lose their driving licence for non-payment of fines and through programs that support compliance with Community Corrections Orders, as these types of initiatives could reduce rates of Indigenous reappearance in court. In addition to assisting offenders to complete mandated community work, the LJWP facilitates the payment and resolution of outstanding fines and warrants. As will be discussed further, the evaluation found that the program is achieving significant results in this area.

Although numbers of order completions and instances of breach actions initiated in court are recorded by service providers and reported in six-monthly reporting, there is currently no feature within the CCS

[15] Prior to 16 January 2012, there were different types of court imposed community orders, including Community Based Orders, Intensive Correction Orders and Combined Custody and Treatment Orders. Commencing 16 January 2012, these sentencing orders have been replaced by a single Community Correction Order. The new Community Correction Order is a flexible order that can have different conditions applied based on the circumstances of the offence, the offender's needs and situation, and the direction of the court.

database to register and track those individuals who have participated in the programs. Records pertaining to participation are maintained at a local level and there is no data linkage between program completions and order completions or breach actions. Due to these limitations in data recording, as well as challenges associated with identifying an appropriate control group, it is not possible to develop a quantitative evidence base that indicates the relationship between program participation and the completion of Community Corrections Orders, or to assess the direct impact of participation in the programs on reoffending. Furthermore, CCS offenders report at 37 CCS locations across Victoria, yet these reporting locations do not necessarily correspond with offenders' registered residential addresses and the catchment areas for the programs do not necessarily correspond to the catchment areas for the CCS locations. Thus, it is not possible to interrogate and match completion rates at the local level either by CCS reporting location or by local government area. As a result, data is not available to undertake a comparative analysis of the impact of the programs on order completion rates in the areas in which they operate.

However, statewide data indicates that the gap between the proportions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders successfully completing their orders has been closing since the programs were first piloted, to the extent that completion (supervised and unsupervised) rates were similar for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders in 2009/10 and 2010/11 (Corrections Victoria Data Warehouse).[16] It should be noted, though, that completion rates among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders between 2002/03 and 2005/06 were higher and completion rates dropped significantly in 2006/07. Despite efforts to investigate, the reasons for this decline in completion rates over this period are unknown.

While rates of completion of all orders (supervised and unsupervised) were similar for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders in 2010/11, there are quite different trends when looking at supervised and unsupervised orders separately. Data presented by Corrections Victoria to the Aboriginal Justice Forum No. 34 in November 2012 indicates that from the programs' commencement in 2006/07 up until 2010/11 a higher proportion of Aboriginal offenders in Victoria were successfully completing their unsupervised orders compared to non-Aboriginal offenders. In 2010/11, 67.2% of Aboriginal offenders in Victoria, compared with 60.4% of non-Aboriginal offenders, completed orders. Data for 2011/12 indicates that completion rates for unsupervised orders declined across the board, with the proportion of successful completion of unsupervised orders by Aboriginal offenders dropping below that for non-Aboriginal offenders for the first time since the programs had commenced. Data will need to be monitored in the coming years in order to determine whether this indicates a downward trend in order completion rates.

[16] The data does not include those with 'unknown' Aboriginal status. The numbers for unknown status are significantly high which suggests that CCS should address the way in which Aboriginal status is investigated and reported. It should also be noted that a successful completion is also recorded if an offender dies. This may have implications in relation to analysis of program outcomes.

In contrast, while the rates of completion for supervised orders have also improved among Aboriginal offenders since 2006/07, there is still a gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders. Specifically, the proportion of Aboriginal offenders completing supervised orders is less than non-Aboriginal completion rates (62.8% and 73.7% respectively in 2010/11) (Corrections Victoria presentation to Aboriginal Justice Forum No. 34). This is despite the proportion of Aboriginal offenders in Victoria successfully completing supervised orders increasing by 13.9% from 2006/07, when the programs were piloted, to 2010/11.[17] Data for 2011/12 indicates that completion rates for supervised orders have also dropped across the board. Again, this data will need to be monitored in the coming years in order to determine whether this indicates a downward trend in order completion rates.

Other programs in Victoria, such as the Victorian Bail Support Program and the Court Integrated Services Program, although not Aboriginal-specific programs, may also have contributed to the improvement in completion rates over this period. It is likely that some of this can be attributed to the LJWP and KOSMP, especially given that the areas in which these programs are delivered have been identified as having the highest need.

What is a good model?

Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap

The programs meet a clear need of supporting Aboriginal offenders to complete Community Corrections Orders. The programs were developed as a direct response to the data indicating an increased likelihood of Aboriginal people breaching orders. The AJA2 noted that between 2000/01 and 2004/05, in comparison with other Victorians, Aboriginal Victorians were 19% more likely to breach Community Corrections Orders than non-Aboriginal offenders (Victorian Department of Justice, 2006). Following the funding of successful pilot programs in Shepparton and Horsham, the programs were funded to run in various sites across Victoria. The programs are run across a range of urban and regional locations based on data relating to the number of Aboriginal people on Community Corrections Orders within those communities, and have been extended to further priority areas based on this data as funding levels have increased. When the pilot sites began delivering the programs in 2006/07, the rate of order completion for Aboriginal offenders was 57.8%.[18]

Although some community organisations were providing similar types of support to Aboriginal community members, they did so with a lack of funding and adequate resources on an ad-hoc basis across the state. The LJWP and KOSMP provide funding and resources to those communities deemed to be in greatest need, as well as providing structural support to organisations and individuals delivering the programs. Contracts are awarded to local community organisations to manage the

[17] The data does not include those with 'unknown' Aboriginal status.

[18] As noted above, these rates indicated a significant drop in completion rates across the board from the previous five years. The completion rate for non-Aboriginal offenders for 2006/07 was 66%.

programs' implementation and delivery, and the inherent flexibility of the program models provides for an appropriate fit between the model and the geographic location in which the programs are delivered.

Before the inception of the programs, access to culturally specific/accessible worksites for Aboriginal offenders in Victoria at which to complete mandated community work hours was limited. Although some community organisations had arrangements with CCS to provide community work opportunities for Aboriginal people on community work orders, these opportunities were limited and were not consistently available across the state.

The evidence suggests that the LJWP and KOSMP are fulfilling a need for culturally appropriate worksites at which Aboriginal offenders feel comfortable to complete mandated community work. Feedback from various stakeholders indicates that, on the whole, Aboriginal offenders are unlikely to attend mainstream worksites to complete mandated community work. Feelings of isolation and discomfort were generally cited as the primary reasons for this. The programs facilitate availability of culturally appropriate worksites in which Aboriginal offenders can work in an Aboriginal work team, or for an Aboriginal community organisation, event or project, under the supervision of a Local Justice Worker or KOSMP Coordinator. Evaluation feedback indicated that this has had a significant impact on the likelihood of offenders completing mandated community work orders, and that offenders are attending and engaging in community work when it is facilitated by the LJWP or KOSMP.

Stakeholder feedback indicated that without the programs there would be a significant impact on the levels of attendance and compliance with orders, and that this would have a spiralling effect on offenders repeatedly returning to court for breach of Community Corrections Orders. There was a clear feeling from the CCS personnel interviewed that, without the programs, CCS would be struggling to maintain effective compliance with orders. In addition, CCS officers reported that the programs sensitively and appropriately respond to any specific needs of Aboriginal clients arising from particular disadvantage, for example through the provision of appropriate work clothes and footwear in a way that mainstream worksites are generally ill equipped to do. The provision of transport to and from worksites as well as to CCS and other appointments or programs in order to meet the conditions of orders further facilitates compliance.

As noted above, statewide data suggests that the programs are likely to be impacting on the rates of completion of Community Corrections Orders for Aboriginal offenders. However, data limitations preclude any interrogation of completion and breach rates in the specific areas in which the LJWP and KOSMP operate.

In addition to assisting offenders to complete mandated community work, the LJWP has had a significant impact on the payment of outstanding fines and the resolution of outstanding warrants. Data is not available on the extent of outstanding fines and warrants for Aboriginal Victorians, as

information in relation to Aboriginal status was not previously collected.[19] However, evaluation feedback from Sheriff's Officers, program personnel and Aboriginal community organisation representatives indicates that in many locations outstanding fines and warrants are a significant justice issue for Aboriginal community members. The programs have facilitated contact with Sheriff's Officers where community members would otherwise have avoided contact. This in turn has led to the payment of a substantial number of outstanding fines and the resolution of many outstanding warrants, particularly through conversion to payment plans, community work permits or Community Corrections Orders.

In addition to specific support on completing mandated community work orders and facilitating fine payback, the programs provide community-based support to community members in relation to justice-related issues outside the Aboriginal-identified positions within the justice agencies themselves.[20] Feedback from stakeholders and program participants indicated that the assistance and support provided by the Local Justice Workers, mentors and KOSMP Coordinators is invaluable, particularly in relation to support provided during court and Parole Board appearances, and providing community members with an understanding of justice-related processes.

Increasing the skill levels of Indigenous Australians has been shown to have a positive impact on increasing Indigenous employment rates, which are disproportionately low compared with all Australians (Gray et al., 2012; Graffan & Shinkfield, 2012). Graffan and Shinkfield (2012) note that programs that incorporate on-the-job work experience with other forms of support such as mentoring are more likely to be successful in terms of enhancing the employment opportunities of Indigenous ex-offenders. It is clear that the programs have the potential to, and in some locations have been shown to, contribute to skills development (discussed further in Theme 4 below). Opportunities for training and skills development afforded by the worksites developed by the various program sites and the supervision provided by program personnel indicate that the programs are also working towards having a broader impact on the employment opportunities of participants. The feedback from program personnel clearly reflected this. However, the evaluation also revealed that some lack of clarity and disparity exists among program stakeholders as to the types of activities and training that count towards community work hours, and it appears that this is managed differently in the various CCS locations. Opportunities exist to clarify and enhance the work and training opportunities that could contribute to order completion for program participants.

[19] It is understood that as at February 2012 the Sheriff's Office has implemented a new operational policy to ask the standard Indigenous question. It is expected that this will better enable identification of individuals able to participate in the programs, as well as the potential for improved data collection.

[20] These positions include the Indigenous community corrections officer (ICCO) positions within some offices of Community Corrections, the Aboriginal community liaison officers (ACLO) or police aboriginal liaison officers (PALO) in some Victoria Police stations and the Aboriginal liaison officer with the Sheriff's Office (one officer state wide) and Aboriginal liaison officers in the courts.

It is clear that the programs provide much-needed support for Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders by way of transportation assistance and through the provision of culturally appropriate worksites to undertake mandated community work. In facilitating the repayment of fines and warrants and supporting community members with justice-related issues, the programs fill a service gap for community-based support for Aboriginal community members regarding justice-related issues.

Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation

The LJWP and KOSMP have a strong emphasis on culture and community support. The programs were based on models of services that were being delivered (generally unfunded) by Aboriginal community organisations in Victoria, and as such they were designed with input from Aboriginal community members and organisations. Local community organisations are contracted by the Department of Justice to employ Local Justice Workers or KOSMP Coordinators and deliver the programs. The program models allow for flexibility to adapt to the needs and circumstances of local Aboriginal communities, and this was reflected in feedback from community organisation representatives, Local Justice Workers, KOSMP Coordinators and KJU personnel. Local community organisations are felt to be well placed to deliver the programs as they understand the unique circumstances faced by Aboriginal offenders, and the success of the programs is seen to rely on the fact that they are community based rather than administered by the Department via identified positions within government. This was seen as being crucial to the engagement of participants.

In selecting a suitable community organisation to deliver the programs, priority is given to Aboriginal community organisations so that power is invested in the local Aboriginal community to respond to the needs of its community.[21] The differing ways that the Local Justice Workers reported undertaking their roles demonstrated the level of flexibility the model affords to respond to local community needs. Key factors in the employment of Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators are their knowledge, connection and commitment to the local Aboriginal community and their ability to gain the community's trust. Housing the Local Justice Worker and KOSMP Coordinator positions within local community organisations provides a safe space for participants in which to contact the Local Justice Worker or KOSMP Coordinator and access the services. This arrangement also provides a workplace support structure for the individual workers delivering the programs.

The programs have a strong emphasis on culture and this is particularly highlighted via a commitment to the involvement of Elders and respected persons in the programs. Elders are engaged to participate in various activities with participants, such as fishing, traditional dance, arts and craft. KOSMP Coordinators' responsibilities include promoting the program in the Aboriginal community and

[21] At the time of the evaluation, 13 of the 15 contracts are with Aboriginal community organisations.

fostering and maintaining strong relationships with Elders and respected persons.[22] In addition to providing role models for offenders, the Elders also provide an opportunity for offenders to reconnect with their community where this connection might have been lost. This also provides a potential avenue for continued community support following the completion of orders and helps in building feelings of identity and belonging. Local Justice Workers and community organisation representatives also emphasised the importance of establishing links with community Elders, not just as mentors but as a way of introducing community members to the programs as well as to the other services available through the organisation.

The cultural appropriateness of these program elements is confirmed through feedback from program participants. Participants indicated that the support of Local Justice Workers, KOSMP Coordinators and mentors had proven invaluable in helping them address issues relevant to their justice concerns. One of the younger participants consulted cited cultural learning as a key benefit of the relationship he has with his mentor. Others noted the importance of having the support of a Local Justice Worker during court proceedings as crucial not only to their understanding of the process but also to their ability to face being in the court. In addition, these participants were also very grateful for having been connected with other programs that were run by community organisation service providers.

The programs' focus on establishing culturally appropriate worksites for Aboriginal community members further highlights their acknowledgment of the importance of culture and is crucial to their acceptance among local Aboriginal communities. Examples of the types of culturally appropriate worksites developed as part of the program (discussed in Theme 4 below) include the refurbishment of a disused and derelict scout hall for use as a community facility, the restoration of a sacred and culturally significant site for use for functions and community camps, and an aquaculture project where fish are being farmed and have been used to cater community events in the past, with the aim of developing the project into a viable commercial enterprise.

Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent

The programs predominantly aim to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal people by increasing the likelihood that Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders will successfully complete the conditions of their orders, assisting Aboriginal people to meet their obligations in relation to outstanding fines and warrants through their conversion to work orders and payment plans, and through improving relationships between Aboriginal communities and justice agencies. The programs also seek to liaise with justice agencies and service providers to ensure that culturally appropriate options are made available to clients, and that there is assistance in case management and a range of supports for offenders engaged in the programs. Findings relating to outcomes are largely based on monitoring data collected by the individual community organisation service providers and

[22] Developing a network of available mentors has proven challenging in some program locations and this is discussed further at Theme 9 below.

interviews conducted with participants, program personnel, justice agency officers and community organisation representatives. The evaluation found that the achievement of outcomes varies across program locations and the sites where the greatest achievements are made tend to be those where the community organisation service provider has strong support structures and programs in place to assist with the additional issues that program clients may be facing. In those locations, the evaluation found that the programs are achieving considerable outcomes in line with program intent.

Outcomes in relation to completion of orders without breach

The primary aim of the programs is to increase the number of offenders successfully completing Community Corrections Orders. Qualitative feedback indicates that the programs have had positive effects and have assisted Aboriginal offenders to meet the conditions of their orders. As noted in Theme 1 above, it is not possible to quantitatively analyse the direct relationship between program participation and the completion of Community Corrections Orders. However, the statewide data suggests that the programs may be making a contribution to improved rates of successful completion of orders by Aboriginal offenders.

Service providers record all instances of breach actions initiated in court by CCS in the six-monthly reports. Data collected over three six-monthly reporting periods in relation to clients who had breach actions initiated in court by CCS while a client of the LJWP indicates that, from January to June 2011, 30% of the 108 clients undertaking mandated community work had breach actions initiated in court, for the period July to December 2011, 42% of the 117 clients had breach actions initiated, and for January to June 2012, 5% of 80 clients had breach actions commenced in court. Data collected over the same three six-monthly reporting periods indicated that, while a client of the KOSMP, from January to June 2011, 12% of 86 clients had breach actions initiated in court, 13% of 76 clients had breach actions initiated for the July to December 2011 period and 9% of 54 clients for the January to June 2012 period.

It is not possible to compare this data with rates of breach by Aboriginal offenders across Victoria as CCS data in relation to breach activity is not collected centrally, and there is no agreed definition as to what constitutes breach. CCS records statewide data in relation to 'unsuccessful completions'. An unsuccessful completion will be recorded if a court or parole board finds a breach matter proven. Many of the data issues could be resolved if an identifier was linked to program participation. Data quality could also be improved if CCS provided greater input into the data collected and reported by the individual program sites. If a program flag was added to the CCS database as an identifier of program participation, CCS could provide data in relation to numbers of successful and unsuccessful completions for program participants, as well as the numbers of participants not due to complete their orders in the time period.

Outcomes in relation to culturally appropriate work sites

Towards their aim of increasing the numbers of Aboriginal offenders successfully completing Community Corrections Orders, as already noted, the programs provide support to Aboriginal offenders undertaking mandated community work through the development of culturally appropriate worksites and the facilitation of transport to community worksites. Feedback obtained in interviews suggests that, on the whole, participants are engaging with community work at these sites. The data in Table 6a indicates that a number of new worksites are being established as part of the LJWP and KOSMP.

Table 6a: Number of LJWP and KOSMP worksites

Six-monthly reporting period	Existing worksites (LJWP)	New worksites established (LJWP)	Worksites established (KOSMP)
January 2011 – June 2011	27	9	10
July 2011 – December 2011	22	9	17
January 2012 – June 2012	31	9	14

Feedback obtained in interviews indicated that, on the whole, program clients are highly engaged with the worksites developed through the programs. As previously noted, the refurbishment of a disused scout hall in Morwell was an example of the culturally appropriate worksites developed as part of the programs. The hall was transformed into a community facility, 'Kommall' Koori Gathering Place. Kommall is now used as a venue for various program activities, including traditional activities such as basket-weaving, dance, linoleum carving, screen-printing, woodworking, men's groups and women's groups, as well as being regularly used for delivering training and hosting cultural and community activities. The restoration of Kommall not only assisted numerous offenders to successfully complete their orders but also provided them with an opportunity to gain maintenance skills by working alongside Elders, local community members and tradespeople to reroof, rewire, reclad and repaint the building and install a new kitchen.

In addition, program clients were provided with the opportunity to gain an Occupational Health and Safety construction white card and a worksite traffic management certificate. A partnership with GippsTAFE also provided the opportunity for taking part in a woodworking course to create furniture for the site. Program personnel reported that program participants were very eager to undertake their community work through the project and continued voluntary work at the site after they had completed their mandated community work, and demonstrated a great sense of pride and achievement in having been involved in the project. For some, the experience resulted in paid employment through the local tradespeople who were involved in the refurbishment project.

Rebuilding and refurbishing the Boole Poole Peninsula Property site on the Gippsland Lakes is another example of a worksite at which program participants completed mandated community work.

Participants focused on the restoration of a sacred and culturally significant site so that it could be used for functions and community camps. Works involved refurbishing the building, plumbing and farming and repairing the veranda. A community Elder played a key role in providing information and understanding about the significance of the area and the history of the burial site. Since the rebuilding and refurbishment, a number of successful events have been held at the site.

A further example of a community appropriate worksite is an aquaculture project in which female project clients were involved in a project to farm fish. Fish raised as part of the project have been used to cater a community event. The KOSMP Coordinator and the community organisation are working towards the project becoming a sustainable commercial venture so that any profits can be used for community events and so that equipment can be purchased for the work teams and further opportunities to assist Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders can be provided.

The evaluation revealed a strong desire on the part of the programs to provide more meaningful community work options for Aboriginal offenders. In line with program intent, the above examples indicate the opportunities for training and skills development relevant to employment, as well as the increased exposure and connection to positive role models and cultural support that the programs afford. Feedback from the evaluation consultations also related to the sense of pride that program clients experienced from being involved in the work team projects, and this is particularly highlighted by examples of clients returning to volunteer on the projects after successfully completing their orders. Examples of offenders assisting with the set-up and organisation of community events as part of their orders were also cited in this context, with feelings of being accepted back into the community, enhanced community-mindedness and gratefulness for the opportunity to give back to the community reported as positive outcomes for program clients. The evaluation highlighted that there are opportunities to better capture the qualitative evidence in relation to client outcomes that are not adequately incorporated into current monitoring and evaluation practices. This could be achieved through case studies that track client progress or use of other qualitative techniques such as the Most Significant Change technique, involving the ongoing collection of stories of significant change to capture participants' experiences of the impact of the programs. Opportunities to better record individual client outcomes in relation to skills development and training were also highlighted.

Outcomes in relation to conversion of fines to work orders or payment plans

As previously noted, through initiatives developed in partnership with local Sheriff's Offices to improve relationships between the community and Sheriff's Officers, the LJWP has had a significant impact on the resolution of outstanding fines and warrants for Aboriginal community members, particularly through conversion to payment plans, community work permits or Community Corrections Orders. From January 2011, data collection systems were updated to capture the value of warrants and fines finalised by each location of the LJWP. This data is provided to the program service providers by the Sheriff's Office but has not been provided consistently across locations. As a result, the available data is not complete and is only based on a limited number of program sites. Although not reflective of the

total value, based on the available data the value of fines and warrants either paid in full, paid in part or converted to payment plans or work orders totalled $268,175.79 for January to June 2011,[23] $220,693.18 for July to December 2011[24] and $66,410.00 for January to June 2012.[25] The monitoring of outcomes in relation to the conversion of fines and warrants to work orders or payment plans could be improved if data was also collected and provided to the program service providers by the Sheriff's Office in relation to the number of clients whose fines or warrants were converted and whether this was achieved via payment in full or through conversion to a work plan or a payment plan.

Feedback from stakeholders indicated that the LJWP also significantly contributed to the fines recouped during the six-week fee waiver removing additional fees and costs incurred on outstanding fees that the Victorian Government implemented in 2010. Data is not available to reflect the scope of the program's contribution as at the time the Sheriff's Office database did not identify work done with Aboriginal communities.

Outcomes in relation to other supports

In addition to assisting offenders to undertake mandated community work and resolve outstanding fines and warrants, the programs also provide support to Aboriginal offenders and community members in meeting other conditions of Community Corrections Orders and in relation to broader justice-related issues. The types of support include attending and assisting with court appearances, supporting attendance at appointments and engagement with community services and programs that are attached to Community Corrections Orders, and assisting with infringement notices and other local government issues. Program data also captures assistance provided to clients to undertake mandated community work at a mainstream worksite where these arrangements better suit the needs of individual clients. Feedback from stakeholders and program participants indicated that this assistance and support is invaluable, particularly in relation to engagement with services and programs, support during court appearances and enhancing understanding of justice-related processes.

The programs also adopt a holistic view of service delivery and strive to engage program clients with programs and services that may address underlying factors associated with offending. Data collected for the KOSMP indicates that 84% of program clients had been engaged with community services through the program from January to June 2011, 79% of clients were engaged with community services from July to December 2011, and 87% of clients were engaged with community services from January to June 2012. The types of services include drug and alcohol, housing, parenting

[23] This figure is based on data from eight of the 10 program locations.

[24] This figure is based on data from five of the 10 program locations.

[25] This figure is based on data from three of the 10 program locations.

programs, legal aid, behavioural change and financial counselling (discussed further in Theme 6 below).

Other outcomes

As outlined in Theme 6 and Theme 7 below, the programs have achieved considerable outcomes in terms of their aims of establishing positive links between justice agencies and community organisation service providers, building relationships between Aboriginal community members and justice agencies, and increasing the capacity for justice agencies to work with Aboriginal communities. The evaluation also highlighted that the programs have resulted in other positive outcomes for the community and particularly Aboriginal communities in the areas in which the programs are delivered. The above examples of culturally appropriate worksites clearly demonstrate the benefits to these communities through the development of community facilities, the restoration of culturally significant sites and the development of products for community use and potentially future commercial use. Community organisation representatives and program personnel also reflected on how positive individual client outcomes can lead to broader community outcomes. Specific examples included the community-strengthening aspects of offenders working together with community members and mentors to achieve something for the community as a whole and building the confidence of the community because they see the direct benefits of offenders working and giving back to the community. There were also instances of family members of program clients who were previously disengaged re-engaging with the community organisation as a result of family members' participation in the programs.

The programs are also seen to have contributed to raising community awareness of justice-related issues, building relationships between justice agencies and the Aboriginal communities in which the programs are delivered, and improving the competence and confidence of justice agencies to work effectively with Aboriginal communities (see Theme 7 below). Evaluation feedback indicated that the programs facilitate greater understanding among justice agencies about Aboriginal community issues, which in turn benefits the community. Many of the achievements of the programs in this area are based on mutual respect between Local Justice Workers, KOSMP Coordinators and community organisation representatives and justice agency officers. This was highlighted in the example of one Local Justice Worker who recounted experiences of having given a presentation at a conference to Victorian Magistrates on the benefits of the program and the support services provided by the community organisation as well as issues faced by Aboriginal offenders. This example also highlights the role the programs have played in building community skills and capacity. Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators indicated that the depth of their knowledge of criminal justice issues has grown as a result of performing their roles. The development of a network of Elders and respected persons who are positively committed to assisting offenders also builds the capacity of the community to respond to issues faced by Aboriginal offenders and benefits the broader community. On average, 22 mentors per month were engaged in the program across the five program sites for the period January 2011 to July 2012.

The evaluation found that the programs are achieving positive client and community outcomes. However, significant opportunities exist to better record and capture program outcomes, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in order to more accurately monitor and evaluate program achievements and contribute to continual program improvement.

Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement

The AJA highlights the importance of Aboriginal community participation in the development, ownership and implementation of interventions for Aboriginal offenders. Having been developed as part of the AJA2, the programs were developed under a framework which is based on partnership agreements between justice agencies and Aboriginal communities. Maximising participation of the Aboriginal community in the design, development, delivery and implementation of all justice policies and programs that impact on Aboriginal Victorians is a central principle of the AJA. As such, the programs are based on the promotion of inclusive community participation, and the evaluation feedback reflected a partnership framework which allows for effective community consultation and participation.

The programs' design includes avenues for continued input from, and feedback to, the Aboriginal community. Under the Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees (RAJACs), regional representatives from the Aboriginal community and justice agencies work together to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal community members at the regional level. Central to these partnerships are the RAJAC Executive Officers, whose role is focused on community engagement and who are the point of contact between the Aboriginal community and the business units of the Department of Justice and other agencies and networks. Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees (LAJACs) also exist in many regions in Victoria where Aboriginal people are in more frequent contact with the criminal justice system. Local government officers, community organisation workers and local community members work together to promote coordination, positive working relationships and initiatives at the local level in order to reduce the degree to which Aboriginal people come into negative contact with the criminal justice system. Operating within the partnership frameworks of the AJA was seen by stakeholders as a key strength of the programs.

The programs are delivered in locations across Victoria based on data identifying the areas of greatest need. As the programs are delivered locally by community organisations, they inherently provide for community participation and ownership, and the programs have been designed and implemented with the input of Aboriginal community members and organisations. The managers and CEOs of the community organisations, themselves respected community members, tend to work closely with the Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators in the design and implementation of the programs at particular program sites. Interviews conducted indicated a strong commitment on the part of these personnel to ensuring the program run in their area meets the needs of the local Aboriginal community. This support was further reflected in one location where the community organisation has committed additional funds to employ a full-time mentor to supervise a community

work team. The programs also seek to ensure that Elders and respected persons are involved in order to enhance community ownership and provide community-based, local support and cultural connection for service users.

Both programs also ensure continued input from stakeholders via a local program steering committee or reference group at each program site. The committee or group meets quarterly to assist in implementing and operating the programs, achieving program objectives, responding to local needs, identifying and responding to emerging trends and issues likely to impact on the programs, and facilitating pathways and communication among program stakeholders. These meetings involve program representatives, community organisation service provider representatives, KJU representatives and representatives from partner justice-related agencies and, in the case of the KOSMP, mentor representatives. The RAJAC Executive Officers also attend these meetings (discussed further in Theme 6 below).

In relation to gender inclusivity, data relating to the gender breakdown of program clients has only been collected since January 2011. The available data indicates that female clients are generally participating in all locations in which the programs are being run, but their representation differs across locations. Statewide data collected for the LJWP from January 2011 to June 2012 indicates that 44% of new program clients across all program sites were female and 36% of clients undertaking mandated community work through the program were female.[26] Female representation in the KOSMP is lower, with corresponding data for the same period indicating that 27% of new program clients were female. CCS data in relation to the daily number of offenders by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status and gender indicates that from 2007/08 to 2011/12 the proportion of female Aboriginal offenders in Victoria on Community Corrections Orders ranged between 23% and 26% of the total number of Aboriginal people on Community Corrections Orders.[27] This indicates that female participation in the programs is either on par with or higher than the level of representation among Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders.[28] Data relating to gender breakdown of mentors engaged in the KOSMP has also been collected since January 2011. This data indicates that 38% of mentors engaged in the KOSMP are female and that female clients generally have access to female mentors across the program sites.

In terms of responding to the particular issues facing Aboriginal female offenders, in one location the decision was made by the service provider organisation to employ one male and one female KOSMP Coordinator across one full-time position to address gender-specific client needs. Feedback from program personnel and participants at this location suggests that this arrangement is successfully

[26] It should be noted that data collection and reporting is up to the service provider organisations and the Department is not in a position to validate the data reported. These issues are discussed in Theme 8 below.

[27] This data does not include those with 'unknown' Aboriginal status or gender.

[28] Data in relation to outstanding fines and warrants for Aboriginal females is not available. As noted in Theme 2 above, it is understood that the Sheriff's Office only recently began collecting information on Aboriginal status.

addressing the needs of both male and female participants. Feedback from female participants in an LJWP site with a male Local Justice Worker indicated that in those particular circumstances female clients were very satisfied with the services and support received from the worker and no concerns were raised in relation to needs not being met. In one program location with a predominantly male work team, female participants were given the opportunity to work in a separate female worksite on an aquaculture project farming fish. However, the interviews conducted also indicated that some program sites had faced difficulties in developing culturally appropriate worksites where female offenders could complete work orders. It was also noted that participants are supported to complete their orders by linking them with appropriate childcare arrangements to facilitate their capacity to undergo mandated community work, and this significantly assisted female participants in particular. Nevertheless, the evaluation indicated that there is scope for the programs to have a greater focus on female-appropriate worksites and skills development.

Overall, being based on the framework of the AJA and being delivered by local community organisations, the programs engage Aboriginal people in all aspects and have a strong focus on promoting inclusive community participation. While there is some room for developing the programs to meet the work placement needs of female clients in some locations and encourage Aboriginal women on Community Corrections Orders to access the services, overall the programs appear to be responding to the needs of female community members.

Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration

The literature highlights the importance of effective coordination and collaboration across government and non-government agencies (AIC, 2012; Calma, 2008; Stacey and Associates, 2004; Stewart, Lohoar & Higgins, 2011). Effective coordination is viewed as essential because it increases access to resources and service delivery capacity and assists the offender to navigate through complex systems to access the required services (Denning-Cotter, 2008; Simpson et al., 2009). As such, interventions require effective coordination mechanisms and communication strategies that build and sustain networks (Gilbert, 2012). The evidence indicates that the programs have a strong focus on service coordination and collaboration. Having the programs operating from within local community organisations facilitates access to other programs and services provided by the organisation to provide community-based support to address other needs and underlying issues associated with offending behaviour in areas such as medical, health and wellbeing, alcohol and other drug counselling, grief counselling, family counselling and other community services. Feedback from interviews with program personnel, service providers and program participants indicated that participants are being referred to relevant available services and programs. In particular, healing programs and substance use programs were cited by participants. Assistance with accommodation and associated family issues were also noted in interviews, along with access to childcare services. Linking program participants with other community programs and services occurs in varying degrees depending on the capacity and expertise of the individual organisations.

Stakeholders also highlighted the fact that Aboriginal community organisations had previously been supporting offender needs, though without resources from government, because they recognised the consequences of not responding to the complex issues facing this client group. Stakeholders further noted that the holistic approach of Aboriginal organisations can be challenging for government departments that are concentrating on one aspect of service delivery rather than the whole picture. However, it was felt that the programs demonstrate the capacity for the various justice agencies to recognise the broader needs of Aboriginal offenders and to collaborate with community organisations to meet those needs, as well as a commitment on the part of the Department of Justice to support the programs.

Stakeholders were able to cite numerous examples of effective working relationships at a local level with Sheriff's Officers, CCS Officers, Police Officers and Court and Judicial Officers, all of which have greatly facilitated the level of support provided to Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders and in the resolution of justice-related issues for Aboriginal community members more broadly.

Community Corrections Officers and program personnel work closely to facilitate the completion of community work orders by Aboriginal offenders, as well as providing information to offenders and community members. In the locations where the positions exist, Indigenous Leading Community Corrections Services Officers provide important support to enhance these functions. Similarly, program personnel and Sheriff's Officers work together to facilitate the payment of outstanding fines and warrants or their conversion to community work orders. Examples of initiatives to achieve these outcomes include set days in which Sheriff's Officers and Community Corrections Officers attend the community organisation to facilitate the payment of fines and provide information to community members about the roles and functions of CCS and the Sheriff's Office and the rights and responsibilities of community members and offenders. The data indicates that between January 2011 and June 2012 the LJWP had undertaken a total of 331 activities with the Sheriff's Office in relation to outstanding fines for Aboriginal community members across all program sites in Victoria. Activities reported include community information days, barbecues and events. Similarly, a further 317 activities were undertaken with local Police, courts and other justice-related agencies in the same time period. These activities are discussed in more detail in Theme 7 below.

Program personnel also work with the courts to assist Aboriginal offenders attending court, while at the same time providing information to the courts about available support and community services. Stakeholder feedback indicates that this has led to successful working relationships that have delivered positive results for program clients. It was reported that Magistrates feel more comfortable placing offenders on Community Corrections Orders or bail and CCS Officers feel more comfortable recommending Community Corrections Orders because of the support available through the Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators. CCS Officers and Sheriff's Officers indicated that the programs provide a great deal of support in fulfilling their roles and case management duties.

Examples of cooperation with other services, such as employment agencies and training or educational institutions, were also cited. Stakeholders at various program sites reported having developed these relationships to facilitate training and work placement for program participants. Program personnel also reported assisting access to other government services and information such as Centrelink and Consumer Affairs. The existence and outcomes of these relationships could be better captured in monitoring data to ensure that intermediate outcomes of the program are being effectively monitored and reported. For example, data could be collected in relation to any training or work placements that program participants are linked with through relationships built by the programs with employment agencies or education and training facilities. Service coordination with other agencies such as Centrelink could also be captured in routine monitoring data mechanisms.

Some mechanisms are in place to increase the profile of the Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place, a voluntary residential program for Aboriginal men undertaking Community Corrections Orders as an option for completing their orders. There is opportunity for the LJWP and KOSMP to act as supports for offenders re-entering the community after having spent time at Wulgunggo Ngalu, and coordination in this area appears to be improving. Justice agency stakeholders also indicated a clear willingness to better use the services at Wulgunggo Ngalu, and opportunities for greater coordination with and promotion of Wulgunggo Ngalu were reported.

This strong focus on service coordination and collaboration to improve service delivery to Aboriginal offenders and community members is also reflected in program documentation, and this approach was supported by the stakeholders consulted. The programs' guidelines and the funding agreements require that service providers establish a reference group (for LJWP) or local program steering committee (for KOSMP) and convene quarterly meetings with relevant stakeholders, including program and service provider representatives, KJU representatives, RAJAC Executive Officers, representatives from partner justice-related agencies and, in the case of the KOSMP, mentor representatives.

By providing an opportunity for program, justice agency and community stakeholders to meet to identify and respond to issues associated with program delivery and improvement, these meetings are an avenue for enhanced collaboration to service the needs of program participants. Reports indicate that in most locations meetings are held quarterly as required and are well attended. In some locations meetings are held more frequently, for example monthly. At other program sites meetings are conducted on a more ad-hoc basis due to changes in program personnel as well as the working styles of some individual workers who are tapping into the meetings of other justice-related agencies as an alternative way of canvassing the issues associated with delivering the program and meeting participant needs. Often the existing LAJAC meetings are used as a vehicle to canvass issues and report back on a local level, as the same stakeholders are generally at the meeting table. These meetings are seen to be very important for discussing justice-related issues and circumstances affecting Aboriginal community members on a local level. There were also examples of program sites

within a certain geographical area meeting biannually to share experiences, discuss ideas and collaborate on effective service delivery.

The success of these kinds of initiatives depends on the individuals involved, and, although there are differences in this regard across the various program locations, the initiatives mentioned above reflect a high degree of coordination with related services across the programs, with strong cooperation and goodwill established to improve the implementation of the programs and the level of support provided to Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders and Aboriginal community members more broadly.

Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders

In addition to the initiatives on service coordination and collaboration, as noted in Theme 4 above, the programs have contributed to raising community awareness of justice-related issues and building positive relationships between Aboriginal community members and justice agencies. Activities such as information days, community barbecues and events, involvement of justice agency officers in NAIDOC activities, and cricket, netball and football matches between community members and justice agency officers have reportedly delivered significant results in this area.

Stakeholders also reported examples of 'no fines days' where community members come and meet the Sheriff's Officer and look up their fines without the risk of being arrested. Other instances cited of Sheriff's Officers being sensitive to community needs included not issuing an arrest warrant in front of family members and not attending community members' homes in uniform; similar examples were provided in relation to Police Officers. Sheriff's Officers reported that fear and suspicion from the community around the Sheriff's Office can create non-compliance. As such, the programs were seen as having a significant impact on improving relationships and bridging this gap by enabling Sheriff's Officers to meet community members through the Local Justice Worker or the KOSMP Coordinator in a non-threatening and safe environment. It was also reported that in some locations these initiatives have been successful to the point that community members now have the confidence to go directly to the Sheriff's Officers to address any issues with outstanding fines and warrants.

It was also clear from the feedback that the programs increase the skills and capacities of justice agencies to work with Aboriginal communities, with the programs providing enhanced cultural awareness and a bridge between these agencies and the community. Justice agencies gain an understanding of the underlying individual circumstances that may have led to the offending behaviour or the non-compliance with or breach of orders, and there was a great deal of respect, goodwill and gratitude for the work of the programs. There was a clear feeling articulated in the feedback that this filters through and can lead to organisational change within these agencies. The programs also aid understanding of processes and consequences for program participants, which in turn facilitates mutual understanding between offenders and justice agencies. As a result, Aboriginal community members are more likely to access and engage with justice agencies and processes.

There was also a sense from the consultations conducted that the Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators are proud of the mutual respect and good rapport they have developed with justice agencies.

Again, while the scope of these initiatives varies across locations, it is clear that the programs have made a significant contribution to advocacy and systems reform.

What is a well managed and delivered program?

Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes

The evaluation found that the programs are well managed and coordinated centrally through the contract management and support of the KJU personnel and management. As noted above, the program documentation, including program guidelines and funding agreements with individual community service providers, clearly outlines the programs' aims and objectives, reflects the full scope and intent of the programs, and clearly defines program stakeholder roles and responsibilities. The program guidelines are updated and amended to address any issues that arise and to contribute to improving program delivery.

Mechanisms are in place to support program personnel. As previously noted, the KJU runs an annual two-day workshop which brings together Local Justice Workers, KOSMP Coordinators, mentors, KJU personnel, RAJAC Executive Officers and LAJAC Project Officers from across the state to share ideas and experiences and to workshop challenges and barriers to effective service delivery. Representatives from other justice agency partners also attend and give presentations. A written report of the conference is then provided to service providers and program staff across the state to ensure that evidence of program successes and results, key lessons and relevant issues, information and data are circulated among program stakeholders. KJU Community Programs personnel are also an ongoing source of support for program staff, and take a hands-on approach to grants management. KJU personnel visit the various program sites regularly and have developed good relationships with program staff.

Processes are also in place for quarterly steering committee and reference group meetings to be held locally with key program and other agency staff, in order to ensure there are regular updates on program progress and opportunities for implementation and operational issues to be discussed and addressed at a local level. KJU personnel attend these meetings to provide additional support. The meetings also provide an opportunity for information-sharing about relevant justice-related support structures and services.

Record-keeping systems are in place that fulfil operational requirements. In terms of monitoring data, service providers are required to submit six-monthly reports to the KJU detailing activities and data in relation to key performance measures, and the information provided in these reports is collated into a statewide report and used to develop internal reports around performance and ensure that community

organisation service providers are fulfilling the contractual obligations of their funding agreements. The data is also shared with the RAJAC Executive Officers to ensure the RAJACs are kept abreast of program performance. Amendments to data reporting requirements have been made to broaden the scope of information captured by the program sites over the course of the programs, and KJU personnel and RAJAC Executive Officers have provided training and support to community organisations to assist them to fulfil data reporting requirements.

However, as data collection and reporting are done at a local level by service provider organisations, the KJU is not in a position to validate the data reported from the various program sites. Although efforts are made by the KJU to streamline reporting processes, including delivering presentations at the annual workshops in order to go through reporting requirements and any changes to these requirements, it is clear that individual program sites report data differently, particularly new client data for the LJWP. This is partly as a result of the various roles and services the program provides. Opportunities exist to streamline how the categories of data are recorded in order to ensure greater consistency across the data reported by the program sites.

In addition, the monitoring data does not provide any mechanism for tracking outcomes for clients on Community Corrections Orders, beyond recording the numbers of order completions or instances of breach in the reporting period. If resources are available, data systems could be usefully extended to provide a mechanism for more consistent tracking of outcomes over time. This could potentially be achieved through the CCS database and linking program participation to the Corrections Victoria or e-justice identifier in order to track program impact on order completion and any potential impact on reoffending. Any system of monitoring would need to meet ethical and privacy requirements.[29] As previously noted, opportunities also exist for more consistent and reliable data to be recorded in relation to order completions and breaches as well as in relation to the value of fines and warrants resolved as a result of the programs, to allow for more meaningful evaluation of program outcomes and mechanisms for program improvement. Greater input from CCS and the Sheriff's Office in terms of the data collected and reported is necessary in this regard, not only to ensure data consistency and reliability but to prevent program personnel, many of whom are part time, being overloaded with the task. Program participants currently sign a release of information consent form to facilitate the sharing of information between CCS or Sherriff's Office and the community organisation service provider. Should a system for tracking program participation be developed that meets privacy and ethical considerations, CCS could provide data in relation to the number of successful and unsuccessful completions by program participants across reporting periods as well as the number of participants who are not due to complete their orders in the given reporting period. As previously noted, it would also be useful for the Sherriff's Office to provide data in relation to the number of clients whose fines

[29] It is understood that Corrections Victoria is currently in the process of contracting a provider for the development of a comprehensive programs database. It will be necessary for this database to capture participation in the LJWP and KOSMP in order to address these identified data gaps.

or warrants were converted and whether this was achieved via payment in full or through conversion to a work plan or payment plan.

It was clear that, overall, the level of commitment of Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators is high and the level of respect they have in their communities is significant. These people are appointed by the local community organisation service provider, and the majority of Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators are Aboriginal, as the programs have a strong focus on the employment and inclusion of Aboriginal community members.

The community organisations are responsible for recruiting and supervising Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators, and program delivery depends on the capacity of the local service provider to support program personnel in their role. Several program personnel had been employed by the programs over a number of years, which suggests that the capacity and confidence of staff in some locations has been developed and sustained. However, it was clear from the feedback that opportunities exist for more comprehensive and consistent training for new program personnel, particularly where the community organisation may not have the existing justice-related expertise to provide appropriate induction training. Program personnel who were new to the role indicated that the experience was quite overwhelming and that some of the issues identified could have been overcome via more structured induction training. They noted that training should particularly be given in relation to providing an overview of the criminal justice system and the various justice agencies, the role of CCS and the community-based corrections regime, and the role of the Sheriff's Office and the enforcement of warrants for unpaid fines. Training in relation to administrative record-keeping to comply with CCS requirements for recording mandated community work hours could also be included, they noted, as there was some feeling that there was scope for improvement in this area at some program sites.

The training of community mentors is delivered by the KOSMP Coordinators. The KJU, in consultation with the KOSMP Coordinators, developed a comprehensive training toolkit to support the coordinators in their role. The toolkit includes overheads for running training sessions with mentors and handouts to provide to mentors.

There are also opportunities to share information and exchange experiences of service delivery across the program sites throughout the state, beyond the annual workshop, so that program personnel can benefit from the experiences of others on a more regular basis, particularly from those more experienced in delivering the programs. One avenue for achieving this could be monthly or bi-monthly teleconferences convened by KJU personnel as a forum for discussing issues associated with service delivery at the various sites. As noted above, an informal mechanism has developed for sharing information across programs in one geographical area where bi-annual meetings take place, but these mechanisms are ad hoc and could be augmented by a more formal centralised mechanism.

Overall, the program has well-defined and effective structures of management and governance, although there is scope to develop internal monitoring and evaluation capacity to more accurately capture intermediate outcomes and to track individual participant outcomes.

Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent

The evaluation found that the programs are supported by clear and well-developed documentation of program aims and objectives. The program guidelines, as well as the contractual arrangements between the service providers and the KJU, clearly outline the aims and objectives of the programs and capture their intent and scope. As noted, the programs are funded under Phase Two of the AJA and are initiatives that contribute to 'Objective 2: Diversion/strengthening alternatives to imprisonment'. The KOSMP contributes to the AJA activity of "assisting Koori offenders to meet the conditions of Community Corrections Orders" (Activity 2.4.1). The LJWP contributes to three AJA2 activities:

- Strengthening community-based alternatives to imprisonment (Activity 2.3.1)
- Enhancing the effectiveness of the Fairer and Firmer Fines legislation (Activity 2.5.1)
- Assisting Koori offenders to meet the conditions of Community Corrections Orders (2.4.1).

The performance measures, which are outlined in both the guidelines and the service provider contracts, clearly reflect the programs' aims and objectives, which relate to supporting Aboriginal people on Community Corrections Orders to successfully complete their orders and more broadly indicate a commitment to building positive links with justice-related agencies and improving justice-related experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. In addition, the KOSMP guidelines emphasise a commitment to the involvement of Elders and respected persons in the program.

The programs' guidelines clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, and feedback from all consulted indicated a high level of acceptance of the programs and their structure. The KOSMP guidelines also detail the operational considerations for the program, including processes for referral, assessment and matching, and the nature of the mentoring relationship. A comprehensive training resource and toolkit for mentors accompanies the KOSMP. The guidelines for the programs are reviewed and updated as issues arise, and it was indicated that a full review of both the guidelines and the service agreements will take place at the commencement of the new funding agreements in 2013. An annual workshop bringing together relevant program stakeholders is held and a report is generated that outlines the issues covered at the two-day workshop. These workshops (discussed in Theme 8 above) further articulate the aims and scope of the programs and ensure that the programs' capacity to adapt to changes affecting justice processes are well understood by program personnel across the program locations.

Theme 10: Sustainability of the program/s over time

Since their inception in 2006, the programs have had ongoing funding through the AJA2. Annual funding has increased incrementally each financial year and the programs will continue to be funded under the Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 3 (AJA3),[30] which indicates that the programs are likely to be sustainable, at least in terms of funding, over time. In 2006/07, the budget allocation for the LJWP was $270,000, and the pilot was established in Horsham towards the end of this period.[31] All 10 sites became operational the following financial year and the budget allocation was $450,000.[32] By the 2010/11 financial year the program budget and expenditure was $850,000. The budget allocation for the KOSMP in 2006/07 was $450,000. During this time, the pilot site at Shepparton was delivering the program.[33] By the second half of 2007/08, all five program sites were operational and the budget allocation for this period was $580,000.[34] By 2010/11, the program budget and expenditure was $800,000. Funding agreements with community organisation service providers were initially for a period of two years, and subsequent agreements were extended to three years. Stakeholders also noted that the sustainability of the programs is enhanced by the return on investment they provide the Department of Justice as a result of the fee recovery they facilitate.

At the time of writing, additional funds had been committed by Corrections Victoria to expand the LJWP. Stakeholders anticipate that the new community correction order that replaces the old regime of Community Corrections Orders under the *Sentencing Amendment (Community Correction Reform) Act 2011* will likely increase the workload of the programs. The additional funding from Corrections Victoria for the LJWP was secured through the sentencing reform initiatives in anticipation of an expected increase in demand for the services of the program.

Funding allocation to the individual program sites across both programs is based on an analysis of available CCS data in relation to the daily average number of Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders in the program locations. This funding allocation currently provides for a full-time KOSMP Coordinator in all five program sites, a full-time Local Justice Worker in two of the program sites and a part-time worker in the remaining eight sites.[35] As a result program delivery tends to rely on the Local Justice Worker and KOSMP Coordinator positions and the programs' success depends

[30] The AJA3 is expected to be launched in February 2013.

[31] The total budget expenditure for this period was $240,000.

[32] Budget allocation included establishment funding for new programs.

[33] The total budget expenditure for this period was $370,000.

[34] Budget expenditure for this period was $230,000.

[35] A needs analysis was conducted and, following an increase in budget allocation, with additional funding being provided through the Infringement Management and Enforcement Services (IMES) in 2010/11, the program was extended to a full-time position in the two sites. In addition to the worker's' salary, 25% for on-costs is also included in the budget.

on the individual performing the role's capacity and commitment. The programs reliance on these positions leaves them vulnerable and also means that program results tend to vary across locations. Within the limited resource framework, KJU stakeholders indicated that the data supports the extension of the LJWP to a full-time position in another two of the program locations, and it is possible that the additional funding from Corrections Victoria may be partly used for this purpose. Additional program sites are also being considered.

Some issues were identified in the evaluation feedback that indicate that other factors may need to be taken into account when allocating funding for the program sites to ensure program sustainability over time across the state. Stakeholders indicated that program investment in regional locations tends to deliver a higher return than in urban locations due to higher costs, transport, access to community supports, etc, and this could be taken into consideration when allocating funds to individual program sites. Concerns were also raised that part-time positions tend to generate higher turnover of personnel as people leave the position to take on a full-time role elsewhere. Difficulties were also identified by the Local Justice Workers, who indicated that participants expect them to be available full time, and this is particularly an issue when participants have court dates that do not fall on the Local Justice Worker's usual working days. This suggests a possible over-reliance on the individual Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators for effective program delivery; however, funding and resource constraints inevitably limit the capacity to overcome this issue.

The sustainability of the programs also depends on the support of the community organisations and their capacity to engage Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators and recruit appropriately when staff turnover takes place. The KJU provides support to the community organisations by way of assistance with position descriptions and advertising to recruit for the positions, and RAJAC Executive Officers generally sit on selection panels. However, some program sites have encountered staffing difficulties in the past, with some positions remaining vacant for several months, leading to disruptions in service delivery in some locations. A lack of suitable candidates was cited as the main reason for difficulty with recruitment.

KOSMP Coordinators also face challenges in establishing a network of Elders and respected persons as mentors. Developing a network of mentors has been achieved in varying degrees across the locations where the program is delivered. Some locations have a strong network of mentors, but finding mentors has proven difficult in some other locations where, as is the case with all programs that rely on community member participation and support, key community members are extremely busy with community and other commitments. It was also reported that in some instances where local mentors are not available mentors are sourced from other regions, which may make them less accessible or relevant to some program participants.

This issue has been addressed in different ways by the various service providers. In one location, the Aboriginal community organisation has committed funds to employ a full-time mentor to supervise offenders on community work orders, demonstrating the flexibility of the model to adapt to the needs

of the local community as well as the support afforded the program in the particular community. However, while this set-up is considered a reliable one, concerns were expressed that this is not an ideal situation as it detracts from the cultural connection, education and support focus of the program; the KOSMP Coordinator is consequently continuing efforts to find additional community mentors to be part of the program. KOSMP Coordinators also act as mentors for participants, and this is seen as particularly worthwhile when mentoring clients with higher needs. These clients require more time as they tend to have more conditions on their orders, and the coordinator can bring their knowledge of justice processes to the mentoring relationship. To ensure the programs maintain a cultural and community connection, Elders are engaged to participate in various activities with program participants, such as fishing, traditional dance, arts and craft.

Access to transport for Local Justice Workers was also reported as a difficulty, particularly at those program sites that span a large geographic area. Due to funding limitations, an annual contribution to the service provider's vehicle pool is made to assist access to transport when required. However, this does not resolve the difficulties faced by some workers from not having permanent access to a vehicle.

Given the increasing commitment to funding and extending the programs and the evidence-based approach based on daily average numbers of Aboriginal offenders that supports the funding allocations to the various program sites, the programs have a strong focus on sustainability and the opportunity to minimise the abovementioned human resource limitations.

6.5 Assessment of programs against the good practice themes

The following provides an overall assessment of the LJWP and KOSMP programs against the 10 good practice themes identified in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (see Table 3a in Chapter 3).

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
What is a good intervention?				
Theme 1: Focusing on crime prevention and aiming to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system	Focus of programs in supporting offenders to successfully complete their Community Corrections Orders, prevent breach and improve relationships with justice agencies.	Data limitations in being able to undertake a reoffending analysis (e.g. lack of appropriate comparison data, limitations to completion data available by site).		
What is a good model?				
Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap	Clear evidence of a need for Aboriginal-specific programs to provide support for people to successfully complete their orders and prevent breach action and warrants. Programs responsive to local needs as local organisations deliver the programs. Programs were piloted prior to implementation and program locations selected according to assessment of need based on corrections data.			
Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation	Programs designed by, or with input from, Aboriginal community members and organisations. Programs operating within a cultural framework with strong emphasis on culture and community support.			

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent		Qualitative data supports positive individual outcomes achieved. Programs would benefit from capturing this information and incorporating the data into an internal monitoring and evaluation system. An annual conference provides some avenue for the analysis of outcomes to occur. Outcomes in part dependent on community availability of work options and other support options.		Inconclusive trends re order completion rates and quality of data provided cannot be easily verified.
Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement	Programs designed and implemented on a statewide basis through local community organisations. Programs are delivered within AJA2 framework, which is based on partnership agreements between justice agencies and Aboriginal communities. Programs include avenues for continued input from and feedback to community.	There is flexibility in the model design to respond to gender needs, but the capacity to meet needs varies across sites, including availability of suitable work options for women.		
Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration	Coordination with a wide range of justice-related agencies. Delivery via community-based organisations facilitates a holistic approach to service delivery and services access.			
Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders	Programs develop relationships, deliver events and raise community awareness to improve relationships between justice agencies and the Aboriginal community. Justice agencies are more informed about issues and able to negotiate better			

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
	outcomes for Aboriginal community members. Aboriginal community members more prepared to access justice agencies.			
What is a well managed and delivered program?				
Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes	Centrally well managed and coordinated. Mechanisms such as annual staff conference to support continued program improvement.	Program delivery is dependent on capacity of local service providers; therefore there is some variation of management processes across sites. Need to develop internal monitoring and evaluation capacity to collect qualitative data in the face of unclear trends evident from available quantitative data.		
Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent	Programs clear about their program intent and realistic in scope in a community based context.			
Theme 10: Sustainability of the program/s over time	Aboriginal Justice Agreement provides ongoing funding with additional funding to be provided by Corrections Victoria.			Sustainability vulnerable as dependent on capacity of service provider to engage Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators when staff turnover takes place.

6.6 Key lessons

The Local Justice Worker Program and the Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program provide support to Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders to prevent breach and successfully complete their orders. The programs have also achieved significant outcomes in building relationships between Aboriginal communities and justice agencies with a view to improving justice-related experiences and outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians. The following highlights key lessons drawn from the evaluation of the programs' operation.

Community-based culturally appropriate support is key to supporting Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders

The programs were developed as a direct response to data indicating an increased likelihood of Aboriginal people breaching Community Corrections Orders, and they provide much-needed support to Aboriginal offenders to complete orders and avoid breaches. Providing a community-based response that can be flexible enough to respond to local community needs ensures the programs are able to provide relevant support to Aboriginal offenders. The cultural and community support that is provided through the involvement of community Elders and respected persons is central to the programs' success. The programs also increase the likelihood of offenders completing mandated community work by fulfilling a need for culturally appropriate worksites at which Aboriginal offenders feel comfortable and are willing to attend.

Opportunities exist to clarify and enhance work and training opportunities

The programs demonstrate the positive outcomes that can be achieved through adopting proactive and creative strategies for community worksites. Positive outcomes in terms of the completion of mandated community work by Aboriginal offenders are best achieved when CCS Officers are flexible in terms of supporting new ideas in relation to community work options and in circumstances where the Local Justice Worker, KOSMP Coordinator or community organisation service provider are able to access community networks to support access to more meaningful work and skills development opportunities.

However, opportunities exist for CCS to adopt a flexible approach across the board to the types of activities and training that count towards community work hours, in order to enhance the potential for more positive client outcomes and support program personnel in developing meaningful community work options for Aboriginal offenders.

Delivery via local community organisations enables a holistic response

Funding community organisations to deliver the programs enhances opportunities for linking program participants with other community programs within the organisations. In this way, other service needs and underlying issues associated with offending behaviour (in areas such medical, health and wellbeing, alcohol and other drug counselling, grief counselling, family counselling and other family services) can be addressed. This occurs in varying degrees depending on the capacity and expertise of the individual organisations. The evaluation found that the sites where the greatest program outcomes were achieved tended to be those where the community organisation service provider has strong support structures and programs in place to assist with the many issues that participants may be facing.

Collaboration is effective for achieving positive justice-related outcomes

Effective working relationships developed at a local level with justice agencies reflect a high degree of coordination with related services across the programs. Strong cooperation and goodwill have been established to improve the implementation of the programs and the level of support provided to Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders and Aboriginal community members more broadly. Service collaboration has greatly impacted on program outcomes on an individual and community level. Among other things, these relationships have seen significant achievements in terms of successful completion of mandated community work by Aboriginal offenders and payment or resolution of outstanding fines warrants, which is a significant justice issue for Aboriginal community members, particularly as it can result in incarceration.

Program personnel have also collaborated with other services, such as employment agencies and training/educational institutions, to facilitate training and work placement for participants. However, the existence and outcomes of these relationships could be better captured in monitoring data in order to ensure that intermediate program outcomes are being effectively reported.

Community-based programs improve justice agency/Aboriginal community relations

The programs have contributed to raising community awareness of justice-related issues and the need to build positive relationships between Aboriginal community members and justice agencies. Significant results in this area have been achieved through community activities and events involving justice agency representatives and local Aboriginal communities. As a result of the effective working relationships between program personnel and justice agency officers, and the respect, goodwill and gratitude justice agencies have for the work program personnel do, the programs have contributed to improving the competence and confidence of justice agencies to work effectively with Aboriginal communities.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms could be improved

Significant opportunities exist to better record and capture program outcomes, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in order to more accurately monitor and evaluate program achievements and contribute to continual program improvement. If resources are available, data systems could be usefully extended to provide a mechanism for more consistent tracking of outcomes over time. This could potentially be achieved through the CCS database and by linking program participation to the Corrections Victoria or e-justice identifier in order to track program impact on order completion and reoffending. Any system of monitoring would need to meet ethical and privacy requirements and considerations.

The programs would benefit from a more coordinated approach to data recording and monitoring across the various business units of the Department of Justice. Opportunities also exist for more consistent and reliable data to be recorded in relation to order completions and breaches, as well as in relation to the value of fines and warrants resolved as a result of the programs, in order to allow for more meaningful evaluation of program outcomes and mechanisms for program improvement. Greater input from CCS and the Sheriff's Office in terms of the data collected and reported is necessary in this regard, not only to ensure data consistency and reliability but also to prevent program personnel, many of whom are part time, being overloaded with the task.

The evaluation highlighted that there are also opportunities to better capture qualitative evidence in relation to participant outcomes that are not adequately incorporated into current monitoring and evaluation practices.

Limited staff resources impact capacity to deliver intended support to clients

In providing support to Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders, the availability of, and relationship with, Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators is key to contributing to positive outcomes for participants and the efficacy of the programs as a whole. While a key strength, this also means that the programs are vulnerable to reliance on a single worker for effective program delivery. This is particularly difficult given the operating context of limited resources, leading to these positions often being part time. This was particularly problematic when clients had court dates that did not fall on the workers' usual working days.

While funding and resource constraints inevitably limit the scope to overcome this issue, consideration could be given to building the capacity within organisations so that the programs, and support provided to participants, become less vulnerable to the availability of individual workers. Specifically, in allocating funding to the program sites, consideration should be given to the need for Local Justice Workers to be available full time, the availability of transport at program sites that cover a large geographical area, and the potentially greater costs of delivering the program in an urban environment. Given the increasing commitment to funding and extending the programs, there is

potential for these issues to be considered in the allocation of funding to program sites. Despite funding limitations, the evidence-based approach that supports the funding allocations to the various sites and the programs' strong focus on sustainability provide clear opportunities for addressing this limitation.

Opportunities exist to enhance the capacity of program personnel

Opportunities exist for more comprehensive and consistent training for new program personnel, particularly where the community organisation service provider may not have enough justice-related expertise to provide appropriate induction training. The programs would benefit from more structured induction training, particularly in relation to providing an overview of the criminal justice system and the various justice agencies, the role of CCS and the community-based corrections regime, as well as the role of the Sheriff's Office and the enforcement of warrants for unpaid fines. Training in relation to administrative record-keeping to comply with CCS requirements for recording mandated community work hours could also be included.

There are also opportunities to enhance information-sharing and exchange experiences of service delivery across the program sites throughout the state. One avenue for achieving this exchange could be monthly or bi-monthly teleconferences convened by KJU personnel as a forum for discussing issues associated with service delivery at the various sites.

7. Findings: Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program, Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)

7.1 Summary of programs

Program context

The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement (AJA), which was first signed in 2000, was one of the Victorian Government's responses to the 1997 National Ministerial Summit into Indigenous Deaths in Custody, which served to review federal and state governments' responses to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody five years after their implementation. The AJA is a formal agreement between government ministers and members of the Aboriginal community and is based on partnerships with Aboriginal communities. The agreement aims to minimise Indigenous over-representation in the criminal justice system by improving accessibility, utilisation and effectiveness of justice-related programs and services and by maximising participation of the Aboriginal community in the design, development, delivery and implementation of all justice policies and programs that impact on Aboriginal people.

In October 2001, funding was provided for the Corrections Long Term Management Strategy, including the delivery of a framework, the Reducing Re-offending Framework, to reduce reoffending through diversion and rehabilitation programs (Corrections Victoria, 2004). The framework was designed to provide a hierarchy of programs, beginning with foundational programs seen as prerequisites for preparing and motivating offenders for participation in moderate or higher intensity, more targeted offence-specific interventions. Under this framework, the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, the Marumali Program and the Koori Cognitive Skills Program were considered foundational programs.

The Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement Phase 2 (AJA2) was launched in 2006 and marks a recommitment by the Victorian Government and Aboriginal communities to continue working together to improve justice outcomes for Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program was initially an initiative of the AJA, but the program was redeveloped in 2005. The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, the Marumali Program and the Koori Cognitive Skills program were all implemented by Corrections Victoria as initiatives of the AJA2. The aims of the AJA2 are to:

- Minimise Aboriginal over-representation in the criminal justice system by improving accessibility, utilisation and efficacy of justice-related programs and services in partnership with the Aboriginal community

- Ensure the Aboriginal community, as part of the broader Victorian community, has the same access to human, civil and legal rights, living free from racism and discrimination and experiencing the same justice outcomes through the elimination of inequities in the justice system.

Program delivery to Aboriginal prisoners is managed by the Indigenous and Diversity Unit, Targeted Programs Branch Offender Management Division, of Corrections Victoria. The following Programs Guiding Principles apply to all Aboriginal programs delivered by Corrections Victoria:

- Present a holistic perspective (i.e. acknowledge past-present-future and individual-family-clan-community connectedness)
- Be strength-focused (i.e. build on strengths not focus on weaknesses)
- Be gender sensitive
- Allow/facilitate self-determination
- Provide a gateway to other services
- Provide for needs and concerns that cannot be met by mainstream programs.

Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers (identified positions) and Aboriginal Liaison Officers (non-identified positions) are positions within Corrections Victoria prisons and correctional centres that are responsible for providing practical assistance to Aboriginal prisoners and ensuring they have access to mainstream services and consult with prisoners' contact officers and offender case managers to ensure their needs are being met. Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers facilitate and support program delivery to Aboriginal prisoners.

The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program

The first incarnation of the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program was developed following planning over a 15-month period which involved consultation with Elders in Victoria as well as government and community stakeholders. The previous model was delivered one day a week for seven weeks and was piloted in 1998 at the then HM Prison Won Wron and was run by the then Aboriginal Community Justice Panels. The program was redeveloped by Kellawan Pty Ltd in 2005 in collaboration with Corrections Victoria.

The current Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program runs intensively for five consecutive days, as program facilitators felt that it was better to have continuity. The program encourages participants to connect or reconnect with their culture, and its main emphasis is on aspects of universal Aboriginal cultural principles that participants are able to draw from in order to strengthen their cultural identity and to develop their understanding of their role as an Aboriginal person, and their responsibilities to self, family and community.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Increase Aboriginal offenders' understanding of their cultural identity
- Address the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of Aboriginal offenders
- Decrease reoffending behaviour and recidivism
- Identify pre- and post-release networks
- Provide a gateway to other, offence-specific programs.

The program covers broad topic areas which vary and are tailored for men and women. Topics for male prison programs include art, music, culture, men's health, family, and education and employment. Topics for female prison programs include culture and history, culture and identity, art and fibre craft, mothering, parenting and family issues, basic cooking and nutrition, women's health, budgeting and household management, and education and employment.

Table 7a indicates the number of times the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program has been delivered in Corrections Victoria prisons and correctional centres and the Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place from 2006/07 to 2010/11, and the number of program participants.

Table 7a: Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program – programs delivered and number of participants

Year	Corrections Victoria prisons and correctional centres		Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place	
	Number of programs delivered	Number of participants	Number of programs delivered	Number of participants
2006/07	2	35	-	-
2007/08	2	32	-	-
2008/09	3	39	2	18
2009/10	1	8	2	18
2010/11	3	37	2	21

In 2011/12, Corrections Victoria commenced delivering the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program in Community Corrections Services.[36] In that year, the program was delivered 11 times – seven times in Corrections Victoria prisons and correctional centres and four times in Community Corrections Services – with a total of 141 participants. The program was also delivered three times in the same year at Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place, with a total of 28 participants. A further two programs were delivered at Wulgunggo Ngalu in late 2012, with a total of 23 participants.

[36] These programs were delivered under the sentence reform budget.

The Marumali Program

The Marumali Program uses a specific licensed healing model in which external facilitators are engaged by Corrections Victoria to deliver the program. The Marumali Program is a model of healing that was developed by Aboriginal Elder Lorraine Peeters as a result of her own experiences of being forcibly removed from her family and institutionalised at the age of four. The Marumali Program is based on Peeters' own journey of healing and aims to increase the quality of support available for survivors of removal policies and practices. In 2002, Corrections Victoria began delivering the program: a five-day program was delivered to Aboriginal prisoners and a two-day workshop was provided to train non-Aboriginal clinical staff.

The Marumali Program is a five-stage model of healing that was developed to support members of the stolen generations to recover from longstanding trauma. The program aims to deliver a culturally sensitive and culturally appropriate model of healing to Aboriginal prisoners within correctional facilities. The program has several aims for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders:

- Provide a culturally appropriate program delivered by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people in the area of healing and self-determination
- Contribute to the rehabilitation of participants by providing them with a program that encourages a positive direction
- Affirm and strengthen participants' identity throughout the workshop
- Provide a culturally appropriate forum for participants to discuss colonisation, grief, loss, identity and other issues of a sensitive nature
- Provide participants with strategies to deal with issues of trauma associated with removal practices in a variety of settings
- Create an environment that is comfortable, friendly and supportive and that encourages participation.

The program includes the following session topics: brief history on past laws, policies and practices concerning removal of Aboriginal children; different kinds of removal/separation and its impact; triggers; realisation of reality; talking; 'facing the demons'; going home; reclaiming the future; peace, identity and strength; genetic sexual attraction; and self-care.

Table 7b indicates the number of times the Marumali Program has been delivered in Corrections Victoria prisons and correctional centres from 2006/07 to 2011/12 and the number of program participants.

Table 7b: Marumali Program – programs delivered and number of participants

Year	Number of programs delivered	Number of participants
2006/07	5	81
2007/08	4	62
2008/09	Nil	Nil
2009/10	Nil	Nil
2010/11	Nil	Nil
2011/12	1	9

It was reported that funding constraints precluded the Marumali Program from being run from 2008/09 to 2010/11. Funding allocations under the current budget mean that delivery of the Marumali Program was able to resume in 2011/12. A further two programs are scheduled in prisons and correctional centres for late 2012/13.[37] The program recently commenced delivery at Wulgunggo Ngalu. One program with nine participants was delivered in 2012/13.

The Koori Cognitive Skills Program

The Koori Cognitive Skills Program is an adaptation of a mainstream cognitive skills program being run in Corrections Victoria corrections centres and at Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place. The program was developed because Corrections Victoria found that Aboriginal prisoners were not responsive to the mainstream program being offered. It is a problem-solving program based on cognitive behavioural therapy and is intended as a foundation program designed to prepare and motivate offenders for participation in moderate or higher intensity, more targeted offence-specific interventions. An Aboriginal registered psychologist undertook the adaptation of the mainstream program in collaboration with community Elders, and Aboriginal community members were also consulted as part of the adaptation process. The program is co-facilitated by Aboriginal facilitators (Elders/respected persons) and Corrections Victoria or private correctional facility (private prison) psychologists. The aim of the program is to equip Aboriginal prisoners with practical problem-solving skills in order to increase their capacity to deal with problems more effectively.

The program was piloted in 2005 with Aboriginal women at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (the Victorian female prison) and with men at Loddon Prison and Barwon Prison, and the pilot programs were the subject of an evaluation by Graham Atkinson and Robin Jones (Atkinson & Jones, 2005).

Table 7c indicates the number of times the Koori Cognitive Skills Program has been delivered from 2006/07 to 2010/11, and the number of completions by participants.

[37] Corrections Victoria delivered the Marumali Program to 200 non-Aboriginal staff members in 2012.

Table 7c: Koori Cognitive Skills Program – programs delivered and number of completions

Year	Corrections Victoria prisons and correctional centres		Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place	
	Number of programs delivered	Number of completions	Number of programs delivered	Number of completions
2006/07	3	17	-	-
2007/08	Nil	Nil	1	9
2008/09	1	11	-	-
2009/10	3	23	1	8
2010/11	5	41	1	11

In 2011/12, Corrections Victoria commenced delivering the Koori Cognitive Skills Program in Community Corrections Services.[38] In that year, the program was delivered six times – three times in prisons and correctional centres and three times in Community Corrections Services – with a total of 52 participants completing the program. The program was also run once in the same year at Wulgunggo Ngalu, with seven participants completing the program.

7.2 Program logic

The following table shows the 'program logic' for the three programs. This was developed together with Corrections Victoria representatives to show the connection between the inputs into the individual programs, outputs from the programs, and expected changes in the medium term (outcomes) and longer term (impacts).

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program			
Indigenous facilitators Aboriginal wellbeing/liaison officers	Completion of intensive week-long (five full day) cultural immersion program for Aboriginal prisoners and offenders in Corrections Victoria prisons and correctional centres, Wulgunggo Ngalu and more recently in Community Corrections Services	Increased knowledge of connections to culture by Aboriginal prisoners and offenders Participants have greater confidence to participate and actively engage in offence specific programs in prison and post release	Improved emotional and spiritual wellbeing of offenders Improved coping skills to self-manage behaviour in prison Reduced reoffending More participants utilising and completing offence specific programs

[38] These programs were delivered under the sentence reform budget.

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Marumali Program			
Indigenous facilitators Aboriginal Wellbeing/Liaison Officers	Completion of five-day program focusing on healing longstanding trauma and loss associated with stolen generations issues and loss of identity for Indigenous prisoners and offenders in Corrections Victoria prisons and correctional centres and more recently at Wulgunggo Ngalu	Participants develop strategies for dealing with trauma associated with removal practices in a variety of settings (stolen generations, foster care, adoption) Participants increase their knowledge and skills, and experience of healing and self-determination Participants increase their ability to discuss and explore sensitive issues in their personal and family functioning (parenting, education, health, employability, respect and relationships)	Participants exercise more control over the healing process and its pace, direction and outcome Improved basic family functioning in areas of parenting, education, health, employment and relationships Greater understanding of the impact of offending and incarceration on family members and others Reduced reoffending
Koori Cognitive Skills Program			
Clinical and correctional services staff Elder/respected person co-facilitators Aboriginal Wellbeing/Liaison Officers	Adaption of cognitive behavioural therapy program for Aboriginal prisoners and offenders in Corrections Victoria prisons and correctional centres, Wulgunggo Ngalu and more recently in Community Corrections Services	Participants develop more self-awareness and insight into the drivers of their offending behaviour Participants develop skills and strategies for problem-solving Increased uptake and completion of further treatment programs and services	Participants apply more behavioural insight and skills and avoid offending behaviour Reduced reoffending

7.3 Methodology

The evaluation framework and methodology are outlined in Chapter 3, where key themes were identified which typify good practice in the Offender Support and Reintegration area. These serve as a reference point for analysis against the good practice themes (see 7.4 below). These themes also provide a tool for assessing the program's initiatives on a scale from 'excellent to very good practice' to 'adequate practice' or 'poor practice' (see 7.5 below).[39] Evidence for the evaluation of the Corrections Victoria programs was gathered through analysis of documentation and data, and through

[39] The evaluation of Victorian programs required ethics approval from the Department of Justice Victoria, Justice Human Research Ethics Committee (JHREC). The JHREC granted approval on 26 October 2011 (Ref: CF/11/18137).

interviews and consultations. Finally, based on the evidence gained, key lessons were identified (see 7.6 below).

Documentation and data analysed	The literature on offender support and reintegration. Corrections Victoria policy and program documentation. Program records in relation to monitoring data and program performance measures. Limitations in data recording processes and issues associated with small sample sizes precluded the conduct of a recidivism analysis as well as the measurement of key program aims.[40]
Interviews and consultations conducted	A site visit to Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place on 28 March 2012. Consultation during a meeting on 12 April 2012 with: Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers; Aboriginal Liaison Officers; Community Corrections Services (CCS) staff, including Indigenous Leading Community Corrections Services Officers; Indigenous and Diversity Unit, Targeted Programs Branch, Offender Management Division personnel. Consultations conducted during a site visit to the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and the Metropolitan Remand Centre on 1–2 May 2012 with: Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers; program participants. Consultations conducted during a visit to Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place and Fulham Correctional Centre on 8–10 May 2012 with: Aboriginal Wellbeing Officer; program developers and facilitators; community Elder (facilitator); program participants; Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place Manager. Telephone interviews with: Senior Psychologist (program facilitator); Program Developer and Facilitator; Offender Development Manager; Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place Programs Manager; Indigenous and Diversity Unit, Targeted Programs Branch, Offender Management Division personnel; Corrections Victoria Research and Evaluation personnel.

[40] Further detail about the appropriateness and efficacy of program-related monitoring and evaluation data is discussed at 7.4 below.

7.4 Findings in relation to the good practice themes

The following is an assessment of the programs against the attributes of good practice identified in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework as outlined in Table 3a in Chapter 3. The themes are grouped according to three components: 'What is a good intervention', 'What is a good model?' and 'What is a well managed and delivered program?'

What is a good intervention?

Theme 1: Focusing on crime prevention and aiming to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system

The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and the Marumali Program are focused on preparing Aboriginal offenders for participation and engagement in offence-specific programs and services in prison and post release. In keeping with Corrections Victoria's guiding principles of Aboriginal-specific programming, they are intended to provide a gateway to other services. The literature indicates that one barrier to the rehabilitation of Indigenous offenders is that many either do not participate in treatment or are less likely to complete interventions (Jones et al., 2002; Day, 2003; Howells et al., 2004). Interventions that are preparatory or motivational can be used to provide an introduction to group-based therapy, improve awareness of problems and increase motivation to change behaviour (Heseltine et al., 2011). These interventions have been found to increase readiness to participate in treatment and to improve program completion rates (Day, Casey, Ward, Howells & Vess, 2010).

In aiming to prepare Aboriginal prisoners for further offending behaviour programs, these two programs demonstrate an understanding of the multilayered and complex nature of Aboriginal offender needs and consider the unique sociohistorical experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, identified in the literature as necessary for effective correctional programming for Indigenous offenders (Jones et al. 2002; Howells et al. 2004; Willis & Moore 2008).

As the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and the Marumali Program are intended as gateway programs, it is appropriate to consider the extent to which they facilitate participation in other custodial and community-based programs as indicators of program outcomes. Feedback from stakeholders and program participants indicated that these programs prepare Aboriginal prisoners for and encourage participation in other behavioural and offence-specific treatment programs by introducing participants to the idea of group work and increasing their confidence in their capacity to build skills and make changes. Participant and stakeholder feedback indicated that these programs predominantly achieve this through providing appropriate cultural support that contributes to feelings of empowerment, instilling cultural pride, improving cultural identity, promoting respect, and enhancing a sense of community responsibility. Data in relation to program completion lends further support to indications in the qualitative evidence that participants are very engaged with the programs. Participation in all cultural programs is voluntary, and completion rates for both these programs are high. However, under

the current data management system, Corrections Victoria does not have the capacity to track and monitor individuals' program participation centrally in order to measure outcomes in terms of facilitating participation in other behavioural and offence-specific custodial and community-based programs.[41] As a result, it is not possible to accurately measure the programs' success in terms of achieving this central program outcome.

Under the new model for Aboriginal programming that Corrections Victoria is implementing in 2013 (outlined in Theme 10 below), the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and the Marumali Program will continue to be foundation programs for behaviour and offence-specific treatment programs, and to be an acknowledgement of the perceived strengths of the programs and an indication that they are seen as key foundation programs and successful in acting as a gateway into other, more targeted programs.

The Koori Cognitive Skills program is a problem-solving program that is based on CBT. In addition to problem-solving skills, it is designed to teach participants self-management skills, social interaction and values, and to encourage participants to practise applying these skills in everyday life problems, including those related to offending behaviour. The program was intended for moderate- to high-risk offenders and is delivered prior to offence-specific programs, as it is considered to provide a strong foundation for further treatment. The program aims to equip prisoners with a set of practical problem-solving skills to enhance their capacity to deal with everyday problems more effectively. The literature indicates that cognitive skills training, or programs that employ CBT methods to improve decision-making, interpersonal problem-solving and moral reasoning, have become a core feature of offender rehabilitation (Heseltine et al. 2011). Findings indicate that interventions with particular characteristics may be more effective for reducing reoffending. Interventions that are highly structured, focus on developing skills and use behavioural or cognitive behaviour methods appear the most effective for reducing reoffending (MacKenzie, 2000). There is some debate around rates of reoffending, but some conclude that generally it would appear that the studies indicate that cognitive skills program completion is associated with a reduction in recidivism one year following release, but may not be maintained over a longer period (Heseltine et al. 2011).

Participants are identified as suitable to participate in the program by clinical services and are referred to the program following an assessment by clinical services. Participation in the Koori Cognitive Skills Program is voluntary; however, completion rates were found to be generally high for this program as well. Although data in relation to completion rates for all the Koori Cognitive Skills Programs run in Victorian prisons over the past five years was not available, the available information indicated a completion rate of 80–85%, with variations across prison locations. It should be noted that, due to small participant numbers, this rate generally meant that one participant per program did not complete.

[41] As noted earlier, it is understood that Corrections Victoria is currently in the process of contracting a provider for the development of a comprehensive programs database. The capability of Corrections Victoria to monitor and track program participation is expected to be improved through this programs database.

However, stakeholder feedback indicated that there are challenges associated with delivering the Koori Cognitive Skills Program. In particular, the length of the program (60 hours usually run over 8 to 16 weeks) means that external factors, such as release on parole, completion of sentence, or transfer to another facility which leaves them unsuitable for participation in the program, impact on the ability of prisoners to complete the program. These issues are discussed further in Theme 10 below.

The finding of reliable and robust data was attempted so as to undertake an analysis of recidivism outcomes for the Koori Cognitive Skills Program. However, it was not available, as a result of the small participant numbers, compounded by the requirement to have a full two-year period post release from custody further reducing the sample size, as well as limitations in the way records were kept and in the Corrections Victoria offender data system, which does not record program participation as part of a consolidated data recording process. Data limitations also precluded measurement of the extent to which Koori Cognitive Skills Program participants went on to complete further treatment programs. The evaluation also identified limitations in terms of evaluating the results of participant testing undertaken as part of the program. These limitations are discussed further in Theme 4 below. Although also intended as a foundation program for further treatment, given the CBT focus of the program, there is potential for the Koori Cognitive Skills Program to directly contribute to a reduction in recidivism. Corrections Victoria has proposed amendments to the delivery of offending behaviour programs to Aboriginal offenders which will impact on the delivery of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program. These proposed changes are outlined in Theme 10 below.

The three programs are intended either as preparatory programs for Aboriginal prisoners to participate and engage in offending behaviour programs or as programs designed to teach participants skills such as problem-solving. Rather than measuring programs against the longest term impact of reduced recidivism, ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should focus on indicators that are more closely linked with program intent, in particular the extent to which program participants engage in and complete offending behaviour treatment programs. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods, such as the use of case studies or other qualitative techniques, should be applied when measuring immediate and medium-term impacts.

What is a good model?

Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap

Consistent with the literature, the AJA2 noted that Aboriginal prisoners are less likely to access mainstream rehabilitation programs compared with other Victorians, indicating a need for Aboriginal-specific programs in prisons (Victoria Department of Justice, 2006). This is supported by the feedback provided by program participants and Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers that indicates that Aboriginal prisoners are generally unlikely to participate in most programs but were eager to participate in the cultural programs that are the subject of this evaluation.

In addition to Indigenous offenders being less likely to enter mainstream programs, the literature also indicates that they are less likely to complete mainstream programs, more likely to have difficulty relating to mainstream program content, and generally more likely to reoffend on release from prison (Howells et al. 2004; Atkinson & Jones 2005; Jones et al. 2002). The literature also suggests that mainstream correctional rehabilitation programs generally result in poorer outcomes for Indigenous offenders as compared to non-Indigenous offenders, and that outcomes for Indigenous prisoners improve when culturally appropriate programs are offered (Howells et al. 2004; Atkinson & Jones 2005; Jones et al. 2002). Feedback from the evaluation indicates that the program content, and the fact that the programs are solely for Aboriginal prisoners, encourages participation and completion. This was also reflected in stakeholder feedback indicating that Aboriginal prisoners will not engage in or are very withdrawn during mainstream programs if they do participate, which is very different from the openness that is generally seen in Aboriginal-specific programs. Due to data limitations mentioned previously, it was not possible to extract information based on Aboriginal status in relation to participation in mainstream Victorian prison programs, or to gain an understanding of the extent to which Aboriginal prisoners participate in and complete mainstream treatment programs.

Feedback provided during the evaluation indicated that, in terms of meeting the needs of Aboriginal prisoners, the programs were felt to adequately cater to prisoners with limited English literacy skills, an area that mainstream programs were identified as unable to address, partly due to the fact of non-disclosure on the part of participants experiencing these difficulties. It was also reported that in instances where difficulties arose, mainly in relation to the completion of the workbook for the Koori Cognitive Skills Program, fellow prisoners would assist those who were struggling to complete the work, adding to the sense of community and bolstering a sense of self-worth in the prisoner assisting. The use of learning techniques such as role play, DVDs and group artistic collaboration were also seen by those interviewed to be an appropriate way to deliver information and encourage participation and engagement with program content.

Programming in relation to delivery of the Aboriginal-specific programs in Corrections Victoria prisons is undertaken in consultation with the Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and program managers in the prisons, prioritising against other mandated programs that address offending behaviour. Decisions in relation to where the programs will be run in each financial year are made against locations need and prisoner numbers within an allocated budget. While the programs address a need for culturally relevant programs, the number of Victorian prisons and the number of Aboriginal prisoners in Victoria suggests that the programs are not run frequently enough across the correctional facilities to afford all Aboriginal prisoners who wish to an opportunity to participate in the programs (Department of Justice, 2010). For example, from 2006/07 to 2010/11, each of the programs was delivered two to five times per year, servicing 12 correctional facilities.[42] The perception that programs were not run frequently

[42] From 2005/06 to 2009/10, the number of prisoners per year who identified as Aboriginal on reception ranged from 215 to 290 (Department of Justice, 2010).

enough was certainly articulated in the interviews conducted. Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers reported a need for Aboriginal prisoners to frequently participate in programs in order to ensure continued engagement and provide opportunity to deconstruct behaviour and build skills. This suggests that if funding was available there are opportunities to increase the number of Aboriginal-specific programs delivered.

Difficulties in running the Koori Cognitive Skills Program in general (discussed in Theme 10 below) are compounded in the Metropolitan Remand Centre on account of the prisoners not being in custody for an appropriate length of time to complete the program, hence leaving a gap in terms of behavioural change programs among this cohort. This suggests an opportunity to provide a condensed Koori Cognitive Skills Program for prisoners on remand.

Feedback from facilitators, Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and participants reflected a feeling that Aboriginal offender needs cannot be addressed by prison programs alone, which are unable to solve the many issues associated with reintegration. A need for more programs and services to support reintegration was articulated. For example, access to services in relation to finding accommodation post release, assistance filling in forms and accessing Centrelink, more opportunities for culturally relevant and appropriate workplace qualifications and training, assistance with gaining employment on release from prison, and assistance with basic life skills were all identified. The need for programs to maintain the knowledge, skills and outcomes of prison-based programs post release was highlighted. Concerns were also articulated that in some areas Aboriginal community organisations do not have the capacity or the resources to provide the level of support required, and that community and family issues can create barriers to offenders accessing available support post release. Stakeholders also reported a need for further prison-based Aboriginal programs to support and build on the outcomes achieved in the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, the Marumali Program and the Koori Cognitive Skills Program as follows:

- More targeted and Aboriginal-specific education programs (particularly literacy and numeracy programs)
- Aboriginal-specific parenting skills programs
- More focused Aboriginal-specific relationships and family violence programs (both in custody and in the community)
- Aboriginal-specific alcohol and other drug programs.

The evaluation found that the Aboriginal-specific programs delivered by Corrections Victoria fulfil a need for culturally relevant corrections programs for Aboriginal offenders. However, the evaluation indicated that the programs are not run frequently enough to include all Aboriginal prisoners who may want to participate. It is unclear how well the planned amendments, commencing in 2013, which will

provide a culturally specific 'wraparound' to program delivery for Aboriginal offenders, will meet the needs of Aboriginal prisoners.

Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation

All three of these programs have a clear focus on Aboriginal culture and operate within a cultural framework with a strong emphasis on culture and history. In particular, the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program are specifically designed to increase participants' understanding of their culture and the historical, cultural and social factors that have affected and affect the lives of Aboriginal people both historically and now.

All three programs were either designed by, or with input from, Aboriginal community members. As detailed above, the Marumali Program was designed by Lorraine Peeters as a response to her own experiences as a stolen generations survivor. The current Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program was developed by Wanda Braybrook and Kelly Faldon (Kellawan Pty Ltd), two Aboriginal women with over 20 years' experience in the Aboriginal community sector.

The Koori Cognitive Skills Program is an adaptation of a mainstream cognitive skills program. An Aboriginal registered psychologist undertook the adaptation of the mainstream program in collaboration with a male Elder and a female Elder to ensure the model met community standards of cultural integrity (Atkinson & Jones, 2005). Aboriginal community members were consulted as part of the adaptation process. The mainstream cognitive skills program manuals (for males and females) were reviewed in their entirety and a wide range of adaptations were made, including beginning the first session with a group discussion of the Tindale map[43] and displaying the map in subsequent sessions, commencing sessions with a talking circle, displaying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in each session, and integrating traditional or gender-relevant cultural activity.

The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program are facilitated by Aboriginal facilitators. Guest Aboriginal community members, including community Elders, Aboriginal artists, musicians and sportspeople, also attend the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program. The Koori Cognitive Skills Program is co-facilitated by Aboriginal facilitators (community Elders) and Corrections Victoria or private correctional facility (private prison) psychologists.

The literature notes that having programs delivered by people with experience and expertise in Indigenous culture is a central element of providing culturally specific programs, and the importance of employing Indigenous facilitators to provide programs to Indigenous offenders is emphasised in evaluations of Indigenous programs (Willis & Moore 2008; Trevethan et al. 2005). It is clear from the feedback from participants and Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers that the Aboriginal facilitators are key to the success of the programs and, along with program content, are what participants feel make the

[43] Norman Tindale's map of Aboriginal group boundaries at the time of European contact, published in 1974.

programs particularly relevant. The evaluation feedback consistently indicated that employing Aboriginal facilitators and co-facilitators builds the trust of program participants, and the shared learning experience with facilitators develops relationships of mutual respect which break down barriers and encourage involvement and engagement. The feedback also indicated the inclusion of guest community members in the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program serves to heighten participant engagement, and facilitators and guest community members were often seen as role models by program participants.

The literature indicates that there is international research suggesting that cultural content is critical to the success of Indigenous correctional programming (Willis & Moore 2008). It is suggested that correctional programs for Indigenous offenders need to address acculturation stress and the loss of cultural knowledge and connections, separation from land, family and culture, loss of identity and racial discrimination (Jones et al. 2002). The content of the programs is underpinned by an understanding of the unique historical and social issues facing Aboriginal prisoners. The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program are clearly focused on connecting Aboriginal offenders with their culture by increasing their awareness of history and events and assisting them to strengthen their identity. The Marumali Program also focuses on healing longstanding trauma and loss associated with stolen generations issues, such as the enforced removal of children from families. The programs build the confidence of Aboriginal offenders to re-examine their responsibilities to self, others and the community.

The qualitative evidence suggests that participants felt a strong identification with and appreciation for the content of the programs, which was considered to be engaging and empowering. It was also apparent that program participants felt safe and supported in the group environment with Aboriginal peers and Aboriginal facilitators, which encouraged them to share their experiences and the challenges of being an Aboriginal person, and promoted a feeling that they are not alone in facing some of the issues they face, while also learning from the experiences of others. Feedback indicated that the week-long format of both the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and the Marumali Program was a strength as it provides an opportunity for bonds to form between program participants and facilitators, creating a sense of being part of a community for the length of the program. Further, participants are likely to be in custody for the duration of the programs. It was also felt that the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program provide a secure space for those prisoners who are less connected with their culture to learn about Aboriginal culture and what it means to be an Aboriginal man or woman in a non-confronting way and in an environment that celebrates Aboriginal cultural identity. The fact that the Corrections Victoria cultural programs are delivered in a dedicated Aboriginal space within the prisons enhances feelings of security and community.

The inclusion of artistic activities such as painting, craft and music in the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and the Koori Cognitive Skills Program supports the identification and promotion of these

skills in Aboriginal prisoners, reportedly increasing their sense of self-worth and self-respect and often uncovering hidden talents.

Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent

The findings regarding program outcomes are largely based on feedback provided from stakeholders and program participants during interviews, as well as participant feedback forms completed following program participation. The overall feedback indicates that program participants are experiencing positive personal outcomes as a result of their participation in the programs. As outlined in Theme 1 above and discussed further in Theme 8 below, limitations in the current Corrections Victoria data management system as well as small participant numbers precluded a quantitative data analysis in relation to program outcomes.

In aiming to equip Aboriginal prisoners with improved cultural knowledge, the programs endeavour to encourage a stronger cultural identity and awareness of responsibility to family, community and self among program participants. Qualitative feedback indicated a strong appreciation for the cultural learning the programs afforded, and participants greatly appreciated the opportunity to learn about their own and their peers' backgrounds. The group environment was felt to strengthen a sense of community among participants.

Feedback suggests that participants experience a sense of identity, pride and belonging and increased confidence and self-belief from participating in the programs. Improved communication and problem-solving skills, a sense of respect, patience and coping strategies were also cited, and the programs were generally felt to be empowering. According to the feedback, providing participants with an understanding of their own family and cultural histories has led to instances of reconnection with family, and examples of individuals writing letters to family members as a result of having gained an understanding of their family member's own life experiences were cited. From a participant perspective, the programs were felt to provide support that contributes to feelings of empowerment, and the programs have been successful in terms of instilling cultural pride, improving cultural identity, promoting respect, and increasing a sense of community responsibility. This qualitative feedback is supported by the high program completion rates.

Stakeholders and program participants reported that participating in the cultural programs led to increased confidence to participate in other offender programs and prepared them to interact in a program environment. There was also a sense that the shared learning experience among program participants and clinical staff helped to break down barriers and encouraged Aboriginal prisoners to access and engage with clinical staff for support. These outcomes appear to be sustainable to the extent that prisoners consulted who had done the programs on previous occasions had a strong recollection of the program content and the impact that participating in the program had on them. Also, there is evidence of participating in the programs on more than one occasion, consolidating the outcomes each time. However, as outlined in Theme 1 above, under the current data management

system Corrections Victoria does not have the capacity to track and monitor individuals' program participation centrally to measure outcomes in terms of facilitating participation in other behavioural and offence-specific custodial and community-based programs, precluding any assessment of outcomes in terms of facilitating participation in offence-specific treatment programs.

As noted above, the Koori Cognitive Skills Program is a problem-solving program that is also designed to teach participants self-management skills, social interaction and values, and encourages participants to practice applying the skills learnt to everyday life problems, including those related to offending behaviour. It was intended to be delivered prior to offence-specific programs to provide a foundation for further treatment. The evaluation of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program in 2005 found that applying Heppner's Problem Soling Inventory (PSI), which was used as a pre-and post-program psychometric tool to assess participants' acquisition of the skills taught in the program, was not an appropriate instrument for use with an Aboriginal prisoner population (Atkinson & Jones, 2005). The evaluation recommended that a reliable pre- and post-program measure be identified to enable an independent assessment of the skills acquired by participants. It is understood that the psychometric test applied as part of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program has been amended since the time of the evaluation of the pilot. It is understood that the revised tool is applied to all cognitive skills programs delivered by Corrections Victoria and has not been specifically designed for Aboriginal prisoners. The evaluation found no evidence that the results of these tests, which are held in the Corrections Victoria clinical health files, are de-identified and aggregated to monitor program outcomes, particularly in relation to motivation and skills acquisition as a result of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program; therefore, these results were not analysed as part of this evaluation. As a result, although there is important and valuable qualitative feedback that participants do strive to apply the problem-solving skills taught in the program, there is no independent measure of the impact the program has had on the development of skills. Monitoring of program outcomes could be enhanced if the results of these tests were de-identified and aggregated to provide an indication of the extent to which the program is achieving outcomes in terms of the development of skills. In assessing the success of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program, qualitative methods should also be applied to provide a more accurate picture of program outcomes and inform decisions about program modifications. This will potentially mitigate any issues associated with applying this kind of tool (as identified in the Atkinson and Jones evaluation) and provide an alternative avenue for validating results. As noted above, data limitations also preclude any analysis of the contribution of the program to reducing reoffending, or participating in further offence-specific treatment programs.

At a community level, there was a feeling among community stakeholders that these programs are an investment in social capital for Aboriginal communities. Examples were provided of prisoners wanting to become spokespeople for their community post release so they can educate young Aboriginal people about not following the same path as them. Some participants indicated a desire to fulfil this role in their community and to contribute to the community by turning their negative experiences into

positives. These participants indicated that these feelings were inspired by participation in the cultural programs.

The Koori Cognitive Skills Program supported building community skills and capacity to the extent that Elders were trained as co-facilitators. However, difficulties associated with putting a group together, due to timing and the length of the program, meant that some of the Elders who were trained did not have an opportunity to facilitate the program.

The evaluation found that the programs are achieving some positive client outcomes, and in terms of the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and the Marumali Program these are well captured qualitatively through participant evaluation forms. However, significant opportunities exist to better measure outcomes in terms of the programs' capacity to facilitate participation in mainstream offending behaviour and treatment programs, and in the case of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program in terms of specific outcomes relating to skills acquisition.

Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement

As noted above, all three programs have been designed and implemented with the input of Aboriginal community members and clearly acknowledge the impact of culture on program design and delivery. The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program are delivered by Aboriginal facilitators, and the Koori Cognitive Skills program is co-facilitated by trained Aboriginal Elders. Guest speakers from the Aboriginal community are also involved in the delivery of the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, indicating an inclusive community approach to responding to Aboriginal prisoner needs.

The AJA highlights the importance of Aboriginal community participation in the development, ownership and implementation of interventions for Aboriginal offenders. Having been implemented as part of the AJA and AJA2, these three programs are delivered within a framework based on partnership agreements between the Victorian Government justice agencies and Aboriginal communities. As a result of these partnerships, mechanisms exist that require Corrections Victoria to consult with and inform the Aboriginal community about program delivery to the Aboriginal prisoner population, via the Aboriginal Justice Forum and Victorian Koori Caucus.

At the agency level, an inclusive approach to addressing the needs of Aboriginal prisoners and staff is also adopted. The Indigenous and Diversity Unit, Targeted Programs Branch, of Corrections Victoria holds regular staff meetings, attended by the manager and staff of the Indigenous Diversity Unit, Targeted Programs Branch, Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers, Aboriginal Liaison Officers, Indigenous Leading Community Corrections Officers and Indigenous Community Corrections officers to discuss cultural programming and meeting the needs of Aboriginal prisoners and supporting the workers in their roles. The General Manager, Targeted Programs Branch, also attends as required.

Corrections Victoria also facilitates the running of a weekly men's group in the cultural centres in the prisons, providing a forum for Aboriginal male prisoners to debrief about program participation and discuss issues, concerns and experiences. One example of an outcome of these discussions is that Corrections Victoria is looking to introduce 'support days' as part of the delivery of the Marumali Program in response to concerns raised by Aboriginal prisoners in relation to the intensity of the program; this would involve further debriefing with program facilitators following program participation. Although there is an effort to run a similar group fortnightly at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre for female prisoners, it was reported that greater effort needs to be made to promote this forum and encourage women to engage and participate. One difficulty cited in this regard was the transient nature of the female Aboriginal prison population. Opportunities exist, however, to engage female prisoners at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre in a weekly women's group.

In relation to gender inclusivity, these three programs have all been delivered at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. The content of the programs is adapted to meet the needs of female participants and the programs are facilitated by women. There was a perception in some of the feedback that there is a lack of sufficient programming for female prisoners and that male prisoners tend to be the focus of program planning. Data in relation to the Aboriginal prison population in Victoria indicates that between July 2005 and June 2010 the female Aboriginal prisoner population was between 6.1% and 9.3% of the total Aboriginal prison population in Victoria (Department of Justice, 2010). Funding constraints limit the numbers of cultural programs that are delivered in Victoria in any one year, and, as noted above, the programs are not run frequently enough to ensure that all Aboriginal prisoners have an opportunity to participate in the cultural programs. As a result, due to the low numbers of Aboriginal female prisoners, there have been years in which no cultural programs have been run at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre; this appears to be a symptom of inadequate funding rather than inattention to the needs of female prisoners.

The information obtained throughout the interviews suggested that these programs respond to changing participant needs and are also adaptable to the needs of the varying ages of participants. Indeed, feedback from male participants and Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers indicated that the older prisoners see they have a role in encouraging younger members of the group to learn about culture and to equip themselves to make better decisions in the future. This sense of supporting differing needs within the group environment was also supported by the response of participants in assisting fellow participants who may be struggling with bookwork involved in the program.

Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration

The importance of a holistic approach to Aboriginal prisoner support and reintegration was clearly reflected in the feedback from facilitators, Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and program participants, who strongly believe in the link between access to programs and services post release, and diversion from crime and alcohol and substance misuse. Without adequate follow-up and throughcare, it was felt that

Aboriginal offenders often 'slip through the cracks', particularly when they experience a lack of community and familial support structures resulting from high levels of family dysfunction, substance misuse, removal from family and socioeconomic disadvantage. Stakeholders and program participants expressed a need to be able to access and build on the cultural learning, increased confidence and problem-solving tools achieved in the programs through further correctional and community-based programs.

As foundation or gateway programs delivered by external service providers in custody[44] over a week, the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program are limited in the extent to which they can achieve any level of service linkage. That said, the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program facilitators have the skills and experience to refer Aboriginal offenders to other programs and services to address their needs, both in custody (through the Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers) and post release. The evaluation feedback indicates that the facilitators have strong networks among community organisations in Victoria and are able to channel people to appropriate services. Similarly, informal mechanisms of linking prisoners with support through Elder involvement in the Koori Cognitive Skills Program as co-facilitators or in the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program as guest speakers were also reported. Prison management have been known to call on Elders to assist with issues facing Aboriginal prisoners, and there are numerous examples of Elders providing post-release support.

As outlined above, avenues for service coordination and collaboration through the programs exists on an informal and ad-hoc basis. Opportunities exist for Corrections Victoria to tap into the positive outcomes achieved through the programs to connect prisoners with community supports pre and post release and to assist in identifying support networks to provide a more holistic and integrated response to the reintegration needs of Aboriginal prisoners. Opportunities also exist to create better links with the Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (see Chapter 6) to link offenders with community-based support if released on parole.

Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders

As these three programs are predominantly delivered in a custodial setting, advocacy and systems reform is not a key focus, and as a result the programs are limited in their capacity to advocate for systems reform and improve relationships between Aboriginal communities and justice agencies. The programs' main contribution to advocacy is to raise the profile of issues facing Aboriginal prisoners in local Aboriginal communities, via guest speaker community members and facilitators, and within the correctional facilities themselves, via non-Aboriginal prison and clinical staff involved in the programs.

[44] At the time of the evaluation, the programs were only delivered in Corrections Victoria prisons and correctional centres and at Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place, a voluntary residential program for Aboriginal men undertaking Community Corrections Orders. Under the new model of program delivery to be implemented in 2013, the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and the Marumali Program will also be delivered in Community Correctional Services.

In particular, there is qualitative evidence of improved cultural awareness and understanding among prison staff, especially clinical staff involved in the facilitation of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program, as a result of the shared learning experiences the program provides. It was also reported that prison management, including senior management, are supportive of the programs and that this positive endorsement tends to filter through the correctional facility. This is further supported by reports that, in some of the prisons and correctional facilities, prison management is considering providing funding for additional courses of the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, the Marumali Program or the Koori Cognitive Skills Program to be delivered beyond those centrally funded by Corrections Victoria.

The literature highlights the importance of cross-cultural training in reducing the likelihood of discrimination in Australian correctional institutions (Jones et al. 2002). To this end, Corrections Victoria prison officers and clinical staff undertake Aboriginal cultural awareness training as part of their induction training, and many complete a one- or two-day version of the Marumali Program specifically designed for non-Aboriginal workers. Clinical staff who facilitate the Koori Cognitive Skills Program undergo further cultural awareness training prior to delivering the program. Feedback from non-Aboriginal staff who participated in this training indicated that the Marumali Program had a profound impact on the way they view and approach their work with Aboriginal prisoners. This indicates that programs, though not being focused on this matter, have made some contribution to advocacy and systems reform within Corrections Victoria facilities.

What is a well managed and delivered program?

Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes

The delivery of these three Corrections Victoria cultural programs is centrally coordinated through the efforts of the Indigenous and Diversity Unit, Targeted Programs Branch, a team of dedicated Aboriginal staff committed to servicing the needs of Aboriginal prisoners. The branch consists of the manager and two program officers. The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program are delivered by external providers. The same providers have been delivering the programs in Corrections Victoria facilities since the program models were adopted, and to that extent there has been a continuity of delivery across the lifespan of the programs.

The service agreement with Corrections Victoria requires the deliverers of the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program to provide an evaluation report following delivery of every program. These reports are based on feedback provided by participants in evaluation forms prior to and following completion of the program and on the facilitators' experiences of delivering the program. The reports and feedback from facilitators indicate that evaluation forms are almost always completed by participants. The evaluation reports include a summary of participant feedback and details of individual responses, participant numbers at the commencement and conclusion of the program and the reasons for any differences between them, information on whether any participants had previously completed the program and when, and highlighting of any issues encountered in the delivery of the

program that may assist in planning future programs. It is clear that the program facilitators are conscious of the feedback and are committed to addressing any issues that may arise from the reports in order to support continuous program improvement.

Beyond the qualitative feedback of participants recorded in the external service provider reports, as well as the qualitative feedback from Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers shared during staff meetings and fed back to the Targeted Programs Branch, no further performance monitoring and evaluation data is collected by Corrections Victoria for these programs. Furthermore, there is no central monitoring or evaluation of aggregated data relating to the results of psychometric testing conducted as part of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program to measure outcomes in terms of skills acquisition as a result of this program.

Currently, while the Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers maintain records of program participants, participation in the programs is not centrally recorded on the Corrections Victoria data system or linked to the prisoner's e-justice identifier, and as a result Corrections Victoria does not have a centralised record of program participation. Similarly, it is not possible to extract information from the Corrections Victoria data system based on Aboriginal status in terms of participation in mainstream programs. As program participation is not recorded through a centralised data system, there is no tracking of participation in other programs obtainable under the current data arrangements and therefore no monitoring of program outcomes is conducted in this regard. Data limitations also preclude a reliable analysis of reoffending data.

All three programs are reportedly well regarded by the general managers of the various prisons and correctional centres. This support and familiarity with the programs reportedly minimises challenges associated with program planning and scheduling.

Overall, the evaluation highlighted a need for a greater focus on monitoring and evaluation encompassing a range of program performance areas, including referral and access to other programs and services, educational approaches used, and appropriate independent measurement of motivation built or skills attained in the case of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program. In relation to this, it is understood that Corrections Victoria is proposing a change to its offender data systems to allow access to more complete offender data in both the custodial corrections system and CCS, including data on program participation, to make it possible to track offenders' participation in other programs, both in custody and in a community setting. Corrections Victoria will need to ensure that any updated data system is linked to the central e-justice data system and that a consistent offender identifier is used across all justice agencies to ensure longer term impacts such as a reduction in reoffending can easily be measured and analysed. Resources would also need to be committed to ensuring that the Targeted Programs Branch has the capacity to appropriately monitor and evaluate program outcomes to ensure that the needs of Aboriginal prisoners are met through continued program improvement.

Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent

In their current format, all three programs are initiatives of the AJA2, a framework which provides a clear articulation of the programs' intent. The programs fall under Objective 3 of the AJA2, 'Reduce reoffending', as part of Strategy 3.2, 'Address characteristics that put offenders at high risk of reoffending'. The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program form part of AJA2 Activity 3.2.1, 'Increase the cultural strength of Koori offenders', and the Koori Cognitive Skills Program forms part of AJA2 Activity 3.2.3, 'Develop and deliver Koori-specific offending behaviour programs'.

The service agreements between Corrections Victoria and the private service providers of the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program outline the principles that apply to all Aboriginal programs implemented by Corrections Victoria as well as the specific aims and objectives of the individual programs, as outlined earlier. The aims and objectives of the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program, as detailed in the service agreements, reflect the intent of the programs and are realistic in scope. The service agreements also outline the subject content for the programs. The Koori Cognitive Skills Program has a program manual for male and female prisoners that outlines the program content session by session. In addition, a document detailing the schedule for all cultural programs delivered by Corrections Victoria and outlining the program content is distributed to programs managers, Aboriginal Wellbeing Officers and Aboriginal Liaison Officers at the prisons.

Feedback from program personnel and prison staff indicated that the programs are generally well understood and accepted. At some of the prisons visited as part of the evaluation, there was some suggestion of a willingness to fund additional programs through the prison budget, rather than through the Indigenous Programs Unit of Corrections Victoria, in order to increase the frequency of the programs.

Theme 10: Sustainability of the program/s over time

These three programs are funded by Corrections Victoria as part of its core business, but funding is not ongoing and the programs are run only when funding permits. Under the current budget, Corrections Victoria has committed to funding Aboriginal programs in prisons, providing a funding allocation of $152,000 per annum.[45] The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program are intended as a gateway to further offender rehabilitation program participation. Under planned amendments to program planning and delivery for Aboriginal offenders in custodial and community settings, due to commence in 2013, these two programs will continue to serve as

[45] Corrections Victoria has committed an additional $100,000 per annum as part of the sentencing reform budget to deliver cultural programs in community corrections. There is also a budget allocation of $75,000 for the Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place to schedule cultural wellbeing programs.

foundation programs that assist Aboriginal offenders in accessing more targeted offender behaviour programs.

However, concerns do arise over the sustainability of the Marumali Program as this is a licensed program delivered by a private provider that may choose not to, or become unable to, continue delivering the program. Similarly, as the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program was redeveloped by and is delivered by external providers, Corrections Victoria would need to ensure that appropriate facilitators were retained or trained to continue delivering the program, should the external facilitators become unable or unwilling to continue program delivery. It is also worth noting that the Aboriginal community members and Elders involved in delivering the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and the Koori Cognitive Skills Program, either as co-facilitators or guest speakers, are reported to go above and beyond in terms of their commitment to Aboriginal prisoners, a situation that may not be sustainable long term.

The following were identified during evaluation feedback as issues impacting on the sustainability of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program:

- The length of the program (8 to 16 weeks) made it difficult to ensure appropriate participant numbers were available to run the program (i.e. having the same group of prisoners in the same prison for that length of time) and associated issues with planning the program beyond maximum security prisons. Stakeholders indicated that they felt the program should be run more intensively over a shorter period of time.
- Difficulties in finding suitable community Elders to train as co-facilitators in all locations where Victorian prisons are located.
- The need to have facilitators run the program soon after being trained and the practicalities of achieving that.
- The difficulty of finding available community Elders who are in a position to make the required time commitment to co-facilitate the program.

Corrections Victoria has developed a cultural wraparound model that aims to widen access to and availability of programs to Aboriginal offenders within constrained resources. Under this wraparound model, Aboriginal offenders will participate in the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and the Marumali Program as foundation programs for participation in offending behaviour programs. Under the new model, the Koori Cognitive Skills Program will no longer form part of core program content. In terms of a cognitive skills program, Aboriginal prisoners will predominantly access the new mainstream Making Choices Program with cultural support before during and after program participation.

Under the model, all Aboriginal offenders deemed eligible for offending behaviour programs will be engaged in mainstream programs complemented by a culturally specific wraparound to program delivery in the form of:

- A culturally specific session before the commencement of the program
- A culturally specific session midway through the program
- A culturally specific session following the completion of the program
- Culturally specific supports in engagement and participation in offending behaviour programs.

The cultural wraparound component of program delivery will be informed by a cultural program specialist/advisor who will have responsibility for delivering the wraparound culturally specific sessions, and advising and supporting clinical staff and program facilitators on the delivery of programs where Aboriginal offenders are engaged.[46] This position will be funded through the CCS sentencing reform budget and as a result will predominantly support Aboriginal offenders on Community Corrections Orders, although the position will also be responsible for supporting Aboriginal prisoners. It is understood that funding will be sought for a similar position specifically focusing on supporting Aboriginal prisoners, but funding has not been committed for this position.

It was reported that where there is feasibility and demand to run the Koori Cognitive Skills Program this will be considered by the Targeted Programs Branch in consultation with the relevant region or correctional facility. There was also some indication that the Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place and private prisons may continue to run the Koori Cognitive Skills Program.

Given the imminent changes to the delivery of programs for Aboriginal offenders, it is difficult to assess the sustainability of the programs over time and their capacity to meet the needs of Aboriginal prisoners in the future. Although Corrections Victoria has made a commitment to funding the Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program under the new programming model, funding is limited and there are some concerns around the sustainability of these programs given they are delivered by external providers and, in the case of the Marumali Program, licensed to that provider. Also, as previously discussed, the programs are challenged by a lack of adequate and stable funding to ensure that program delivery meets need.

[46] The new model will also include the expansions of CCS-based delivery of culturally specific programs within and outside Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place consistent with identified needs of Aboriginal offenders.

7.5 Assessment of programs against the good practice themes

The following table provides an assessment of the three programs against the 10 good practice themes identified in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, as outlined in Table 3a in Chapter 3.

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
What is a good intervention?				
Theme 1: Focusing on crime prevention and aiming to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system		Limitations in Corrections Victoria offender data system have prevented a recidivism analysis. In the case of Koori Cognitive Skills Program there is direct potential to contribute to reduction in reoffending given the program's CBT focus. There is no data available for tracking outcomes of gateway programs through monitoring participation in other programs, though there is general support for gateway programs providing a potentially effective means of facilitating participation in other custodial and community-based offending behaviour programs.		
What is a good model?				
Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap	Clear evidence of a need for Aboriginal-specific programs delivered in custodial contexts given prisoners not accessing mainstream programs.	Programs not run frequently enough to include all Aboriginal prisoners who may want to participate.		Restructuring the suite of Indigenous programs is intended to provide a cultural wraparound model but it is not clear how well this will meet needs.

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation	All programs designed by, or with input from, Aboriginal community members and delivered or co-facilitated by Aboriginal people. Programs operating within a cultural framework with strong emphasis on culture and history.			
Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent	Overall feedback indicates program participants experienced positive personal outcomes in engagement and motivation to seek further assistance as a result of their participation in the programs. Participants experienced a sense of identity, pride and belonging and increased confidence and self-belief from participating. Overall completion rates are very high.	Evidence of immediate positive results for Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program but data gaps in relation to intermediate or longer term results from participation. No measurement of aggregated outcomes in terms of skills acquisition identified through psychometric testing as part of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program so further data gaps in relation to program outcomes.		
Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement	Programs are delivered within AJA2 framework, which is based on partnership agreements between justice agencies and Aboriginal communities. Framework allows for information to be fed back to the Aboriginal community about program delivery to the Aboriginal prisoner population.	Gender-specific modules available but some limitations in program delivery due to available resources.		

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration		Not a focus of the programs and limited oppportunities given cultural programs delivered in a custodial setting. Some qualitative feedback in relation to linking prisoners with appropriate services both in custodial and community settings.		
Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders		Not a key focus of the programs so programs limited in their capacity to contribute to advocacy and systems reform. Programs do raise the profile of the unique needs of Aboriginal prisoners within the custodial system.		
What is a well managed and delivered program?				
Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes		Evaluation reports based on participant and facilitator feedback but no monitoring of referral processes or access to other services, or other outcomes. No centralised record of program participation and tracking to participation in other programs, nor is reoffending data obtainable under current data arrangements.		
		Programs delivered by external providers through service agreements with Corrections Victoria.		
Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent	Cultural programs clear about their program intent and realistic in scope.			

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
Theme 10: Sustainability of the program/s over time		Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program will continue as foundation programs to assist offenders access offender behaviour programs. Concerns re sustainability given programs are delivered by private providers (and in the case of the Marumali Program licensed to the external provider) who may choose to, or become unable to, continue delivering the program. Koori Cognitive Skills Program will not continue as part of core program content though some indication that it will continue to be delivered at Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place and private prisons may run the program. All programs challenged by lack of adequate, stable ongoing funding.		

7.6 Key lessons

The Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program are valued cultural programs that focus on preparing Aboriginal offenders for participation and engagement in offence-specific behaviour programs and services by increasing their confidence in their capacity to build skills and make changes. The Koori Cognitive Skills Program is a problem-solving program that aims to equip prisoners with a set of practical problem-solving skills to enhance their capacity to deal with everyday problems more effectively. Under proposed changes to programming for Aboriginal prisoners, the Koori Cognitive Skills Program will no longer form part of core program content in Corrections Victoria prisons and correctional centres.[47] The following highlights key lessons drawn from the evaluation of the three programs' operation.

Culturally relevant prison programs can encourage engagement and participation in offending behaviour programs

Participation and engagement in mainstream prison programs by Aboriginal prisoners can be limited, and Aboriginal-specific and culturally relevant programs can encourage participation and engagement by preparing Aboriginal prisoners for offending behaviour programs. Cultural programs may result in increased confidence and self-belief and contribute to feelings of empowerment by instilling cultural pride, improving cultural identity, promoting respect, and increasing a sense of community responsibility. These results are validated by high participation rates and qualitative feedback provided through evaluation feedback forms, but cannot be measured against participation in mainstream programs due to data collection limitations.

Relevant cultural content and support is crucial to effective program delivery

Programs can achieve results if they are informed by an understanding of the multilayered and complex nature of Aboriginal offender needs and if they consider the unique sociohistorical experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Specific cultural content designed by Aboriginal people focuses on connecting Aboriginal offenders with their culture by increasing their awareness of history and events and by assisting them to strengthen their identity by providing them with an understanding of their own family and cultural histories. Aboriginal facilitators are key to success and help make the programs particularly relevant for Aboriginal prisoners. Participants feel safe and supported in the group environment with their Aboriginal peers and Aboriginal facilitators, and this encourages participation and engagement. The inclusion of guest community members can heighten engagement, and facilitators and guest community members can be positive role models for participants. Dedicated Aboriginal spaces for program delivery within prisons enhance feelings of security and community.

[47] The program may continue to be delivered at the Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place and at the private prisons.

Opportunities exist for collaboration with other offender programs

Prison programs alone do not have the capacity to achieve the successful reintegration of Aboriginal offenders and a reduction in recidivism, and a more coordinated response through programs and support services both pre and post release is necessary in order to achieve these long-term impacts. Access to services in relation to finding accommodation post release, assistance filling in forms and accessing government services, opportunities for culturally relevant and appropriate workplace qualifications and training, and assistance with gaining employment and basic life skills were all identified. Also identified were more specific programs that could maintain the results of any offending behaviour programs, particularly in relation to family relationships and family violence and alcohol and substance misuse. Opportunities exist to create better links with other programs such as the Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (see Chapter 6) to link offenders with community-based support if released on parole.

Mechanisms are needed for evaluating program performance against program intent

Rather than measuring programs against the longest term impact of reduced recidivism, ongoing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should focus on indicators that are more closely linked with program intent. Measuring gateway programs in terms of them achieving a reduction in recidivism presents a significant leap between the scale of the programs and their lack of direct focus on offender behaviour. It is more appropriate to consider gateway programs in terms of their capacity to prepare offenders for, and facilitate participation and engagement in, offender behaviour and treatment programs, as well as the more positive personal outcomes currently captured qualitatively through participant evaluation forms. De-identified and aggregated data from the results of psychometric testing conducted in cognitive skills programs could be used to monitor and measure program outcomes, particularly in relation to skills acquisition and motivation as a result of the Koori Cognitive Skills Program. Qualitative methods should also be applied to provide a more accurate picture of program outcomes, inform decisions about program modifications and mitigate any potential issues associated with applying this kind of assessment tool.

A centralised data management system is needed to monitor program outcomes

Program participation is not recorded centrally in the Corrections Victoria data management system and it is not possible to extract information based on Aboriginal status in relation to participation in mainstream Victorian prison programs. As a result, data limitations preclude any assessment of program outcomes in terms of facilitating participation in offending behaviour treatment programs or any reliable analysis of longer term impacts of program participation, such as reduced reoffending.

Measures to address the limitations of Corrections Victoria's data management system will need to ensure that the updated data system records program participation (both in custodial and community

settings) and is linked to the central e-justice data system. A consistent offender identifier will need to be used across all justice agencies to ensure longer term impacts such as a reduction in reoffending can reliably be measured and analysed.

Adequate resources are needed to ensure that program delivery and evaluation needs are met

These programs are challenged by a lack of adequate and stable funding, making it difficult to ensure program delivery meets needs. Frequent participation in programs is seen as necessary for Aboriginal prisoners to ensure continued engagement and provide opportunities to deconstruct their behaviour and build their skills. Funding constraints limit the number of programs delivered, and this results in Aboriginal prisoners who may want to participate not having the opportunity to do so.

In order to develop centralised monitoring and evaluation functions that will strengthen the capacity for the programs to measure results and improve program delivery, resourcing will be required to support the Indigenous and Diversity Unit, Targeted Programs Branch, Offender Management Division to perform this role.

8. Findings: Roebourne DECCA Program (Western Australia)

8.1 Summary of program

Program context

The Western Australian Department of Corrective Services has accorded a high priority to providing employment, educational and vocational training, and re-entry services to offenders (Department of Corrective Services, 2011(a)). To support this end, the Education and Vocational Training Unit of the Department provides a range of basic education, vocational skills training and advanced education courses for prisoners. Extensive educational assessments of individual prisoners are undertaken and study programs developed. A significant proportion of the unit's resources are channelled towards teaching literacy and numeracy, reflecting the low educational profile of many prisoners. Aboriginal prisoners tend to have the lowest educational and skills profile, with very limited training and skills development prior to prison (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2010). This issue is particularly pressing in WA given its high ratio of Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal prisoners: in 2008 WA had the highest ratio among Australian states and territories, with a ratio of 19.8 Aboriginal prisoners to 1 non-Aboriginal prisoner (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2009).

While participation in education and training programs is voluntary, participation rates in WA are historically strong compared to other states. The Parliamentary Enquiry into education, training and employment strategies in WA prisons found the Education and Vocational Training Unit staff to be highly motivated and innovative in approach, and noted a number of awards for training excellence (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2010).

Despite staff commitment, various cultural and organisational constraints in delivery of educational services to Aboriginal prisoners in WA are noted. These include rising numbers of prisoners without addition of further resources, the prevailing culture in some prisons (which reinforces an approach of retribution rather than an educational approach), constraints imposed by the structured day and prison routine, short sentences, and waiting lists for some courses. The demand for education and training programs far exceeds supply and there is a longstanding issue with shortfall of resources (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2010). Regional prisons, which are largely comprised of Aboriginal inmates, have been identified as facing particular constraints and not having the internal infrastructure to support extensive vocational skills or employment-based initiatives (Office of Inspector of Custodial Services, 2010).

The Education and Vocational Training Unit's efforts to develop partnerships with external partners in industry and education have been positively appraised as an effective strategy for improving prisoner outcomes and reducing recidivism. Specifically, the operation of the DECCA Program to deliver skills training relevant to the mining sector, with associated partnerships with mining companies and others, has been identified as a positive model (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2010). The Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services (2011) noted that DECCA's positive attributes should be reinforced through increasing funding and improvement of staff resources beyond one staff position for supervising 20 prisoners. A plan of Roebourne Regional Prison (RRP) to develop a work camp at its current site and incorporate the DECCA Program was supported, and increased overall resources for training resources across both minimum and maximum prisoner security categories were recommended (Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, 2011).

The DECCA Program

The DECCA Program is a multifunction training facility and an important part of the education and vocational training activities of RRP. Through use of an off-site and isolated training location, and strategic alliances with Pilbara Institute, Rio Tinto, Dampier Port Authority and the Ngarliyardarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation (NBAC), a range of focused training initiatives is delivered to selected minimum security prisoners. A wide range of training modules has been provided, focusing on work preparation and pre-vocational and vocational options. The program is based at a former communication facility, DECCA Station,[48] 20 kilometres east of Roebourne. Since October 2006, 171[49] prisoners have received training, which has then been practically applied in refurbishing the facility and undertaking a number of projects for the prison and local community. Officially launched in May 2007, the DECCA Program aims to deliver meaningful training and assist in gaining employment opportunities for prisoners once released. It also aims to provide a safe environment for training.

DECCA trainees are primarily Aboriginal prisoners, and mostly male. Over the period 2007–2011, 88% of participants were Aboriginal. Aboriginal participation is therefore high, but somewhat less than the level of representation of Aboriginal people at RRP, which averages around 97%. RRP holds around 160 prisoners with either a minimum (approx 38%) or medium security (61%) rating. Around 13% of prisoners at RRP are female.[50] Maximum security prisoners are held only on a transitional basis. DECCA participants must have achieved a minimum security rating, be classified as suitable to work in a community setting, have at least three months remaining in their sentence, and be willing to engage in further education to gain skills primarily focused on employment in the mining and

[48] DECCA refers to the name of the company that developed the Decca Navigator System, which previously operated at the site and is no longer utilised. This was a low frequency radio navigation system for ships and aircraft.

[49] To May 2012.

[50] Based on data for mid-May 2012.

construction sectors. They are supervised by a Vocational and Support Officer (VSO)[51] and trained by teachers from Pilbara Institute, a TAFE college based in Roebourne.

The DECCA Program complements other training initiatives operated by RRP. Inside the prison, these comprise a range of general education and a limited number of vocational courses. Compared to other, larger prisons based in less remote regions, RRP has relatively few facilities and resources for on-site vocational education (Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services, 2010). RRP operates a work camp at Millstream Chichester National Park in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Conservation. Prior to placement at the work camp, many prisoners undertake skills training at DECCA.

DECCA operates in the context of a high labour demand in the Pilbara and of specific requirements for mining companies and their contractors to maintain a minimum percentage of Aboriginal employees (Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, 2007; Briggs, 2010). Like other prisons in WA, RRP has an Employment Services Coordinator who assists prisoners to gain employment, with follow-up support provided. Many but not all prisoners seek employment in the mining industry. Constraints faced by many Aboriginal prisoners in relation to absence of a driver's licence curtail direct employment in mining companies.[52] Licences are frequently suspended or cancelled, or the individual barred from seeking a licence due to previously driving without one. Magistrates Courts may issue restricted licences, particularly where prisoner workers or other advocates argue that they are vital to an employment position sourced on release. Employment may otherwise be sought with a range of contractors and local employers. Some Aboriginal prisoners return to their communities following release, and in this context may find work in a community setting or otherwise usefully apply skills they have gained.

Program content

Training at DECCA is designed to combine work education and pre-vocational orientation and accreditation in specific fields, while also delivering training for specific trade-related licences and tickets required in various occupations. The range of training offerings is designed to meet the diverse needs of prisoners, who may spend varying lengths of time at DECCA. Certificate courses commonly operate from 12 to 14 weeks, but some prisoners may only attend DECCA for a limited period. While the program has been largely delivered by a set of core teachers from Pilbara Institute, flexibility in delivery is also required to suit teacher availability, including that of training specialists.

[51] Direct on-site management and supervision functions have been almost totally provided by one VSO, sometimes complemented by other staff. VSOs have trade backgrounds and participate in training activities.

[52] Holding a driver's licence is seen as a necessary safety requirement by mining companies even if a job does not directly require driving of vehicle. A high percentage of prisoners are barred from driving by court order due to prior histories. In these circumstances, RRP often makes representation to courts for extraordinary licences for prisoners securing particular types of employment on release.

Certificate courses[53] at DECCA include:

- **Rio Tinto Work Ready** – operates twice a year with trainees, who are then eligible for employment with Rio Tinto mine and port facilities. Core components are advanced first aid, white card,[54] forklift, skid steer loader (bobcat), elevated work platform, basic scaffolding, and elective components, including information technology, literacy/numeracy, welding, plasma cutting, thermal cutting and various building and construction components

- **Industrial Skills** – a flexible pre-vocational course that can cover a range of subjects in areas such as building, construction, horticulture, white card and communications

- **Horticulture** – offering training in plant care and propagation and conducted with support from the Dampier Port Authority and an environmental/horticultural initiative operated on-site by the NBAC.

Trade-related licences and tickets may be included in the above certificate courses or offered individually; they include areas such as skid steer (bobcat), chainsaw, dogging and rigging, forklift, working in confined spaces, and elevated work platform.

Program funding and partners

The DECCA Program received seed funding from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), a Pilbara Development Commission grant, and support for special projects from the WA Department of Corrective Services. Subsequently, budgetary support for DECCA was limited to the mainstream prison budget. In this context, support from partners has played a vital role in program sustainability. Rio Tinto has provided considerable support in equipment and consumables, and in-kind support is received from the Dampier Port Authority for horticultural work. The NBAC owns the site and leases the land to the Department of Corrective Services. The NBAC has operated a water project at the site, funded by the Department of Regional Development and Lands, which focuses on water use, horticulture and production of bio-diesel. The NBAC has a vital interest in the rehabilitation of Aboriginal prisoners and in strengthening their community.

Future plans

RRP has recently received support under the WA Department of Regional Development and Lands' Royalties for Regions program for the establishment of a minimum security work camp on its existing site at Roebourne. This will be established as a separate operating unit in the prison. Following

[53] Certificate courses are offered at Level 1 or 2 in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

[54] Focused on OHS and required for work on a building site in Australia.

construction over a projected two-year period, the DECCA Program will be relocated to the new work camp. Although this will be a more institutional context, RRP intends to continue operating an employment-focused training program together with its current partners.

8.2 Program logic

The following table shows the 'program logic' for the DECCA Program. This was developed together with DECCA Program representatives and shows the connection between the inputs into the program, outputs of the program, and expected changes in the medium term (outcomes) and longer term (impacts).

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
External funding Refurbishment of infrastructure for habitation Resources including training materials, equipment and staff Consultation and 'buy-in' from stakeholders and mining companies	Community consultation with stakeholders undertaken PEP (Preparation for Employment) program delivered Work readiness programs delivered Conservation, land management, horticulture and driver education programs delivered Building construction and Industrial skills training delivered NBAC DECCA water program delivered Infrastructure completed Job placements with Rio Tinto and other employees completed	Partnerships developed with employer groups, Aboriginal corporations and other community groups and agencies Increased sponsorship and support for programs delivered Increased work preparation and employment skills developed Increased technical skills relevant to context developed Increased life skills, including work ethic, self-esteem, motivation and self-responsibility Offenders employed pre and post release	Contributing to building of capacity in remote Aboriginal communities Improved quality of life for individuals, their families and communities Reduction in offending/recidivism Safer and stable communities with positive role models

8.3 Methodology

The Evaluation Framework and Methodology is outlined in Chapter 3, where key attributes were identified which typify good practice in the Offender Support and Reintegration area. These serve as a reference point for analysis against the good practice themes (see 8.4 below). These themes also provide a tool for assessing the program's initiatives on a scale from 'excellent to very good practice' to 'adequate practice' or 'poor practice' (see 8.5 below). Evidence for the evaluation of the DECCA Program was gathered through analysis of documentation and data and through interviews and consultations. Finally, based on the evidence gained, key lessons learned were identified (see 8.6 below).

Documentation and data analysed	The literature on prisoner support and reintegration. Department of Corrective Services policy and program documentation. Records from RRP and the DECCA Program in relation to program operations and profile of participants.
Interviews and consultations conducted	Site visit to RRP and DECCA from 21 to 26 May 2012. Interviews with Corrective Services, RRP and DECCA staff, prisoners (both current and former participants in DECCA), program partners (including staff from Pilbara Institute, Rio Tinto, Dampier Port Authority, and NBAC) and several employers. A total of seven current and three former participants in the DECCA Program were interviewed. Telephone interviews with representatives of the Education and Vocational Training Unit in Corrective Services, and the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services in WA.

8.4 Findings in relation to the good practice themes

This section assesses the DECCA Program against the 10 good practice themes identified in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework as listed in Table 3a in Chapter 3. These themes are grouped according to three components: 'What is a good intervention?', 'What is a good model?' and 'What is a well managed and delivered program?'

What is a good intervention?

Theme 1: Focusing on crime prevention and aiming to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system

The DECCA model is clearly focused on increasing employment of Indigenous prisoners, as well as building a set of complementary skills and capacities which promote successful reintegration. The latter include areas such as work orientation, discipline gained from participating in a regular structured program, and building increased confidence and cooperation from team-based training activities. Interviews with prisoners and staff at RRP, and with representatives of the NBAC, indicated that participation generally had positive effects in these complementary areas. Direct assistance from the prison-based Employment Coordinator and Transition Manager assists prisoners in securing and retaining employment, and in a range of related practical arrangements such as finding accommodation.

The available literature indicates that there is clear connection between employment-related skills training for Indigenous prisoners and reduction in recidivism (Beranger et al., 2010). Due to data gaps in relation to individual prisoners who participate in DECCA once discharged from RRP, it is difficult to assess the direct impact of participation in DECCA on recidivism. Program data indicates that of 84 participants in the three-year period 2007 to 2009, 33% had returned to custody in WA within two years. The result was similar for Aboriginal participants, where 32% of the 75 Aboriginal participants from 2007 to 2009 had returned to custody in WA within two years (see Table 8a). While total participant numbers are low, these figures compare favourably with the overall recidivism rates of around 42% in the prison population in WA when recorded over a two-year period. However, caution needs to be taken when drawing conclusions on this data as a recidivism analysis was not conducted that matched DECCA participants with an appropriate comparative control group in relation to age, gender, offence type, offending history or location. Assessment of the level of the program's contribution to these results is limited by the participants being based at DECCA for different periods.

A Work Ready course at DECCA is a complete vocationally orientated course that is recognised by employers. It runs for a defined number of weeks and covers a set number of units, but some prisoners may only attend DECCA for a limited period and complete a small number of units. Data limitations precluded such an analysis; however, it would be useful to compare outcomes for those completing certificate courses at DECCA such as Work Ready and/or a minimum number of educational units. Educational units may also be completed in prison, prior to and after participation in a program such as DECCA, and are likely to reinforce positive outcomes. Initial analysis undertaken in 2011 by the Department of Corrective Services indicates that Aboriginal prisoners who completed five or more vocational educational and training programs had around a 30% lower chance of being returned to custody within a two-year period when compared to those had not completed a training program (Department of Corrective Services, 2011(b)).

The extent to which the DECCA Program achieved outcomes in line with program intent is discussed below (Theme 4).

Table 8a: Data on DECCA participants 2007–2011

Year	Indigenous Status					No. Completed Work Ready		No. Going into Employment on Exit						Recidivism Rate*					
	No	Indig	%	Non Indig.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Indig.	% of Indig persons	Non Indig.	% of non-Indig persons	No.	%	Indig.	% of Indig persons	Non Indig.	% of non-Indig persons
2007	27	21	77.8%	6	22.2%	No Work Ready		7	25.9%	6	28.6%	1	16.7%	13	48.1%	10	47.6%	3	50.0%
2008	24	23	95.8%	1	4.2%	10	41.7%	6	25.0%	6	26.1%	0	0.0%	5	20.8%	5	21.7%	0	0.0%
2009	33	31	93.9%	2	6.1%	23	69.7%	10	30.3%	9	29.0%	1	50.0%	10	30.3%	9	29.0%	1	50.0%
2010	33	31	93.9%	2	6.1%	18	54.5%	12	36.4%	11	35.5%	1	50.0%	8	24.2%	7	22.6%	1	50.0%
2011	35	31	88.6%	4	11.4%	20	57.1%	12	34.3%	11	35.5%	1	25.0%	7	20.0%	6	19.4%	1	25.0%
Total	**152**	**137**	**90.1%**	**15**	**9.9%**	**71**	**46.7%**	**47**	**30.9%**	**43**	**31.4%**	**4**	**26.7%**	**43**	**28.3%**	**37**	**27.0%**	**6**	**40.0%**

* Recidivism is regarded as returning to prison within Western Australia within a two-year period. Recidivism data for 2010 and 2011 (highlighted) is incomplete as this was measured at June 2012, with an additional six months required for the two years to elapse. Therefore, even though they have been included in the table, they should be interpreted with caution, as they are not directly comparable with the rates from previous years. Excluding 2010 and 2011 data, 32.4% of Indigenous participants were recidivist.

What is a good model?

Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap

The strong need for improved reintegration of Indigenous prisoners and the vital role of training and employment in promoting this end have been widely established in the literature. Identifying ways to improve performance in this area was the subject of a parliamentary enquiry in WA in 2010. More generally, the disproportionately high rates of Indigenous unemployment are a manifestation of disadvantage. In 2008, 59% of Indigenous men of working age in Australia were employed, compared with 85% for all Australian men. Corresponding data for women was 42% compared with 69% (Gray et al., 2012:3). While employment rates in the Pilbara and other mining regions are higher than the national average, a clear differential exists between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Analysis undertaken of Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data by Rio Tinto indicates that in 2006 the general unemployment rate in the Pilbara was 3.2% while in a range of shires in the Pilbara region Indigenous unemployment rates ranged between 12% and 19% (Rio Tinto, 2009). Increasing employment is central to meeting Closing the Gap targets, with the aim of promoting engagement of Indigenous people with the mainstream economy (Council of Australian Governments, 2011). In this context, improving rates of Indigenous employment since the mid-nineties suggest a positive trend and the possible influence of positive models of employment generation and promotion (Gray et al., 2012).

The advantages of providing customised training to increase the employment readiness of Indigenous jobseekers has been widely acknowledged. This applies equally to Indigenous people in general and to Indigenous prisoners (Gray et al., 2012; Willis & Moore, 2009). There are clear and complementary advantages from utilising dedicated staff to assist prisoners in sourcing positions and to provide mentoring and support once they are released and employed. At RRP, this role is conducted by the Employment Coordinator. Indigenous people rely more strongly on their networks and known contacts to source employment when compared with the general population. They also benefit from non-traditional and proactive recruitment strategies. These need to directly address the possibility that an Indigenous person would otherwise be screened out (Gray et al., 2012). These strategies are more acutely required in the case of Indigenous former prisoners, who often face discrimination and may lack confidence. In the Pilbara region there are many employment opportunities available. The challenge, however, is to lift skill levels and the ability of Indigenous people to access these. It is also necessary to identify and work with employers who are sensitive to issues relating to Indigenous people. The DECCA model reflects this orientation.

Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation

The design of the DECCA Program was undertaken in consultation with Aboriginal leaders in the Roebourne area, and with traditional owners of the site on which it was established. They indicated a clear intent of working with the prison and using the 20-hectare site for the betterment of the Aboriginal community (Wilson, 2004). Close consultation and regular liaison with the NBAC, which

manages the land, has been undertaken. A leasehold arrangement with the prison and cooperation in relation to an environmental/horticulture project are positive features. RRP personnel, including senior management, the VET Campus Manager, the DECCA VSO and the Employment Coordinator, regularly liaise with Aboriginal organisations and collaborate at forums related to regional issues which increase the visibility and acceptance of the program. The latter includes an initiative to develop an Aboriginal driver education program.

Representatives of the NBAC interviewed were well aware and supportive of the program model, and viewed training, employment and reintegration of Aboriginal prisoners as vital to community resilience and healing. Vocational skills gained through the program were viewed as not only relevant to personal and family income-generation but more broadly of community benefit. NBAC representatives also viewed the style of training at DECCA to be appropriate for young Aboriginal men, reinforcing self-reliance, discipline and self-respect. DECCA's relatively isolated location and proximity to Aboriginal lore grounds was also viewed as advantageous. Participants were very positive about the style of teaching and the ethos at DECCA. They were provided with initial group-based instruction and then moved to work in small teams on what were perceived to be meaningful tasks at the DECCA site. The latter included refurbishing buildings and horticultural work. Elders from the local Aboriginal community visited the site from time to time and engaged with prisoners, and visiting Aboriginal mentors, particularly past participants who had secured positions in the mining industry, were viewed positively.

Overall, both NBAC representatives and prisoners appeared to express a high degree of identification with the site. NBAC representatives indicated a strong desire to continue to use the site following the project's future planned relocation to the main prison, and appreciated its refurbishment. The future use of the site for youth correctional training was advocated by both NBAC and RRP representatives.

The DECCA Project Officer and staff of the Vocational and Education Unit had received Aboriginal cultural awareness training. The introduction of systemic, prison-wide cultural awareness training was planned but had not been implemented. The need for this training was underlined in interviews, with a proportion of prisoners indicating that they had experienced unnecessarily hostile and negative treatment from some prison officers. These prisoners indicated that working at DECCA, which had a supportive ethos and was physically away from the prison, was a relatively positive experience and a 'circuit breaker'.

Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent

Individual outcomes

Findings regarding individual participant outcomes are largely based on records of the operation of the DECCA Program regarding participant numbers, records from the RRP Employment Coordinator and interviews conducted with participants, TAFE lecturers, RRP personnel and employers for this evaluation. These suggest that those attending DECCA have increased their level of technical skills in areas that are highly relevant to the mining and construction sectors, and more generally to maintenance and related tasks in Aboriginal communities. Skills gained in horticulture may also be useful in a community context, in site remediation and in landscaping-related roles in a region that has a high level of housing and urban construction. Increased work readiness and orientation, together with evident improvements in self-esteem, motivation and self-responsibility, are equally important as technical skills gained. Participants had a positive regard for the TAFE lecturers and the teaching approach, which combines group-based teaching of core skills such as literacy and numeracy with more hands-on, project-based activities. Participants reported a positive experience of being trained and of learning useful skills.[55] This experience and orientation are likely to be useful given that those who gain employment will probably be required to undertake further training for their specific roles.

Although some information in relation to employment was available it did not result from systematic and regular follow-up and recording, although it was understood that some follow-up of former prisoners in terms of their employment did occur. As a result, limitations were evident in data accuracy and availability regarding levels of employment of DECCA participants following release from prison. Program records indicate that between 2007 and 2011 around a quarter of DECCA participants moved directly into employment when released from RRP. Considerably higher estimates were obtained from records kept by the prison's Employment Coordinator. Such discrepancies highlight the need for consistent and careful recording of this vital performance indicator, and attention to coordination on sharing and management of data.

Various employers employ prison graduates, including mining companies (such as Rio Tinto, BHP and Newcrest), construction companies and contractors. The Employment Coordinator observed that the training received at DECCA is well known and highly regarded by employers based in Karratha and surrounds. It is seen as providing a foundation for many different types of mining, construction and allied work, with completion of accredited certificates and tickets indicating the dedication and commitment of the trainees. These views were reflected in evaluation interviews with Rio Tinto representatives and another local employer. The Employment Coordinator indicated that employers tend to ring the prison seeking to secure DECCA participants prior to their release, and that the task

[55] As noted in 8.3 above, a total of 10 participants, seven current and three former, were interviewed as part of the evaluation.

of 'marketing' the prisoners to employers is made a lot easier by their participation in the program. Qualitative feedback indicated that challenges remain in securing employment for former participants who return to live in remote communities and, as discussed above, in securing positions that require a driver's licence.

The above information highlights data gaps in relation to employment status following release from prison and the need to marshal the available evidence on participant employment outcomes and detail this more consistently on participant records. Telephone interviews were also conducted in the evaluation with three graduates now in the workforce. These highlighted cases where DECCA graduates made a successful reintegration into the workforce, remaining in positions secured while in prison and in some cases seeking advancement within those organisations. Former graduates now in employment valued the training and projects undertaken at DECCA as keeping them orientated towards work and promoting self-confidence and self-respect while in prison.

Evidence is not available on the degree to which former graduates in general remain in positions. Interviews with Rio Tinto representatives, based on their experience of operating a range of Work Ready programs, indicated that turnover rates among Aboriginal appointees can be an issue. They emphasised the importance of mentoring to help new Aboriginal workers deal with the transition. Aboriginal workers may lack a sense of a career path within the employing organisation and are more likely to remain committed when there is a long-term vocational goal in mind. Aboriginal mentor positions established within Rio Tinto address these issues.

In relation to the longer term impact of reducing reoffending, as outlined in Theme 1 above, while reoffending figures for program participants compare favourably with the overall recidivism rates in the prison population in WA, small participant numbers and the absence of comparison with an appropriate control group limit the ability to draw conclusions about the impact of the DECCA Program on recidivism.

Community outcomes

The DECCA Program has resulted in positive outcomes for communities, and particularly for Aboriginal communities in the Pilbara region. As discussed above, local Aboriginal people, including representatives of the NBAC, have been involved in planning the program and are regularly involved in discussions regarding its progress. NBAC representatives indicated that DECCA was making a positive contribution towards rehabilitation of Aboriginal prisoners and building stronger individuals who could then play productive and necessary roles in supporting the community. They observed that a number of men in their community had benefited from DECCA and found positive work following release. They highlighted the vital role of adults in leading their community. Given ill health, social problems and high rates of incarceration, there was a high demand on available adults to play a

variety of community support roles. Given relatively high birth rates, this included guiding and supporting a growing number of children.

NBAC representatives and RRP staff indicated that the local Aboriginal community respected the DECCA Program, which was based on Aboriginal land. An indirect indicator of this respect was the lack of security issues on the site, which was left unattended after hours. The local Aboriginal community also had benefited from refurbishment of buildings on the DECCA site and intended to make use of this facility for youth-justice-related training in future. A limited number of DECCA projects completed, such as building of furniture, had also benefited the community. NBAC representatives and prisoners requested that this role be expanded.

For RRP, which in part may be regarded as a community facility, the DECCA Program has brought a range of benefits. These include creating an educational and training pathway for prisoners which may commence with basic education at the campus and graduate to technical training at DECCA, and increasing the motivation for prisoners in education and training, with participation in DECCA as a popular objective. Qualitative feedback indicated that taking prisoners out of the prison on a daily basis and into purposeful training and applied projects acts as a 'safety valve' and reduces conflicts that might otherwise occur. DECCA has also brought considerable positive publicity for the prison. Several stakeholders also observed that exposure to DECCA and its approach may have led to some change in staff attitudes towards Aboriginal people and rehabilitation approaches. It is possible that the program has also had positive effects on a range of employers in terms of their propensity to employ Aboriginal workers, including prisoners, although this was not investigated in this evaluation.

Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement

The DECCA Program was designed and implemented in conjunction with local Aboriginal organisations in the Pilbara region, and specifically with traditional owners of the DECCA site. As detailed above, the NBAC was regularly consulted, and their representatives visit the program and interact with participants. The significant value placed on the initiative by the NBAC was highlighted in interviews and in plans to transform the future use of the site to focus on youth justice and diversionary initiatives. This would follow the planned relocation of the DECCA training initiative to RRP.

RRP senior management and staff directly involved in the DECCA Program reflect an innovative and responsive approach to meeting community needs. Interviews conducted and copies of submissions made indicate that these personnel saw a high degree of value in the training aspect of the prison's functions and identified a range of means to meet needs of local Aboriginal and mainstream communities. In addition to on-site renovation, programs completed through DECCA included fixing a local jetty, manufacturing furniture for community groups, and conducting community maintenance work. Aboriginal group representatives and some prisoners requested that the maintenance role of

DECCA for Aboriginal community buildings be increased. The main constraint on such functions was lack of staff and financial resources, as well as consideration of security clearances for such roles. Engagement with employers, particularly with Rio Tinto and its allied Work Ready training programs, has brought considerable resources to the program as well as goodwill and publicity (see e.g. Rio Tinto, 2008).

In relation to gender inclusivity, participation of women in DECCA has not reflected their level of representation in the prison. RRP is largely a male Aboriginal prison, in that they comprised 82% of total prison population as at May 2012. Around 13% of all Aboriginal prisoners are women. Of all DECCA participants since the beginning of the program, only four (2%) were women. The reasons for their low level of participation may partially reflect issues with the motivation of women to undertake technical trade-related training and employment. RRP staff reported that women prisoners were not strongly motivated to undertake vocational education training in general, and that a key staff position focusing on women's issues and activities was unfilled. One female prisoner interviewed who had undertaken the Work Ready program at DECCA had found the course useful and stimulating, but indicated that she found being the only female participant challenging. Staff shortages and subsequent difficulties in providing female staff to supervise female prisoners at DECCA may have further curtailed female participation. Further assessment of the vocational aspirations of female prisoners and their demand for participation at DECCA appears warranted, together with a need to identify staff resources to facilitate placements where required.

Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration

RRP operates as the single adult correctional institution in a remote area. It therefore has a unique role and responsibility in relation to rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners. In relation to DECCA, its coordination role has included identification of organisations with related aspirations of supporting Aboriginal justice interventions, prisoner education and rehabilitation, and promotion of employment. Collaboration with these organisations has brought significant resources and goodwill for the DECCA initiative and enabled the program to remain operational in a tight funding environment.

As noted above, the start-up of the program was supported by grants from DEEWR and the Pilbara Development Commission ($380,000), which provided support for a staff salary, vehicle and other costs. Collaboration with the NBAC provides land for the initiative, as well as increased legitimacy and a sense of ownership from the Aboriginal community. The NBAC itself applied to the Pilbara Development Commission and received funding for a water project which enabled the site to be transformed into a horticultural training facility (Ngarliyardarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation, 2011). This project was implemented with full participation of the DECCA participants, Staff Coordinator and TAFE lecturers. Partnership with the Pilbara Institute has provided a range of training inputs to the program while also consolidating the Institute's overall training activities. The Institute's training work

with RRP has grown to around 20,000–22,000 hours per year, with around two-thirds of this input at DECCA.

Cooperation with Rio Tinto has led to DECCA delivering the Work Ready certificate course, which is designed specifically for preparation for employment with the mining company. Data provided by the Employment Coordinator indicated that 11 DECCA graduates have received direct offers of employment from Rio Tinto to take up positions upon release from prison.[56] As noted above, while a positive result, qualitative feedback indicated that issues connected with driving licences, such as disqualification or suspension from holding a licence, have constrained employment opportunities for employment in mining companies for some. This is indicative of a wider issue for Aboriginal people, who are known to face challenges in obtaining and maintaining a driver's licence (Skinner & Rumble, 2012; DoT, 2012, Elliot and Shanahan Research, 2008). In addition to representation in courts on behalf of new employees to obtain extraordinary licences, another response has been the establishment of the Red Dirt Driving Academy by the NBAC. Collaboration with Rio Tinto has also led to the donation of substantial amounts of equipment and materials to the DECCA Program, as well as support from staff and mentors employed by Rio Tinto operating other Work Ready courses in conjunction with the Pilbara Institute. Support from the Dampier Port Authority has focused on horticulture-related infrastructure and equipment at DECCA.

Overall, these initiatives reflect a high degree of coordination with related services, with strong cooperation and goodwill established to draw in services and resources to the DECCA initiative. Additional support and services gained have been mutually reinforcing, extending the breadth of the program, with sharing of experience and strategies to increase employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders

The DECCA Program's main contribution to advocacy is to raise the profile of issues relating to Aboriginal employment and reintegration of prisoners in the Pilbara region. The program has encouraged an intensified focus from a range of stakeholders, including training, employer and Aboriginal organisations, to actively support reintegration and employment of Aboriginal prisoners. This particularly stems from active outreach to a wide range of employers to assess their suitability and encourage their employment of released prisoners. While many employers are well motivated, active screening of their orientation and intent is still required, together with promotion of cultural sensitivity in employment practices. DECCA also reinforces other employment outreach initiatives at RRP, such as the operation of employer expos, which bring a range of employers to the prison and allow interaction with prisoners. As described above, the DECCA initiative may have had a positive impact on RRP in promoting more positive attitudes from some of the prison's staff. The DECCA

[56] However, it is unknown how many of these offers were accepted and resulted in continued employment.

model has also stimulated the creation of other initiatives in employment-related training in WA and received interest and visits from interstate politicians and corrections officials. A further skills training initiative for Aboriginal prisoners focusing on mining industry employment has been established at Karnet Prison, south of Perth, in partnership with BIS Industries Limited and Fairbridge Western Australia (Australasian Corrections Education Association, 2011).

What is a well managed and delivered program?

Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes

The DECCA Program has operated through the efforts of dedicated staff and support from external organisations. The program and its staff member are well supported through the Education and Vocational Training Unit. At senior management level within RRP, the program is also well regarded. The Superintendent was a key instigator of the initiative and remains an advocate for growing the prison's focus on vocational training. As discussed above, the main constraints on the program have been limited funding and the small number of personnel involved. Improved resources would support the further development of management systems and tools. Furthermore, establishing a DECCA working group or committee within RRP would promote improved internal coordination, drawing together the different parts of the prison involved with the initiative. This includes senior management, education and vocational training, and employment services.

Management of different aspects of the project cycle could be improved for the DECCA initiative, such as program planning, monitoring, and evaluation and reporting. As discussed above, plans in place for the program provide only limited guidance on its implementation and provide a limited reference point for evaluation. The program objectives are narrow and do not reflect its full scope or intent. Record-keeping systems for the program appear reasonable for operational requirements but should be extended and further detailed to provide a greater level of information about participant backgrounds and outcomes, particularly in relation to employment and the type of training undertaken. This type of data would provide greater evidence regarding the efficacy of the program, and should support the case for further funding resources. Consideration could be given to more consistent tracking of outcomes over time in relation to the employment and recidivism status of DECCA graduates, particularly graduates of certificate courses such as Work Ready. Such arrangements would need to meet ethical and privacy requirements. Overall, the program's internal arrangements for monitoring and reporting are limited and could be enhanced with the development of monitoring tools which would be applied to the periodic assessment of different dimensions of program performance and support regular reports on outcomes and issues affecting the program.

The DECCA Project Officer is well regarded by participants and other stakeholders in terms of commitment and achievements made. Their trade background, long service in the prison system, commitment to rehabilitation of prisoners, and willingness to lead by example make for an ideal mix of

background and skills. Unfortunately, this level of commitment may be difficult to duplicate. Some prison stakeholders suggested that the number of prison officers involved in vocational training needed to be built up to provide greater support in this area. Pressures on this position are also likely to escalate in future, with increased attention needed to plan the development of the work camp at the main prison site and to maintain the project work at DECCA through its transitional phase.

The DECCA Program has a strong sense of inclusiveness for Aboriginal people. Although the program has very limited staffing and does not employ an Aboriginal person, the recent engagement of an Aboriginal Education Worker with the education and vocational training area at RRP increases attention to this area. The position had been unfilled for some time.

Arrangements are in place for regular meetings with external partners/collaborators, including Rio Tinto and the NBAC. Developing an informal reference group for the program with members drawn from different partners may be advantageous and may further strengthen engagement with the program. Such a committee could meet, for example, every six months.

Overall, with limited resources, the Education and Vocational Training Unit at RRP has shown a high degree of commitment to developing an innovative initiative. This has required flexibility and patience from the DECCA Project Officer and management in order to develop a wide range of relationships and to draw resources to the program while maintaining an operationally demanding program. In this context, evident limitations in management practices are understandable but should be addressed.

Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent

The DECCA Program has developed fairly organically, and strongly relies on the commitment of a small but dedicated staff and the goodwill of partners. RRP compiled an early submission relating to its use of the site, and a generalised operational plan was developed. The DECCA Program's objectives, namely to provide training and assist prisoners in gaining employment once released and to provide a safe and effective workplace (training site), were detailed subsequent to implementation. The objectives are contained in a brief document outlining the program philosophy, main approaches and rationale. These current objectives do not capture some of the intent of the program, which includes developing partnerships to source and support prisoner training and employment and responding to the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal prisoners and Aboriginal communities in the Pilbara region in a culturally appropriate way. Similarly, a fuller program document would usefully detail the strategies the program uses to achieve such ends and its expected outcomes. These would provide greater guidance to program planning and evaluation.

Several plans have been developed for refurbishment of the site, and a simple one-page outline of annual training activities has been produced. More detailed planning would assist program delivery and resource allocation. The DECCA Program has faced a range of resource and staffing constraints

and issues with the availability of TAFE teachers, all of which have frustrated intended activities. More detailed plans are required, however, to specify DECCA's forward program and to provide a firmer base for monitoring and evaluation. These would include a program plan, annual plans, and a specific plan to guide monitoring and evaluation.

Theme 10: Sustainability of the program/s over time

The DECCA Program has operated on a limited budget, with periods of uncertainty regarding ongoing funding and operations.[57] External funding grants have assisted with the establishment of the program, the purchase of a vehicle, and initial funding for the position of VSO. Equipment and consumable costs have been strongly supported by Rio Tinto, enabling operations to continue. While budgeting for DECCA has more recently been shifted from a project basis to being part of the mainstream operations of the prison, funding for the initiative has been limited and uncertain. DECCA has operated with one staff member since inception, with additional RRP officers involved on a limited basis to undertake specific tasks or supervision.[58] In this context there has been limited time available for the program to build on the work and reputation established or, for example, to seek further funding through grants.

[57] The discovery of asbestos in buildings and electrical pipes on the site also threatened its closure, but this was addressed through remediation. This was a considerable expense supported by RRP.

[58] At time of completion of this report, staffing numbers were in transition and may increase.

8.5 Assessment of program against the good practice themes

The following table provides an assessment of the DECCA Program against the 10 good practice themes identified in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, as outlined in Table 3a in Chapter 3.

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
What is a good intervention?				
Theme 1: Focusing on crime prevention and aiming to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system	Strong focus with significant connection between the model and intent to reduce crime and recidivism.	Due to data gaps, it was difficult to assess the direct impact of participation in DECCA on recidivism.		
What is a good model?				
Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap	Program strongly aligned to meeting individual and community needs – a unique, needed, proactive intervention. Developed in conjunction with preferences of local Aboriginal community groups.			

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation	High level of culturally appropriate practices in program design and delivery, including active collaboration with Aboriginal organisations. Design in consultation with Aboriginal leaders and traditional owners of the program site.			
Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent		Evidence of significant outcomes in skill development, personal confidence and work readiness. Further attention required to identify data on securing of employment for Aboriginal prisoners, and on recidivism rates. Complementary positive outcomes for Aboriginal community and on Roebourne Regional Prison (RRP).		

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement	Strong participation and engagement with Aboriginal groups, and with other organisations working with Aboriginal communities. Positive engagement with employers, e.g. Rio Tinto, brought resources, goodwill and publicity.	Arrangements to promote inclusion of women need review.		
Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration	Effective service coordination and collaboration particularly with significant employers and Aboriginal organisations. Evidence of development of complementary strategies to address key issues. Area would be further strengthened through more detailed program plans which incorporate service coordination arrangements.			
Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders		Not a key focus of the program, but evidence of raising profile of issues concerning Aboriginal prisoners and employment, and beneficial impacts within the prison and more broadly in the corrections system.		

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
What is a well managed and delivered program?				
Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes		High-quality staffing and external stakeholder liaison. Project management arrangements, including data collection, monitoring and reporting, require some attention.		
Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent		Adequate level of documentation. More attention to formalisation of program design, specification of objectives and planning required.		
Theme 10: Sustainability of program/s over time		Program has considerable goodwill, but has lacked consistent and adequate internal funding support. Efforts to secure support from other stakeholders have been successful.		

8.6 Key lessons

The DECCA Program is an effective initiative which has been tightly focused on providing specific kinds of vocational training geared to the needs of the local employment market, while also operating in a positive and culturally sensitive manner. This section highlights key lessons drawn from its operation.

The proactive promotion of Indigenous employment addresses a clear area of need

In the broadest sense, the operation of the DECCA Program is reinforced by policy and legal requirements for mining companies and their contractors to employ Aboriginal people and to maintain a minimum proportion of their workforce as Aboriginal. In the Pilbara region of WA, given a high proportion of Aboriginal people and relatively high unemployment rates, the value of such policies is clear. The levels of social and economic disadvantage that Aboriginal people experience are highlighted by the high incarceration rates. Remedial programs such as DECCA which actively promote the engagement of Aboriginal people with economic activity are appropriate and can make a constructive impact. Partnerships with private-sector organisations which have a strong commitment to improving the situation of Aboriginal people further reinforce positive impacts.

Prisons can play a valuable role in vocational training and reintegration

The DECCA Program highlights the value and useful role prisons can play in rehabilitation of prisoners and in building their skills, qualifications and work orientation. The need for such a role is highlighted in the context of very high proportions of Aboriginal prisoners who are relatively disadvantaged. Bridging a gap between education and training and their application to real job opportunities is a significant positive feature of the model employed. Employment is associated with a range of educational, social and personal attributes which improve quality of life and reduce a propensity for offending and therefore recidivism. In this context, and as strongly advocated in the WA parliamentary enquiry, there is a need for justice systems to modify their priorities towards reducing crime, reducing reoffending by ex-prisoners, and strengthening communities (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2010).

Positive impacts are noticeable at the individual and community levels, but to a lesser extent at the organisational and systems levels

The operation of the DECCA Program highlights a range of impacts which are both beneficial and mutually reinforcing, but also highlights some uncertainties about outcomes. At the individual level, an increase in skills, qualifications, work orientation and confidence are noticeable. Issues with data accuracy obscure levels of program achievement in assisting Aboriginal people to secure employment on release. The longer term effects of the program in terms of continuity of employment, offending

behaviour and recidivism also remain unknown. While the immediate effects of the program suggest that positive longer term impacts will follow, further research and analysis is required. Dedicated resources for tracking a sample of graduates should be considered, provided that ethical requirements are met. At the community level, strong engagement and desire for continuity are apparent, with reports of Aboriginal prisoners returning to community life, albeit often with some adjustment issues. The DECCA Program appears to have had a beneficial impact on RRP in terms of highlighting the needs and potential of Aboriginal prisoners, and on associated attitudes of some prison staff. More broadly, as an innovative model it has catalysed a related initiative in WA and received high levels of interest from interstate.

Addressing resource constraints would increase program impact

The scale of the DECCA Program matches that of many other innovative programs focusing on prisoner support and rehabilitation. It is relatively small and operates with limited resources, to some extent on the margins of mainstream prison operations. Overall, around 31 participants per year on average have participated in the program over its five years of operation. These limited numbers are partly attributable to periods of uncertainty and reduced operations beyond the program's control, and also reflect limited resources. Increased levels of resourcing, including numbers of staff, have been previously recommended by the WA Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services for the program, and would certainly increase the level of impact from its operation. With the planned relocation of DECCA to the RRP campus within a newly constructed work camp, there is an opportunity to provide a boost to this important initiative. More broadly, the level of resources flowing to education and vocational training in WA's prisons appears to be of ongoing concern, and this is exacerbated in a remote context. The need for wider attention and resourcing for this area has been highlighted in a range of reports. Increasing levels of staffing and resources for the DECCA initiative would raise levels of participation, allow more dedicated management time, and provide a more consistent and stable funding base.

The culturally appropriate program design has increased a sense of local ownership

The effectiveness of the program is reliant on its engagement with local Aboriginal people and specifically with the NBAC, which manages the DECCA site on behalf of traditional owners. Engagement during both design and operation of the program has been important to the level of acceptance and sense of local ownership of the initiative. Importantly, these positive views were shared by prisoners, who welcomed the involvement of Aboriginal stakeholders and appreciated being able to work on Aboriginal land, with the benefits of their work serving the Aboriginal community. They indicated potential for and interest in extending their work role to more Aboriginal community settings.

Program effectiveness is reinforced by a focus on real employment opportunities

Mining and building/construction are areas of high labour demand and skills acquisition, and certification is targeted accordingly. Employers value the content and learning approach, with its focus on team-based activities and personal responsibility. Specific vocational learning is also backed by more general educational activities which serve to fill gaps and broaden the skills learned. The focus on areas such as literacy, numeracy and IT are important in this regard. More generally, having prisoners develop a propensity to learn and see learning as a positive and worthwhile experience are valuable attributes of training at DECCA. Given a move into employment, the experience at DECCA is likely to be one of a number of work-based training experiences.

Private sector and educational and community partnerships are critical

Partnerships developed by DECCA expand the reach, impact, level of acceptance and available resources for the program. This applies to partnerships with the private sector, the Pilbara Institute and the NBAC. The partnerships build on the cooperation of organisations with mutually reinforcing aspirations and strengthen the role of RRP as a community resource promoting training and rehabilitation of Aboriginal prisoners.

Proactive employment strategies, mentoring and case management are needed

The need for proactive strategies to identify employment opportunities for Aboriginal people and specifically for prisoners, and to promote their recruitment, has been emphasised in the literature and further validated in the experience of the DECCA Program. Other proactive strategies include the use of a strong case management approach which involves skills, gaps and aspirations being identified early, and a specific program of study identified. Although it could benefit from further strengthening, the system used in DECCA shows such potential. In an employment context, the experience of DECCA graduates highlights the value of provision of ongoing support and mentoring. This assists former prisoners to make the transition into employment and back to the community. Prisoners can face a broad range of challenges in the reintegration process in areas such as housing and family relationships which, without appropriate supports being in place, have the potential to otherwise undermine advances made in the area of employment.

Learning pathways for prisoners are valuable and worthwhile

The operation of the DECCA Program underlines the importance of learning pathways for prisoners which cover basic education and extend to pre-vocational and vocational offerings. Participation in vocational training relies on a range of other skills and attributes, such as literacy, numeracy and communication. Mining and construction workplaces, for example, rely on employees being able to respond to a range of OHS signage and requirements. For many prisoners, foundation skills will often need to be built in a mainstream, prison-based context before or alongside vocational training. Being

able to identify learning pathways for prisoners which lead to vocational training is likely to represent a positive objective and aspiration for prisoners undertaking educational activities. The operation of educational assessment and training activities at RRP and through DECCA specifically demonstrate the value of this approach, albeit with a limited number of prisoners.

The model needs to be flexible enough to achieve a fit with different prisoner needs

Prisoners have a diverse range of needs, and sentence lengths vary widely. While the DECCA Program offers a core certificate-based training program, its flexibility in allowing attendance for parts of the program and completion of individual trade certificates has been a positive feature. This has promoted wider attendance and increased opportunities and involvement for a broader base of prisoners.

There are opportunities to develop strategies to promote increased female participation in the DECCA Program, including identifying additional resources for female prison officers to supervise female trainees.

There are opportunities for greater overall attention to program planning and reporting

Consideration should be given to improving program planning and reporting functions, including detailing a more comprehensive program design document, giving attention to program objectives to encompass program intent, specifying expected outcomes, and monitoring and reporting regularly on progress in relation to intent, processes, outcomes and critical issues.

Consideration should be given to forming an internal RRP working group to promote coordination between different personnel and sections contributing to the DECCA Program. Consideration should also be given to developing a program reference group comprising representatives of key partner organisations in order to promote information exchange, engagement and further commitment to the initiative.

There are opportunities for greater attention to monitoring and evaluation

There are opportunities for greater overall attention being given to monitoring and evaluation encompassing a range of program performance areas, including educational, employment and other outcomes, educational approaches used, and stakeholder engagement.

Consideration should be given to improving data collection and integration, including drawing together data in relation to education and employment, and providing particular attention to graduate employment status. Conducting recidivism analysis by monitoring reoffending data and making comparisons to an appropriate control group should be considered. This may be achieved by using the available resources within the Department of Corrective Services.

9. Findings: Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)

9.1 Summary of program

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program commenced in 2006 and is run in partnership by the Department of Sport and Recreation Aboriginal Outdoor Recreation Program (AORP) and the Tasmanian Prison Service. The program is open to Aboriginal prisoners pre and post release who meet the Tasmanian Government's Aboriginality criteria and have a minimum security clearance. The program aims to enhance the reintegration of male Aboriginal prisoners into society after release. The program structure involves completion of two three-day camps on Aboriginal cultural specific land. An Aboriginal cultural advisor attends both camps.

The focus of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program is on improving participants' health and wellbeing by using Aboriginal culture, outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy workshops. The first camp aims to engage participants in a range of cultural and outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy workshops to assist personal growth and affirm the value of identity and culture. This first camp involves a series of challenges to help participants develop outdoor skills and to foster teamwork and trust. The first camp also provides participants with the underpinning skills and knowledge required for the second camp, which is held one to two months later. The second camp is a more challenging three-day trek into the wilderness that may include visiting a cave of Aboriginal significance. Successful completion of the second camp is the more mentally and physically challenging part of the program.

While the Aboriginal Reconnect Program started as an isolated intervention, since 2008 it has become a vehicle for longer term support through Colony 47's Aboriginal-specific prisoner throughcare programs.[59] In practice there is a clear relationship between the Aboriginal Reconnect Program and these programs. An additional purpose of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program is to enhance participants' capacity to participate in these throughcare programs, and conversely these programs aim to embed and build on outcomes achieved as a result of participation in the Aboriginal Reconnect Program. Since 2008, Colony 47, Sport and Recreation Tasmania (through the AORP and the Wilderness Program) and the Tasmanian Prison Service have been delivering the Aboriginal Reconnect Program in partnership. However, the intentionality of this relationship is unstated in program documentation.

[59] Colony 47 is a not-for-profit organisation offering support services to disadvantaged Tasmanians.

Sport and Recreation Tasmania oversees the operational aspects of the camps, including:

- Leading and coordinating the wilderness therapy direction of the camps
- Risk management documentation in accordance with Wilderness Program requirements
- Risk management practices, briefing and instruction of adventure activities during the camps
- A dedicated 24-hour contact person to coordinate emergency responses and course support.

Colony 47 has responsibility for:

- Leading and coordinating cultural activities
- Liaising with Wilderness Program facilitators on camp planning.

The Tasmanian Prison Service has responsibility for:

- Selection of participants in liaison with the AORP Project Officer
- Participant medical histories and associated controls that manage known health risks.

The program reaches small numbers of offenders overall; in total 19 offenders have participated in nine camps since 2006 as follows:

		Camp 1	**Camp 2**
2006	2 x 3 day camps	3 participants	1 participant
2007	1 x 3 day camp	2 participants	–
2008	2 x 3 day camps	5 participants	4 participants
2010	2 x 3 day camps	5 participants	5 participants
2011	2 x 3 day camps	4 participants	3 participants

9.2 Program logic

The following table shows the 'program logic' of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program. This was developed together with Aboriginal Reconnect Program representatives and shows the connection between the inputs into the program, outputs of the program, and expected changes in the medium term (outcomes) and longer term (impacts).

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
No specific funding allocated for the program Staff resources through existing positions within Sport and Recreation Tasmania, Tasmanian Prison Service and Colony 47 implement the program. No dedicated positions available for the program Colony 47 provides the cultural component and public liability insurance for cultural activities through separate funding stream from Attorney-General's Department (no longer available)	Completion of camps (2 x 3 days)	Increased awareness of culture and identity Improved self-discipline, self-expression and confidence Improved team participation skills Improved motivation Improved knowledge of and commitment to healthy lifestyle Increased trust and experience of safe and supportive environments	Healthier lifestyle for participants Participants have greater social connectedness Contribution to crime prevention

9.3 Methodology

The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is outlined in Chapter 3, where key themes were identified which typify good practice in the Offender Support and Reintegration area. These serve as a reference point for analysis against the good practice themes (see 9.4 below). These themes also provide a tool for assessing the program's initiatives on a scale from 'excellent to very good practice' to 'adequate practice' or 'poor practice' (see 9.5 below). Evidence for the evaluation of the Aboriginal Reconnect program was gathered through analysis of documentation and data, and through interviews and consultations. Finally, based on the evidence gained, lessons learned were identified and recommendations generated (see 9.6 below).

Documentation and data analysed	The literature on offender support and reintegration. Materials relating to model planning and development and program aims and objectives, data collection processes, processes for review and learning, training, program costs and expenditure. Program records in relation to participant numbers and demographics, and program completion. Secondary analysis of program evaluation data (participant surveys and feedback and debrief reports).

Interviews and consultations conducted	A site visit to Hobart in November 2011, where interviews were conducted with representatives from Tasmania Prison Service, Sport and Recreation Tasmania (the Wilderness Program and Aboriginal Outdoor Recreation Program), Colony 47 and community Elders. Telephone interviews with representatives from Tasmania Prison Service, Sport and Recreation Tasmania (the Wilderness Program and Aboriginal Outdoor Recreation Program) and Colony 47.

9.4 Findings in relation to the good practice themes

This section provides an assessment of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program against the 10 good practice themes identified in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, as outlined in Table 3a in Chapter 3.

What is a good intervention?

Theme 1: Focusing on crime prevention and aiming to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program is focused on building protective factors that may assist with reintegration by improving participants' health and wellbeing through the use of Aboriginal culture, outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy activities. It is based on a model of practice developed by Project Hahn Inc., a wilderness therapy program that now resides with Sport and Recreation Tasmania as the Wilderness Program,[60] providing opportunities for young people to participate in outdoor recreation activities which encourage personal and social development. The Aboriginal Reconnect Program has an added cultural component to enhance the integration of Aboriginal prisoners post release.

[60] The Wilderness Program is a primary prevention program that assists people who are contemplating change to realise their potential and tap into the benefits flowing from making positive choices

The use of risk-recreation activities such as bushwalking, abseiling, caving and kayaking, provide an intervention that allows the individual the freedom to make choices. As a learning tool, future behaviours are influenced through the continued reinforcement of personal decisions which reap success and the extinguishing of behaviours that potentially cause distress or simply do not measure up.

The bush setting provides an opportunity to search for personal meaning unencumbered by modern day technological tools. This search for meaning is achieved through development of positive self-efficacy, non-verbal exercising through body movement, exploration of one's emotional responses to the world and living in the here and now.

The social norms agreed to by participants include: giving and accepting constructive feedback; no put-downs of self or others; respecting physical and emotional safety; goal setting; confidentiality and abstinence.

The literature suggests that juvenile wilderness challenge programs, which immerse youth in activities that challenge their skills and self-concepts, reduce reoffending by 0–18% (Aos et al., 2006; Drake et al., 2009; Gass, 1993; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Wilson & Lipsey, 2000).[61] However, the literature indicates that challenge programs have no appreciable impact on reoffending unless they are paired with therapeutic components such as counselling or therapeutic group sessions (Wilson & Lipsey, 2000). Other factors which have been found in the literature to impact on successful outcomes for wilderness programs are thorough assessment and ongoing monitoring of participants, a risk management assessment of activities and screening of program staff, multi-modal treatments with a cognitive-behavioural orientation, addressing specific criminogenic needs, meaningful and substantial contact between participants and treatment personnel, and inclusion of an aftercare component (Lan, Sveen & Davidson, 2004; Wilson & Lipsey, 2000; and Wilson & MacKenzie, 2006).

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program model incorporates some, but not all, of these factors. For example, it includes thorough assessment (but not ongoing monitoring of participants), a risk management assessment of activities and screening of program staff. However, the program in and of itself does not focus on criminogenic needs, nor is it paired with therapeutic components or does it include an aftercare component (however, the aftercare component was addressed between 2009 and 2011 through the involvement of Colony 47, as discussed below). The Wilderness Program within Sport and Recreation Tasmania recognises that the level of change offenders need to make, coupled with the internal and external barriers/challenges they experience, requires much more support than the camps can provide. Between 2006 and 2008 the camps were run as a one-off intervention, but from 2009 to 2011 the camps were run collaboratively between the Wilderness Program, the Tasmanian Prison Service and Colony 47. This provided participants with access to a before and aftercare component through Colony 47's Aboriginal-specific throughcare prison program.

From 2009, all participants of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program were also connected to Colony 47's Aboriginal-specific throughcare prison program – the DEEWR-funded Justice Mentor Program – which later evolved into the Attorney-General's Department-funded Healing Our Way Program. These programs include weekly group therapy for offenders around men's health and wellbeing, drug and alcohol treatment, assistance with accommodation post release, support to reintegrate with family, and support to access education and training. They are facilitated by counselling staff with knowledge and understanding of issues facing Aboriginal people. The Aboriginal Reconnect Program acts as a gateway for more effective participation in these longer term programs, and conversely these programs provide a mechanism for ongoing support for participants pre and post completion of Aboriginal Reconnect Program camps. The mutual benefit across the programs is the contribution of the camps in fast-tracking the development of group safety and support mechanisms; reciprocally, the

[61] It should be noted that most of the literature in this area focuses on juveniles and young people, and there is limited information available about their impact in the adult population.

group support provided by the Justice Mentor Program and Healing Our Way Program embeds benefits gained through the camps outside the camp context.

Significantly, since the end of 2011 Colony 47 no longer has funding to provide the Justice Mentor Program or Healing Our Way Program, and no alternative mechanism has been established for ongoing follow-up. The implication of this is that the enhancement of the efficacy of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program camps through partnership with these aftercare and counselling programs is no longer available, and subsequently the Aboriginal Reconnect Program has not been delivered since 2011.

Due to data gaps and the very small number of participants (19 participants over five years), it is difficult to assess the direct impact of participation in the Aboriginal Reconnect Program on recidivism. Data gaps relate to the identification of past participants being a manual process, and the lack of availability of a suitable control group given small numbers of Aboriginal offenders in the Tasmanian prison system[62] – making it very difficult to match by offending history, type of offence, number of offences, period in custody, etc. Additionally, because most participants also participated in the Justice Mentor Program or the Healing Our Way Program, it is difficult to assess to what extent outcomes are attributable to the Aboriginal Reconnect Program in isolation to the broader suite of programs within which it is offered. Multivariate regression analysis to this effect would be useful, but overall program numbers are insufficient for this.

Assessing a reduction in recidivism is also significantly problematic given that the Aboriginal Reconnect Program does not directly focus on offending behaviour. Indicators that are more closely matched to the program aims include preparedness for group therapy, enhanced capacity to participate in available Aboriginal-specific prison aftercare programs, and measures of self-esteem and wellbeing. In this context it is more appropriate to consider the program in terms of its capacity to contribute to change, rather than attempting to attribute change directly to it.

In assessing success, a blend of qualitative and quantitative measures is required in order to better understand why certain results were achieved or not achieved, to explain unexpected outcomes, and to inform decisions about program modifications. The outcomes achieved by the Aboriginal Reconnect Program within this context are discussed in Theme 4 below.

What is a good model?

Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap

Aboriginal people are over-represented in the Tasmanian corrections system, as they are in corrections systems nationwide. Aboriginal Tasmanians are 3–4 times more likely to be involved in the

[62] In the March quarter 2012 the average daily number of Aboriginal men in full-time custody was 74 men (ABS 2012).

corrections system than non-Aboriginal Tasmanians. In terms of absolute numbers, the overall Aboriginal offender population is small (approximately 70 prisoners and 130 offenders). However, in March 2011 Tasmania experienced the largest proportional increase in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment rate (20%) compared with other states and territories.

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program was developed to assist the reintegration of Aboriginal men into their community and society after release from prison. The program model was developed and piloted in 2006 through a collaboration between the Tasmanian Prison Service and Sport and Recreation Tasmania's AORP, through the Wilderness Program. The model is one of the longest-running Outward Bound derivative programs in Australia (commencing in 1983 as Project Hahn), and provides opportunities for young people over age 15 years to participate in outdoor recreation activities to encourage personal and social development.

As described in Theme 1 above, prior to 2009 the Aboriginal Reconnect Program operated independently of the Aboriginal-specific programs offered by Colony 47. Prior to its involvement with the Aboriginal Reconnect Program, Colony 47 commissioned an independent report in 2008 to evaluate the needs of Aboriginal prisoners (Langford, 2008). The report identified a lack of specific programs that work in a holistic way with Aboriginal men in custody. The report identified the need for programs that focus on men's health and wellbeing, counselling staff with knowledge and understanding of issues facing Aboriginal people, drug and alcohol treatment, accommodation post release, support to reintegrate with family, building community capacity through access to education and training, and coordinated long-term commitment to service provision. One of the strategies identified in the report to address these gaps was programs that reconnect participants to community and country by providing a series of cultural healing opportunities, facilitating interaction with Elders, facilitating peer and community mentors, and providing Aboriginal counsellors and wilderness-based therapy facilitators. The Justice Mentor Program and Healing Our Way Program were developed to try to address some of these needs.

The pilot of the Justice Mentor Program indicated that it was not meeting the needs of a number of Aboriginal offenders who simply were not program-ready as a result of issues relating to disadvantage through the life course, including family dysfunction, substance misuse, lack of identity and connection to culture, and removal from family. A need was identified to develop Aboriginal offenders' readiness for group therapy. Inclusion of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program into the suite of programs offered by Colony 47's Aboriginal-specific prisoner support programs was therefore in response to this service gap.

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program was seen as a gateway into these Aboriginal-specific reintegration programs, using wilderness therapy and providing challenges to engage and build mutual trust between participants, and between participants and counsellors. Discussions with program facilitators and Tasmanian Prison Service staff suggest that participants tend to open up and discuss personal

issues more easily in more culturally comfortable settings, such as outdoor environments, than as part of structured programs within a prison setting. The isolated and remote settings were also felt to provide distance from day-to-day pressures and stressors faced by participants. The intensity of wilderness and associated physical challenges was also thought to contribute to a perceived environment that was conducive to relationship- and trust-building, as well as opportunities for participants to experience success.

The program reaches small numbers of offenders overall, and is not run frequently enough to include all Aboriginal prisoners who may want to participate. In total, 32 offenders participated in nine camps between 2006 and 2011. Around two-thirds of participants (13 out of 19) who participated in a first camp went on to complete a second camp.

As discussed above, Colony 47 no longer has funding to run either the Justice Mentor Program or the Healing Our Way Program, so there is no mechanism for aftercare or ongoing support of participants. Given the Wilderness Program recognises that justice clients do not get sufficient outcomes if the Aboriginal Reconnect Program is conducted without a connection to other Aboriginal-specific reintegration programs, the program has not run since March 2011. Currently there are no programs that have replaced the Justice Mentor Program, the Healing Our Way Program or the Aboriginal Reconnect Program, so there is a gap that has emerged in programs supporting the reintegration of Aboriginal men into their community and society after release from prison.

Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation

The design of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program was undertaken jointly by the Aboriginal Support Liaison Officer, the Tasmanian Prison Service and the AORP Project Officer at Sport and Recreation Tasmania. Although no broader community consultation was undertaken in the design of the program, the fact that it was designed by Aboriginal people with expertise across both offender support and wilderness therapy is appropriate for the size and scope of the program.

Overall, the Aboriginal Reconnect Program operates within a cultural framework with a strong emphasis on culture and history. The Tasmanian Prison Service, Wilderness Program representatives and Colony 47 stakeholders felt that this framework was conducive to young men opening up about personal issues, often for the first time. Participant feedback indicates that participants valued the opportunity to talk about cultural issues, and for some this had a profound impact. Program partner stakeholders believed that the group environment involving Aboriginal peers and facilitators helped participants to understand the challenges of being an Aboriginal person and learn from the experiences of others, and that it promoted a feeling that others also face some of the issues they face.

Cultural mentors are embedded into the program design and are present on all camps. Aboriginal facilitators and co-facilitators are seen as crucial to building trust among program participants. During

the pilot the Aboriginal Project Officer at the Wilderness Program fulfilled the role of Camp Coordinator and coordinated the cultural components of the camp. This was a designated position. In 2009, when the partnership between the Wilderness Program and Colony 47 was established, these culturally specific components of the pilot were upheld. Specifically, as the cultural activities and components of the camps were considered to be beyond the organisational scope of the Wilderness Program, these aspects were outsourced to Aboriginal staff at Colony 47. Aboriginal counsellors employed by Colony 47 through the Justice Mentor Program and Healing Our Way Program attended the camps and planned and organised the cultural activities These counsellors provided ongoing support to participants through their involvement with these Aboriginal-specific prison aftercare programs. Colony 47 also provided the additional insurance required to cover the cultural activities of the camps. Overall camp coordination, however, still fell under the jurisdiction of the Wilderness Program within Sport and Recreation Tasmania.

In addition to the Colony 47 Aboriginal counsellors, cultural advisors (Elders or respected persons from the Tasmanian Aboriginal community) had a role providing cultural support to the participating young men on the camps. Cultural advisors are selected on the basis that they have maturity and strong cultural ties and can harness respect among the participants, as well as being a source of cultural knowledge and expertise. Feedback from cultural advisors and stakeholders from the Tasmanian Prison Service, the Wilderness Program and Colony 47 highlights the value for participants of community advisors in contextualising the unique historical and social issues facing Aboriginal prisoners, as well as sharing stories with individuals about their immediate and extended families. No mechanisms exist within the context of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program model for ongoing contact or support by cultural advisors of participants following camp completion (although this may happen incidentally as part of participants' subsequent participation in the Justice Mentor Program or the Healing Our Way Program, given their focus on reconnecting with culture and community).

Other broader Tasmanian Aboriginal involvement in the Aboriginal Reconnect Program has included community organisations such as the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC), the South East Tasmania Aboriginal Corporation (SETAC) and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (TALSC). Involvement of these community organisations included providing assistance with cultural activities and introducing participants to significant cultural sites. The involvement of these organisations highlights the availability of culturally specific support post release. However, again no mechanisms exist within the context of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program model to facilitate ongoing contact or support between these organisations and participants.

Stakeholders felt that the fact that the camps provided access to culturally significant sites was significant for participants because it was very experiential and helped to facilitate a connection to land, culture and heritage. It also provided a secure space for those prisoners who were less connected with their culture to learn about Aboriginal culture in an environment that celebrated

Aboriginal cultural identity. An example of how camp activities allowed connection through cultural practices was a Healing Our Way Program initiative, run in partnership with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, where community advisors worked with Aboriginal Reconnect Program camp participants to recreate a traditional Tasmanian Aboriginal bark canoe. This was a very significant project for the wider Aboriginal community as well, as a canoe of this nature had not been built in over 170 years. The successful return crossing of the D'Entrecasteaux Channel in the canoe covered a distance of almost 4 kilometres.

As noted already, Colony 47 no longer has funding to run either the Justice Mentor Program or the Healing Our Way Program, so there is no mechanism within the Aboriginal Reconnect Program to provide the cultural component of the camps or provide aftercare and ongoing support of participants.

Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent

As noted already, the Aboriginal Reconnect Program is one of a very small number of Aboriginal-specific prison programs in Tasmania. The program reaches small numbers of offenders overall. In total, 32 offenders participated in nine camps between 2006 and 2011. Thirteen out of the 19 participants who participated in the first camp went on to complete the second camp.

The current project aim is to be a vehicle for longer term support through Aboriginal-specific prisoner throughcare programs. While overall qualitative feedback indicates program participants experienced positive personal outcomes in engagement and motivation to participate in Aboriginal specific throughcare programs, there is limited data available to support this. For example, participation in these throughcare programs among participants of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program is not tracked. The discussion of Theme 8 below also details the inconsistencies in completion (and lack of completion) of the participant evaluation tools that have been developed to provide feedback on the Aboriginal Reconnect Program.

Greater overall focus on monitoring and evaluation within the Aboriginal Reconnect Program is required to assess whether outcomes for participants align with the intent of the program. There are opportunities to measure this more formally by using some of the tools that have been used to assess the impact of Project Hahn (now the Wilderness Program), the program upon which the Aboriginal Reconnect Program is based. For example, Lan, Sveen and Davidson (2004) investigated affective and cognitive outcomes pre, post and at follow-up among Project Hahn participants, including measures of self-esteem, self-actualisation, hopelessness and wellbeing. Behavioural measures of education, employment and recidivism were also used (Lan, Sveen & Davidson, 2004).

Notwithstanding the limitations in the availability of verifiable data for this evaluation of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program, qualitative feedback from program partners and limited feedback from participants collected by program staff post camp and reported broadly in post-camp debrief reports suggests that the Aboriginal Reconnect Program has the potential to provide a range of benefits for

participants. Stakeholders consulted throughout the evaluation cited numerous examples of short-term outcomes for participants, such as:

- *Greater awareness of participants' culture and identity:* Program partners noted that a many Aboriginal young people in Tasmania have been separated from family groupings as children (i.e. in out-of-home care) and as a result may have lost family and cultural links, and may not have had opportunities to participate in cultural rights of passage. By visiting culturally significant sites, and through the intensive support of Aboriginal facilitators, Aboriginal community mentors and Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations such as the TAC, SETAC and TALSC, the Aboriginal Reconnect Program provides opportunities for participants to connect with their culture.

- *Improved self-discipline, self-expression, confidence and self-esteem skills:* Program partners felt that wilderness therapy allows participants to overcome self-doubt during the camp and understand that they can achieve something if they really try. This sentiment was supported by some of the comments in participant feedback forms. Tasmanian Prison Service stakeholders noticed a change in the behaviour of participants post camp; for example, where previously they may have been antagonistic toward prison staff, their behaviour was noted to be more polite and amenable.

- *Individuals achieving common goals by working solely and also as a team:* Program partners believe that the social norms that are agreed to by the group at the start of the program, called the 'Full Value Agreement', greatly assist the group to establish a code of acceptable behaviour. One of the key features of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program model is that everyone has a role, the workload is shared, and meeting challenges requires trusting, and the trust of, other team members.

- *Increased motivation of participants:* One of the ways this is achieved is through goal-setting. The risk-recreation activities used on the Aboriginal Reconnect Program are the medium and catalyst for change. Setting a goal of relevance to achieve during the program flags the individual's intention to change. Setting goals that are specific, measurable, achievable and relevant within a specific timeframe are encouraged.

- *Increased social interaction of Aboriginal people:* Relationship-building through post-camp custodial and post-release follow-up is a key feature of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program model. Examples include post-camp participation in Colony 47's Healing Our Way Men's Group to support reintegration to family, work and independence (operating in both custodial and non-custodial settings).

- *Encouraging a healthy lifestyle for Aboriginal people:* This is encouraged through the use of outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy activities, and the fact that the camp is illicit drug and alcohol free. Incarcerated participants are subject to drug testing to ensure this is the case.

- *A safe and supportive environment where strengths can be developed:* One of the key features of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program model is that participants get to experience the success of meeting a significant challenge through the physical elements of the camp.

As discussed, further investigation is required to assess the extent of these outcomes across the participant group, whether they are lasting or transitory, and the extent to which they interact with the broader outcomes achieved the Aboriginal-specific prisoner throughcare programs.

Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement

An AORP Community Advisory Group (formally known as the Reference Group) was established in 2008 to guide and develop a strategy for the various programs under the AORP (of which the Aboriginal Reconnect Program is one) and to ensure they reflect the needs of the Aboriginal community. The group met several times between 2008 and 2009 but has not met since 2009. One of the goals of the group was to identify a pool of suitable Aboriginal people who could be trained as mentors or facilitators in a range of outdoor education programs targeting Aboriginal people. This goal was not achieved, and no Aboriginal people have been trained as facilitators as a result of the Community Advisory Group process. Consultations conducted for the evaluation made reference to tension between Sport and Recreation Tasmania and the Community Advisory Group regarding the level of influence that the group should have regarding allocation of Sport and Recreation resources, and this appears to have been a factor in the disbandment of the group.

While cultural advisors (Elders or respected persons from the Tasmanian Aboriginal community) are invited to provide cultural support to the participating young men, there are varying levels of self-reported satisfaction among the advisors about their participation. One advisor felt there was a lack of opportunities for advisors to provide input into how the camps should run. He noted that cultural advisors are not involved in the planning process for the camps, and to his mind there were not enough opportunities to impart cultural knowledge and understanding to participants or opportunities for one-on-one discussions with them. He felt he was underutilised and that his presence felt more tokenistic than valuable.

There are no clear guidelines or protocols within the Aboriginal Reconnect Program model for selecting, briefing or training Elders and respected community members for their role within the program as cultural advisors, and the process for this is informal and opportunistic. Opportunities exist for greater standardisation of briefing and training for Elders and respected community persons. In terms of training, there are opportunities to better prepare Elders for their role in relation to their

understanding of justice issues, particularly offender support and reintegration, and risk factors for reoffending. Also cultural advisors should be sufficiently briefed about the Aboriginal Reconnect Program approach and intent, how it fits with the Justice Mentor Program and the Healing Our Way Program, privacy and confidentiality issues, program parameters, and the role of group work. This would enhance the capacity-building effect of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program for Elders and community members and potentially increase the capacity for greater participation in the program. These opportunities need to be balanced with enough flexibility to respond to variations in terms of the skills and available pool of Elders and respected community persons willing to take on these types of roles.

In terms of gender inclusivity, no women have participated in the Aboriginal Reconnect Program. Program partners believe including women on the camps with men (either as participants, facilitators or community mentors) would detract from the impact for the participating male prisoners given the focus on 'men's business' in a range of cultural activities. The viability of developing a women's program has not been explored, although in the March quarter of 2012 the average daily number of Aboriginal women in full-time custody was only eight (ABS, 2012).

Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration

The successful collaboration and coordination between the Aboriginal Reconnect Program and Colony 47 enabled the project to remain operational in a tight funding environment. This collaboration also enabled the program to become a gateway for more effective participation in Colony 47's longer term Aboriginal-specific throughcare programs. Conversely, these programs provided a mechanism for ongoing support to Aboriginal Reconnect Program participants post camp. Funding no longer exists to support this collaboration, and no alternative service provider or funding source has been identified. Any future collaboration with Aboriginal-specific throughcare prison programs should seek to measure the effectiveness of these relationships.

While there has been evidence of some degree of coordination with other services in delivering the Aboriginal Reconnect Program (e.g. TAC, SETAC, TALSC), the cooperation and goodwill established through these connections have not been sufficient to draw in services and resources to allow the program to continue without the support of Colony 47.

Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program raises the profile of the needs of Aboriginal prisoners among the partner organisations – the Tasmanian Prison Service, Sport and Recreation Tasmania and, until recently, Colony 47. Given its limited scope, it has limited capacity to contribute to broader advocacy and systems reform.

What is a well managed and delivered program?

Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program has operated through the efforts of committed staff at the Tasmanian Prison Service and the Wilderness Program and through financial and cultural support from Colony 47. The program is reportedly well regarded at senior management level within the Wilderness Program and the Tasmanian Prison Service. This top-down support helps to mitigate potential resistance for a dedicated program targeting Aboriginal prisoners. While the Aboriginal Reconnect Program camps are governed by the Wilderness Program Risk and Emergency Management Framework and procedures (a robust and contemporary risk management system), the program has required flexibility and responsiveness among the program partners to develop appropriate protocols and procedures to manage a program of this nature.

The camps appear to be scheduled on an ad-hoc basis, with no clear forward planning regarding scheduling. The program would benefit from the implementation of more frequent and formal processes to enable forward planning.

There are limited mechanisms within the Aboriginal Reconnect Program model to support continuous quality improvement. A debrief meeting involving staff from the program partners occurs after each camp. Information from this debrief session, along with participant feedback information (where this exists), is compiled into a summary report prepared by Sport and Recreation Tasmania. It is unclear to what extent the information arising from the debrief sessions has contributed to program improvement.

While a participant evaluation form has been developed to provide feedback on the program, completion of this has been inconsistent. While some participants complete the questionnaire, for others feedback is collected verbally and paraphrased for the debrief report, or used as anecdotal input into the post-camp debrief process with program partners. A thorough analysis of participant feedback is not possible because it is not collated or analysed. The inconsistent completion of participant evaluation forms limits the capacity of the program to measure participant outcomes in line with program intent, as well as the capacity to gather sufficient information to inform continuous program improvement. Additionally, the participant evaluation tools do not include measures that would assist in determining whether outcomes have been achieved in line with program intent. As discussed, it would be worth considering using some of the tools that have been used to assess the impact of Project Hahn, such as affective and cognitive outcomes pre, post and at follow-up among Aboriginal Reconnect Program participants, including measures of self-esteem, self-actualisation, hopelessness and wellbeing. Behavioural measures of education, employment and recidivism have also been included in previous evaluations of Project Hahn, and may be considered within the context of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program.

There is also potential for greater overall focus on monitoring and evaluation that encompasses a range of program performance areas, including motivation and capacity to participate in other offender support and rehabilitation programs (including Aboriginal-specific prisoner throughcare programs, group therapy and drug and alcohol treatment) and the ability to reflect on program content. A blend of qualitative and quantitative measures should be considered as a means to better understanding why certain results were achieved or not achieved, explaining unexpected outcomes, and informing decisions about program modifications. Addressing these considerations will enhance the opportunity for continuous program improvement, as well as providing indicators more closely aligned to the intent of the program and thus better measurements of program success.

Detailed program proposals are prepared before each camp, including a rationale, aim, plan/timetable of planned activities, relevant personal information of participants and staff, insurance and risk management strategies, responsibilities of the various program partners, resource requirements, briefing logs, a communications plan, incident and emergency protocols, site information, and procedures for evaluation feedback and debrief. Consultations with program partners suggest that they understand and accept the program and the various responsibilities of the partners. While Wilderness Program facilitators undergo mandatory training as part of their role within the Wilderness Program, there is no specific training available relating to the Aboriginal Reconnect Program. Similarly, Colony 47 counsellors are trained as counsellors within a Justice Mentor Program or Healing Our Way Program context, but no specific training is available relating to the Aboriginal Reconnect Program. Opportunities exist to clearly outline and standardise the minimum skill sets required to deliver the program in order to ensure that all facilitators have adequate cultural competency and understanding of wilderness therapy and challenge, and are clear on the approach and intent of the program.

Overall, with limited resources, the Tasmanian Prison Service, the Wilderness Program and Colony 47 have shown a high degree of commitment to developing and coordinating the Aboriginal Reconnect Program. In this context, evident limitations in management practices are understandable but should be addressed.

Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program developed fairly organically in response to service gaps in Aboriginal-specific prison programs and holistic programs that reconnect Aboriginal prisoners to community and country through cultural healing opportunities. Early submissions prepared by the Wilderness Program outlined the rationale and aim of the program, an overview of planned activities, the target population, insurance and risk management strategies, responsibilities of the various program partners, resource requirements and procedures for evaluation and feedback. There is some inconsistency between the current program aims and the original program aims, but the original program aims are what are articulated in recent program proposals.

The intent of the program is clearly articulated as improving participants' health and wellbeing by using Aboriginal culture, outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy workshops, all of which are incorporated into the following objectives: greater awareness of culture and identity; improved self-discipline, self-expression, confidence and self-esteem skills; achieving common goals by working individually and also as a team; increased motivation; increased social interaction; encouraging a healthy lifestyle; and providing a safe and supportive environment where strengths can be developed. The program model, however, does not exhibit clear linkages between these intentions and the longer term program aim of reduction in offending and recidivism.

While the Aboriginal Reconnect Program started as an isolated intervention, since 2008 it has become a vehicle for longer term support of Colony 47's Aboriginal-specific prisoner throughcare programs. In practice there is a clear relationship between the Aboriginal Reconnect Program and these programs. One of the aims of Aboriginal Reconnect Program is to enhance participants' capacity to participate in these programs, and conversely these throughcare programs aim to embed and build on outcomes achieved as a result of participation in the Aboriginal Reconnect Program. The program model therefore requires revision to reflect this evolution.

Theme 10: Sustainability of the program/s over time

Program delivery continues to be constrained by limited and ad-hoc funding, and there is currently no allocated budget for the Aboriginal Reconnect Program.[63] Questions around sustainability may also be raised if only small numbers of Aboriginal prisoners continue to participate.

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program has operated on a limited budget, and is now in a period of uncertainty regarding ongoing funding and operations. The Aboriginal Reconnect Program camps have not run since March 2011, and there are no camps planned for the immediate future given the absence of a service provider to undertake both the cultural component of the camps and the $20 million public liability insurance required for the cultural activities undertaken on the camps.[64] This loss of funding also means the external service provider can no longer provide an aftercare component to the Aboriginal Reconnect Program through the Justice Mentor Program or Healing Our Way Program. Neither the Tasmanian Prison Service nor the Wilderness Program has funding or resources available to provide the cultural or aftercare components, or the insurance required for Aboriginal Reconnect Program cultural activities. Neither the Tasmanian Prison Service nor the Wilderness Program has had contact with a new provider, and involvement of a third party organisation similar to that provided by Colony 47 is required if the program is to continue.

[63] Sport and Recreation Tasmania funding still exists for Aboriginal programs, but Colony 47 funding is no longer available.

[64] Wilderness therapy camps are insured through Sport and Recreation Tasmania, but coverage does not extend to cultural activities delivered by external providers/persons.

9.5 Assessment against the good practice themes

The following table provides an assessment of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program against the good practice themes identified in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, as outlined in Table 3a in Chapter 3.

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
What is a good intervention?				
Theme 1: Focusing on crime prevention and aiming to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system		Focus of program on crime prevention by improving participants' health and wellbeing and social connectedness through culture, outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy.	Intention to achieve reduction in recidivism presents a significant challenge given the scale of program and lack of direct focus on offending behaviour.	Due to very small numbers of participants it is difficult to assess impact on access to other programs or reduction in recidivism.
What is a good model?				
Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap	Need for Aboriginal specific programs delivered in custodial contexts to prepare prisoners for other reintegration programs. Program designed as a gateway to prisoner throughcare programs.	Programs not run frequently enough to include all Aboriginal prisoners who may want to participate. However, given small overall Aboriginal prison numbers in Tasmania, and the available resources to conduct the Aboriginal Reconnect Program camps the scale of the program is reasonable.		

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation	Employment of Aboriginal facilitators and co-facilitators. Program operates within a cultural framework with strong emphasis on culture and history.	Although no broader community consultation undertaken during design, program designed by Aboriginal people with expertise across both offender support and wilderness therapy.	Due to a change of service provider, there is a lack of capacity to provide the cultural component of the program due to no contact being made with the new service provider.	
Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent		Overall feedback indicates program participants experienced positive personal outcomes in engagement and motivation to participate in Aboriginal specific throughcare programs.	While there was positive qualitative feedback about program outcomes, there was limited data available to support this.	
Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement		Although a Community Advisory Group was established it no longer operates due to issues around its role. Program includes Elders in the program but with mixed feedback about the success of this participatory practice.		No women have participated in the program.

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration		Program indicated it had developed relationships with the two main Aboriginal-specific throughcare prison programs and conversely these programs provided a mechanism for ongoing follow-up with participants post Aboriginal Reconnect Program camps. However, this cannot be verified with data available.	Due to the external service provider no longer having funding to support the program, there is a lack of capacity to provide the cultural component of the program due to no contact with a new service provider.	
Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders		Program raises the profile of the needs of Aboriginal prisoners among the partner organisations.		Given its limited scope it has had limited capacity to contribute to broader advocacy and systems reform.
What is a well managed and delivered program?				
Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes	Program has required flexibility and responsiveness by Tasmanian Prison Service and management by the program partners to develop appropriate protocols and procedures to manage considerable risks involved in wilderness and physical challenge activities.		There are no consistent participant feedback systems in place and there is no ongoing monitoring and evaluation data collected despite potential to track referrals made to other services.	

Area of focus	Excellent to very good practice	Adequate practice	Poor practice	Comments
Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent			Focus of program on improving health and wellbeing and social connectedness not clearly linked to aims of crime prevention. Program model and documentation does not allow clear link to be made to the broader program aim.	
Theme 10: Sustainability of the program/s over time			No Aboriginal Reconnect Program camp has run since March 2011, and there are no camps planned for the immediate future.	Delivery continues to be constrained by limited and ad-hoc funding.

9.6 Key lessons

The Aboriginal Reconnect Program focuses on improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal offenders by using Aboriginal culture, outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy. Since 2009 it has also focused on developing Aboriginal offenders' readiness for group therapy through the use of wilderness therapy challenges to engage and build mutual trust between participants, and between participants and counsellors. Its continued operation is under question due to significant funding and resource constraints which have meant it can no longer operate within a cultural framework or provide an aftercare component, which is seen as crucial to its success. This section highlights key lessons drawn from the evaluation of the program's operation.

Programs of this nature have limited effectiveness as isolated interventions, and a therapeutic and aftercare component is crucial

The existing literature on wilderness challenge programs suggests that the crime prevention impact of these types of programs is limited unless combined with other therapeutic and aftercare components. While the Aboriginal Reconnect Program started as isolated intervention, since 2009 it has become a vehicle for building capacity for transition to other Aboriginal-specific prisoner throughcare programs, and there is a clear relationship between the Aboriginal Reconnect Program and these longer term programs. Participation in these programs also has reciprocal benefits as they aim to embed and build on outcomes achieved through the Aboriginal Reconnect Program. The program model requires revision to reflect this evolution.

Partnerships are an effective means for addressing cultural and aftercare needs

Given the lack of internal capacity and resources within the Tasmanian Prison Service and Sport and Recreation Tasmania to provide the cultural component of the camps, or provide aftercare and ongoing support of participants, these gaps need to be filled through collaboration and partnerships with other services. Colony 47's loss of funding to provide Aboriginal-specific prisoner throughcare programs (and no similar relationship being developed with another service provider) has meant there is no mechanism within the Aboriginal Reconnect Program to address the therapeutic and aftercare needs of participants.

Evaluation of performance areas closely linked to program intent is crucial

The current program aim is to act as a vehicle to build capacity for transition to Aboriginal-specific prisoner throughcare programs, and for these programs providing longer term support to embed and build on outcomes achieved. This is not clearly reflected in the program intent as it is currently articulated, nor in the program's monitoring and evaluation data collection mechanisms. The program aims should be revised to reflect this intention. Additionally, there is potential for greater overall focus

on monitoring and evaluation that encompasses a range of program performance areas, including motivation and capacity to participate in other offender support and rehabilitation programs (including Aboriginal-specific prisoner throughcare programs, group therapy, drug and alcohol treatment, and ability to reflect on program content). There are opportunities to use some of the tools that have been used to assess the impact of Project Hahn such as affective and cognitive outcomes pre, post and at follow-up among participants, including measures of self-esteem, self-actualisation, hopelessness and wellbeing. Behavioural measures of education, employment and recidivism could also be considered. Addressing these considerations will enhance the opportunity for continuous program improvement as well as providing indicators more closely aligned to the intent of the program, and thus better measurements of program success.

An intention to reduce recidivism presents a significant challenge given the scale of the program and lack of direct focus on offender behaviour, and it is more appropriate to consider it in terms of its capacity to contribute to change, rather than attempting to attribute change directly to it. Indicators that are more closely matched to program intent include preparedness for group therapy, enhanced capacity to participate in available Aboriginal-specific prison aftercare programs, measures of self-esteem and wellbeing, and participation in Aboriginal-specific throughcare programs. While overall qualitative feedback indicates program participants experienced positive personal outcomes in terms of engagement and motivation, there is limited data available to support this. Should the program continue, greater overall attention to monitoring and evaluation is required.

There are service gaps in Tasmania relating to reintegration after release from prison

Currently there are no programs that have replaced the Justice Mentor Program, the Healing Our Way Program or the Aboriginal Reconnect Program. In the absence of other Aboriginal-specific prison programs, there is a significant gap in programs supporting the reintegration of Aboriginal people into their community and society after release from prison, as there are no other throughcare programs (mainstream or Aboriginal specific) available to Aboriginal offenders in Tasmania.

Opportunities exist to enhance the capacity-building effect of the program

Opportunities exist for greater standardisation of briefing and training for Elders and respected community persons in order to enhance the capacity-building effect of the Aboriginal Reconnect Program, and for greater participation in the program itself. These opportunities need to be balanced with the flexibility to respond to variations in the skills and available pool of Elders and respected community persons willing to take on these types of roles.

Among facilitators, opportunities exist to clearly outline and standardise the minimum skill sets required for facilitation of the program in order to ensure that all facilitators have adequate cultural

competency and understanding of wilderness therapy and challenges, and are clear on the approach and intent of the program.

10. Overall lessons about good practice

This chapter draws on the literature and individual program findings to describe the attributes of a *good intervention*, the attributes of a *good model* for delivering that intervention, and the attributes of a *well managed and delivered program*, and how these fit together to produce good practice. It presents key lessons about what works and what does not in terms of good practice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Offender Support and Reintegration programs.

10.1 Framework for assessing what works

Eight programs were selected for examination within Project B: Offender Support and Reintegration. All these programs had been previously screened and identified as being either 'good practice' or 'promising practice' and were included in the Good Practice Appendix to the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework. The programs evaluated were the:

- Dthina Yuwali Aboriginal Alcohol and Other Drug Program (NSW)
- Local Justice Worker Program (Victoria)
- Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)
- Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program (Victoria)
- Marumali Program (Victoria)
- Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)
- Roebourne DECCA Program (Western Australia), and
- Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania).

These programs were diverse in nature, ranging from programs aiming to strengthen cultural identity, promote healing, build personal skills and develop employment skills to programs aiming to develop a means to deal with substance abuse issues, increase compliance and prosocial behaviours, and forge pathways to relevant ancillary services. The literature reviewed for this report indicated that programs based on the Risks-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model using cognitive behaviour therapy treatment approaches were more evidence based and thus potentially more effective. Yet only a few programs in Project B were based primarily on this approach in relation to the treatment of substance use. The remaining programs operated more on a strengths-based approach in building personal competencies and skills of offenders so that they could adopt a prosocial lifestyle. A further model used by some of the programs targeted cultural factors, encouraging participants to embrace values, motivations and social commitments derived from their traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. The literature reviewed indicated that treatment models emphasising prosocial behaviour and

culture, while yielding positive benefits in relation to personal development, had not been well substantiated as capable of producing beneficial outcomes in relation to reducing reoffending.

The goals and objectives of the eight programs varied significantly and included aims to:

- Motivate young people to change around substance use, offending and reduction of harm associated with substance use and related offending
- Reduce recidivism through engagement with employment
- Provide offenders with greater awareness of their culture and identity
- Assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults on Community Corrections Orders to successfully complete their orders
- Encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners to connect or reconnect with their culture, strengthen their identity and re-examine their responsibilities to self, others and the community
- Assist prisoners in healing longstanding trauma and loss associated with stolen generations issues
- Assist prisoners by developing problem-solving skills based on cognitive behavioural therapy
- Increase the likelihood of offenders successfully completing community work and meeting fine obligations.

While the literature review indicated that an evidence base needs to be developed specifically about the types of interventions that are most effective in reducing offending, this evaluation has attempted to contribute to the growing body of knowledge through taking a wider view. With this in mind, the evaluation developed a conceptual framework that was applied to each of the eight programs in order to identify 10 common good practice themes, arranged according to three components:

- **What is a good intervention?** (effective evidence-based intervention and treatment models)
- **What is a good model?** (effective and appropriate program design and delivery), and
- **What is a well managed and delivered program?** (including adoption of a Results Based Management approach that includes integrated planning, monitoring and evaluation functions).

The diversity, range and transience of program models in the arena of offender support and reintegration created some challenges in establishing common principles for what works and what does not in terms of supporting offenders' reintegration post release and preventing reoffending among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities. Despite these challenges, the literature review provided a reasonable consensus as to aspects of good practice in Indigenous

Offender Support and Reintegration that should be included in the conceptual framework. Good practice principles for policies and practices reviewed included those specified in the National Crime Prevention Framework (AIC, 2012) and included:

- Strong and committed leadership at all levels
- Collaboration among multiple stakeholders to address the wide-ranging causes of crime and to draw upon the skills, expertise, resources and responsibilities necessary to address those causes
- The practical application of research and evaluation findings in the development and implementation of measures to reduce crime, targeted to areas of the greatest need and adapted to suit local conditions
- A focus on outcomes and a commitment to demonstrating measurable results through evaluation and performance measurement, with clear lines of accountability
- Building and maintaining the capacity to implement effective crime prevention policies and interventions
- Promoting an active and engaged community, and being responsive to the diversity and changing nature of communities
- Long-term commitment to achieving sustainable reductions in crime and savings to the criminal justice system and the community, and
- Coordination across sectors to embed crime prevention into relevant social and economic policies, including education, employment, health, and housing policies, particularly those directed towards at-risk communities, children, families and youth.

National Indigenous Justice Clearing House publications and other research publications have affirmed best practice as combining three things: 1) an evidence-based intervention approach that is 2) located in a program design that is based on cultural inclusivity, service partnerships and systems advocacy, and 3) effective management processes that gauge ongoing performance through routine monitoring and evaluation. This best practice paradigm is supported by the review of literature and prior evaluations as presented in Chapter 4. Some of the main concepts derived from the literature that have been used to construct the evaluation's analytical framework are summarised below.

The use of evidence-based interventions

There is still a lot of work to be done in establishing what works in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offender rehabilitation in criminal justice settings. This applies to both offender treatment and offender support.

The Risks-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model has been established in the literature as the dominant evidence-based model of offender rehabilitation in criminal justice settings. This model has been found to result in significant reductions in recidivism, particularly when programs have adhered to the risk and responsivity principles. While the RNR model has been found to be the dominant evidence-based model, culturally enhanced programs based on the RNR model may also reduce reoffending by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders. As crime prevention research progresses, and a greater knowledge base is established, programs should be able to base their rationale and program design on a wide range of evidence available from the research literature as to what works.

Another aspect of successful interventions is the place of strong case management approaches. These approaches have been affirmed in the literature as offering successful outcomes by providing tailored and customised support to individual offenders. Case management approaches can be successful when they adopt a holistic approach and address other risk factors simultaneously.

The RNR model and case management models share a focus on treatment and support customised to the individual offender's unique risks and needs, and this may be a common success factor for successful intervention.

Cultural inclusivity

The literature has affirmed that, despite lack of evidence about reducing reoffending, culturally enhanced programs may be more effective as they build cultural knowledge, self-image and pride; create a sense of identity, belonging and confidence; improve retention in programs; break down barriers to learning and provide a sense of achievement; enhance willingness to learn other skills; and build positive attitudes toward program providers and the wider society.

Service partnerships

While the literature has found that programs that are provided in community settings are generally more effective because the intervention occurs in the person's normal environment, interventions in custodial settings are found to be more effective in reducing reoffending when they include throughcare or an aftercare phase in the community. Therefore, service partnerships offer a critical dimension to program success in custodial settings.

For programs in both community and custodial settings, the need for effective service coordination and collaboration has been affirmed in the literature as providing opportunities for integrated and holistic interventions to address the wide range of risk factors related to offending. Effective coordination increases access to resources and service delivery capacity, as well as assisting offenders to navigate complex systems in order to access the required services.

Systems advocacy

Some literature suggests Indigenous organisations play a much larger role than merely delivering services. Many Indigenous organisations act as vehicles through which government policy is delivered, by delivering essential services that are normally provided by government, particularly in rural and remote communities. Indigenous-sector organisations also function to provide many Indigenous people with material security and help facilitate the expression of cultural and civic identity. The literature highlights the important role Indigenous organisations have in advocacy and policy-making processes aimed at facilitating positive social change and reducing disadvantage. Nevertheless, it is argued in the literature that government policy processes often fail to recognise the strategic importance of the sector as a whole and that the individual services that make up the sector are undervalued.

Effective program management

The literature has affirmed the principles of effective program design, including the importance of clear program intent and sound program documentation that outlines the approach to be adopted and the monitoring of progress and behavioural change outcomes achieved. The literature has further affirmed the importance of good management, effective organisational structures, performance management systems, clear policies and protocols, skilled and trained personnel, adequate funding and a focus on outcomes and continuous improvement.

Routine monitoring and evaluation

The literature strongly supports the need for programs to adopt an outcomes focus and have a commitment to continually improving their practices. The literature has supported the need for funders and programs to adopt a high level of commitment to monitoring and evaluation processes so that outcomes can be identified and assessed. The literature review has suggested that monitoring should be embedded into programs so that performance information can be regularly used to inform decision-making, resource allocation and program improvement, and that evaluation should be conducted periodically to determine whether goals and objectives have been achieved and to identify elements of good practice that can build the evidence base of what works.

The 10 good practice themes that form the conceptual framework for Project B are outlined in Table 3a in Chapter 3, and have been examined in detail in Chapters 5–9. Table 10a draws together the assessments of all eight programs against these themes.

10.2 Assessment of all programs against the good practice themes

Table 10a: Assessment of all programs

Good practice themes	Dthina Yuwali Program (NSW)	Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)	Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program, Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)	Roebourne DECCA (Western Australia)	Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)
What is a good intervention?					
Theme 1: Focusing on crime prevention and aiming to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system Program provides an evidence-based response to intervention or based on research about what does or does not work, for whom and under what circumstances.	*Excellent to very good:* Program makes it clear it is seeking to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour based on the relationship between substance use and pathways to offending. *Adequate:* Program is now seeking to track recidivism patterns among participants, though this was not built into initial program design.	*Excellent to very good:* Focus of programs in supporting offenders to successfully complete their Community Corrections Orders, prevent breach and improve relationships with justice agencies. *Adequate:* Data limitations in being able to undertake a re-offending analysis (e.g. lack of appropriate comparison data, limitations to completion data available by site).	*Adequate:* Limitations in Corrections Victoria offender data system has prevented a recidivism analysis. In the case of Koori Cognitive Skills Program there is direct potential to contribute to reduction in reoffending given the program's CBT focus. *Adequate:* There is no data available for tracking outcomes of gateway programs through monitoring participation in other programs, though there is general support for gateway programs providing a potentially effective means of facilitating participation in other custodial and community-based offending behaviour programs.	*Excellent to very good:* Strong focus with significant connection between the model and the intent to reduce crime and recidivism. *Adequate:* Due to data gaps, it was difficult to assess the direct impact of participation in DECCA on recidivism.	*Adequate:* Focus of program on crime prevention by improving participants' health and wellbeing and social connectedness through culture, outdoor recreational activities and wilderness therapy. *Poor:* Intention to achieve reduction in recidivism presents a significant challenge given the scale of program and lack of direct focus on offending behaviour. *Comment:* Due to very small numbers of participants it is difficult to assess impact on access to other programs or reduction in recidivism.

Good practice themes	Dthina Yuwali Program (NSW)	Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)	Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program, Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)	Roebourne DECCA (Western Australia)	Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)
What is a good model?					
Theme 2: Meeting needs and addressing a service gap	*Excellent to very good:* Need for programs that relate substance use with pathways to offending. This is the only Aboriginal specific juvenile justice program operating under a cultural framework in NSW that addresses motivation and confidence to change in relation to substance use and offending issues. Program was piloted prior to its implementation. *Excellent to very good:* Program uses locally trained facilitators to respond to local needs but faces geographic challenges in coverage of NSW. *Adequate:* Program could do more in terms of linking offenders with other programs/services.	*Excellent to very good:* Clear evidence of a need for Aboriginal specific programs to provide support for people to successfully complete their orders and avoid breach action and warrants. Programs responsive to local needs as local organisations deliver the programs. *Excellent to very good:* Programs were piloted prior to implementation and program locations selected according to assessment of need based on corrections data.	*Excellent to very good:* Clear evidence of a need for Aboriginal specific programs delivered in custodial contexts given prisoners not accessing mainstream programs. *Adequate:* Programs not run frequently enough to include all Aboriginal prisoners who may want to participate. *Comment:* Restructuring the suite of Aboriginal programs is intended to provide a cultural wraparound model but it is not clear how well this will meet needs.	*Excellent to very good:* Program strongly aligned to meet individual and community needs – a unique, needed, proactive intervention. Developed in conjunction with preferences of Aboriginal community groups.	*Excellent to very good:* Need for Aboriginal specific programs delivered in custodial contexts to prepare prisoners for other reintegration programs. Program designed as a gateway to prisoner throughcare programs. *Adequate:* Programs not run frequently enough to include all Aboriginal prisoners who may want to participate. However, given small overall Aboriginal prison numbers in Tasmania, and the available resources to conduct the Aboriginal Reconnect Program camps, the scale of the program is reasonable.

Good practice themes	Dthina Yuwali Program (NSW)	Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)	Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program, Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)	Roebourne DECCA (Western Australia)	Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)
Theme 3: Culturally appropriate program design and implementation	*Excellent to very good:* Program designed by, or with input from, Aboriginal community members and delivered or co-facilitated by Aboriginal people. Programs operating within a cultural framework with strong emphasis on culture and history.	*Excellent to very good:* Programs designed by, or with input from, Aboriginal community members and organisations. Programs operating within a cultural framework with strong emphasis on culture and community support.	*Excellent to very good:* All programs designed by, or with input from, Aboriginal community members and delivered or co-facilitated by Aboriginal people. Programs operating within a cultural framework with strong emphasis on culture and history.	*Excellent to very good:* High level of culturally appropriate practices in program design and delivery, including active collaboration with Aboriginal organisations. Designed in consultation with Aboriginal leaders and traditional owners of the program site.	*Excellent to very good:* Employment of Aboriginal facilitators and co-facilitators. Program operates within a cultural framework with strong emphasis on culture and history. *Adequate:* Although no broader community consultation undertaken during design, program designed by Aboriginal people with expertise across both offender support and wilderness therapy. *Poor:* Due to a change of service provider, there is a lack of capacity to provide the cultural component of the program due to no contact being made with the new service provider.

Good practice themes	Dthina Yuwali Program (NSW)	Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)	Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program, Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)	Roebourne DECCA (Western Australia)	Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)
Theme 4: Achieving outcomes in line with program intent	*Adequate:* Program focus on individual criminogenic needs and responsivity characteristics delivered through 3 modules: Stage 1 Core Concepts, Stage 2 Strengthening Commitment to Change and Stage 3 Relapse Prevention. However, 76% of participants only completed Stage 1 due to orders expiring, which limits scope of outcomes achieved. *Adequate:* Data gaps limit identification of client outcomes even though systems exist to enable measurement of outcomes. *Adequate:* Insufficient staff resources to undertake pre/post assessments, with only 50% post-assessments completed. Therefore model integrity compromised at times due to limited resources. Also, ongoing program monitoring lengthy and therefore not always fully completed.	*Adequate:* Qualitative data supports positive individual outcomes achieved. Programs would benefit from capturing this information and incorporating the data into an internal monitoring and evaluation system. *Adequate:* An annual conference provides some avenue for the analysis of outcomes to occur. *Adequate:* Outcomes in part dependent on community availability of work options and other support options. *Comment:* Inconclusive trends re order completion rates and quality of data provided cannot be easily verified.	*Excellent to very good:* Overall feedback indicates program participants experienced positive personal outcomes in engagement and motivation to seek further assistance as a result of their participation in the programs. Participants experienced a sense of identity, pride and belonging and increased confidence and self-belief from participating. Overall completion rates are very high. *Adequate:* Evidence of immediate positive results for Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program but data gaps in relation to intermediate or longer term results from participation. *Adequate:* No measurement of aggregated outcomes in terms of skills acquisition for Koori Cognitive Skills Program so further data gaps in relation program outcomes.	*Adequate:* Evidence of significant outcomes in skill development, personal confidence and work readiness. Further attention required to identify data on securing of employment for Aboriginal prisoners, and on recidivism rates. *Adequate:* Complementary positive outcomes for Aboriginal community and on Roebourne Regional Prison (RRP).	*Adequate:* Overall feedback indicates program participants experienced positive personal outcomes in engagement and motivation to participate in Aboriginal specific throughput programs. *Poor:* While there was positive qualitative feedback about program outcomes there was limited data available to support this.

Good practice themes	Dthina Yuwali Program (NSW)	Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)	Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program, Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)	Roebourne DECCA (Western Australia)	Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)
Theme 5: Promoting inclusive community participation and engagement	*Excellent to very good:* Program designed and implemented on a statewide basis with input from community members and clearly acknowledged impact of culture in program design. *Comment:* Female modules developed and gender balance in facilitators. However, 91% of program participants are male.	*Excellent to very good:* Programs designed and implemented on a statewide basis through local community organisations. Programs are delivered within AJA2 framework, which is based on partnership agreements between justice agencies and Aboriginal communities. Programs include avenues for continued input from and feedback to community. *Adequate:* There is flexibility in the model design to respond to gender needs, but the capacity to meet needs varies across sites including availability of suitable work options for women.	*Excellent to very good:* Programs are delivered within AJA2 framework, which is based on partnership agreements between justice agencies and Aboriginal communities. Framework allows for information to be fed back to the Aboriginal community about program delivery to the Aboriginal prisoner population. *Adequate:* Gender-specific modules available but some limitations in program delivery due to available resources.	*Excellent to very good:* Strong participation and engagement with Aboriginal groups and other organisations working with Aboriginal communities. *Excellent to very good:* Positive engagement with employers, e.g. Rio Tinto, brought resources, goodwill and publicity. *Adequate:* Arrangements to promote inclusion of women needs review.	*Adequate:* Although a Community Advisory Group was established it no longer operates due to issues around its role. *Adequate:* Program includes Elders in the program but with mixed feedback about the success of this participatory practice. *Comment:* No women have participated in the program.

Good practice themes	Dthina Yuwali Program (NSW)	Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)	Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program, Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)	Roebourne DECCA (Western Australia)	Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)
Theme 6: Effective service coordination and collaboration	*Poor:* Local facilitators link participants with services and supports but this is an individualised rather than a programmatic response. Structural limitations in allowing scope for the program to undertake service linkage roles post completion of orders compounded by lack of completion of Stages 2 and 3 of program model, with Stage 3 of program model specifically focusing on relapse prevention.	*Excellent to very good:* Coordination with a wide range of justice-related agencies. Delivery via community-based organisations facilitates a holistic approach to service delivery and services access.	*Adequate:* Not a focus of the programs and limited opportunities given cultural programs delivered in a custodial setting. Some qualitative feedback in relation to linking prisoners with appropriate services both in custodial and community settings.	*Excellent to very good:* Effective service coordination and collaboration, particularly with significant employers and Aboriginal organisations. Evidence of development of complementary strategies to address key issues. Area would be further strengthened through more detailed program plans which incorporate service coordination arrangements.	*Adequate:* Program indicated it had developed relationships with the two main Aboriginal-specific throughput prison programs and conversely these programs provided a mechanism for ongoing follow-up with participants post Aboriginal Reconnect Program camps. However, this cannot be verified with data available. *Poor:* Due to the external service provider no longer having funding to support the program, there is a lack of capacity to provide the cultural component of the program due to no contact with a new service provider.

Good practice themes	Dthina Yuwali Program (NSW)	Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)	Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program, Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)	Roebourne DECCA (Western Australia)	Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)
Theme 7: Advocating for systems reform and improving relationships among key stakeholders	*Adequate:* Not a key focus of the program so program limited in its capacity to contribute to advocacy and systems reform. *Adequate:* Program does raise the profile of the unique needs of Aboriginal young offenders within the Juvenile Justice system.	*Excellent to very good:* Programs develop relationships, deliver events and raise community awareness to improve relationships between justice agencies and the Aboriginal community. *Excellent to very good:* Justice agencies are more informed about issues and able to negotiate better outcomes for Aboriginal community members. Aboriginal community members more prepared to access justice agencies.	*Adequate:* Not a key focus of the programs so programs limited in their capacity to contribute to advocacy and systems reform. *Adequate:* Programs do raise the profile of the unique needs of Aboriginal prisoners within the custodial system.	*Adequate:* Not a key focus of the program, but evidence of raising profile of issues concerning Aboriginal prisoners and employment, and beneficial impacts within the prison and more broadly in the corrections system.	*Adequate:* Program raises the profile of the needs of Aboriginal prisoners among the partner organisations. *Comment:* Given its limited scope it has had limited capacity to contribute to advocacy and systems reform.

Good practice themes	Dthina Yuwali Program (NSW)	Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)	Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program, Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)	Roebourne DECCA (Western Australia)	Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)
What is a well managed and delivered program?					
Theme 8: Effective governance and management processes Results Based Management that links planning functions with monitoring and evaluation and is outcomes focused Stability and continuity of funding and appropriate resourcing levels Strong leadership and skilled and committed stable personnel	*Excellent to very good:* Program managers have shown a high degree of commitment to developing a well-coordinated and targeted initiative that provides a culturally appropriate and effective intervention to Aboriginal young people. *Adequate/poor:* While there has been significant commitment to measuring participant outcomes in relation to motivation for change for both substance use and offending, limited resources have meant that there is no central data analysis capacity for data provided by regions which impacts on data compliance by regions. *Adequate/poor:* Insufficient staff resources to undertake pre/post assessments, with only 50% post-assessments completed.	*Excellent to very good:* Centrally well managed and coordinated. Mechanisms such as annual staff conference to support continued program improvement. *Adequate:* Program delivery is dependent on capacity of local service providers; therefore there is some variation of management processes across sites. *Adequate:* Need to develop internal monitoring and evaluation capacity to collect qualitative data in the face of unclear trends evident from available quantitative data.	*Adequate/poor:* Evaluation reports based on participant and facilitator feedback but no monitoring of referral processes or access to other services, or other outcomes. *Adequate/poor:* No centralised record of program participation and tracking to participation in other programs, nor is re-offending data obtainable under current data arrangements. *Adequate:* Programs delivered by external providers through service agreements with Corrections Victoria.	*Adequate:* High-quality staffing and external stakeholder liaison. *Adequate:* Project management arrangements, including data collection, monitoring and reporting, require some attention.	*Excellent to very good:* Program has required flexibility and responsiveness by Tasmanian Prison Service, and management by the program partners to develop appropriate protocols and procedures to manage considerable risks involved in wilderness and physical challenge activities. *Poor:* There are no consistent participant feedback systems in place and there is no ongoing monitoring and evaluation data collected despite potential to track referrals made to other services.

Good practice themes	Dthina Yuwali Program (NSW)	Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)	Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program, Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)	Roebourne DECCA (Western Australia)	Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)
	Adequate/poor: Ongoing program monitoring lengthy and therefore not fully completed. *Adequate/poor:* Some program redesign necessary as based on three successive modules that are not completed in their entirety. Numbers of facilitators trained beyond capacity of program to use them.				
Theme 9: Clear articulation of program intent	*Excellent to very good:* Program has clear intentionality in dealing with underlying substance use issues and offending based on its focus on individual criminogenic needs and responsivity characteristics. Program design based on evidence of what works, such as CBT and other behavioural modification and skill development methods, and content of manual is in step with program intent.	*Excellent to very good:* Programs clear about their program intent and realistic in scope in a community based context.	*Excellent to very good:* Cultural programs clear about their program intent and realistic in scope.	*Adequate/poor:* Adequate level of documentation. More attention to formalisation of program design, specification of objectives and planning required.	*Poor:* Focus of program on improving health and wellbeing and social connectedness not clearly linked to aims of crime prevention. Program model and documentation does not allow clear link to be made to the broader program aim.

Good practice themes	Dthina Yuwali Program (NSW)	Local Justice Worker Program, Koori Offender Support and Mentoring Program (Victoria)	Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program, Marumali Program, Koori Cognitive Skills Program (Victoria)	Roebourne DECCA (Western Australia)	Aboriginal Reconnect Program (Tasmania)
Theme 10: Sustainability of the program/s over time	*Adequate:* Funding provided to regions but funding is limited with impact on resources available to deliver program. *Adequate:* No requirement by regional managers to deliver the program. *Adequate:* Numbers of facilitators trained beyond capacity of program to use them.	*Excellent to very good:* Aboriginal Justice Agreement provides ongoing funding with additional funding to be provided by Corrections Victoria. *Comment:* Sustainability vulnerable as dependent on capacity of service provider to engage Local Justice Workers and KOSMP Coordinators when staff turnover takes place.	*Adequate:* Aboriginal Cultural Immersion Program and Marumali Program will continue as foundation programs to assist offenders access offender behaviour programs. Concerns re sustainability given programs are delivered by private providers (and in the case of the Marumali Program is licensed to the external provider) who may choose to, or become unable to, continue delivering the program. *Adequate:* Koori Cognitive Skills Program will not continue as part of core program content, though some indication that will continue to be delivered at Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning Place and private prisons may run the program. *Adequate:* All programs challenged by lack of adequate, stable ongoing funding.	*Adequate:* Program has considerable goodwill, but has lacked consistent and adequate internal funding support. Efforts to secure support from other stakeholders have been successful.	*Poor:* No Aboriginal Reconnect Program camp has run since March 2011, and there are no camps planned for the immediate future. *Comment:* Delivery continues to be constrained by limited and ad-hoc funding.

10.3 Key lessons from all programs

Cultural appropriateness and inclusion are important for program success

The programs in Project B were operating within a cultural framework and were based on the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their design and delivery. This principle was affirmed as a key foundation for achieving program outcomes, but there were some lessons in relation to the extent to which full engagement and inclusion could occur.

All the programs displayed, to varying degrees, culturally appropriate designs which involved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in both the design and delivery process.

The programs were all reliant on effective engagement processes with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. Engagement during both the design and operation of the programs was seen to be an important precursor to the level of acceptance and sense of local ownership of the initiative. These principles, however, were more challenging to achieve in a custodial setting than in a community-based setting.

Programs were inclusive and equitable by design. However, in some cases there were service delivery gaps because programs did not operate frequently enough to meet demand.

While women formed a small proportion of the client group, some programs had developed gender-sensitive approaches in their models while others had not developed specific strategies that could include women. The need to be gender inclusive in program design was highlighted.

While all programs indicated the importance of community involvement in the design and delivery of programs, some also provided feedback about outcomes, reporting back to community stakeholders about challenges faced and new issues. This provided communities with a sense of ownership of the programs.

Some of the programs were highly dependent on the community for identification of employment and community work opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and specifically for prisoners. The success of community relationships was thus integral to program success.

Developing monitoring and evaluation functions is important to participant outcomes

All programs in Project B faced limitations on their capacity to establish outcomes, due to the absence of performance management systems able to generate robust monitoring data. All the programs could have benefited from adopting an increased focus on monitoring and evaluation, particularly in tracking intermediate-level results where intended behavioural changes could be identified and measured. There appeared to be little value in focusing on impact assessment alone (based on recidivism data)

for Project B where there was limited capacity to identify behavioural changes at the outcome level for program participants.

Stakeholders from the programs included in Project B stated to varying degrees that crime prevention and/or reduction of reoffending was an overarching aim. This was to be achieved through primary intervention and treatment or through creating pathways to related crime-prevention-focused or treatment services. However, the data gaps evident in all programs limited the collection and analysis of robust data that could be used to indicate trends in participant outcomes. If an outcomes focus is to be adopted by Offender Support and Reintegration programs, then capacity for Results Based Management, including functions of planning, monitoring and evaluation, needs to be supported and strengthened.

While some programs demonstrated clear program intent, others required a clearer program logic that realistically linked program outputs with expected short, medium and longer term outcomes. The use of a theory of change or program logic[65] approach would be a valuable tool for all programs during initial program design and planning.

In developing a results-based approach through use of program logic, it appeared to be unrealistic to measure program success against the longest term impact level, that being a demonstrated reduction in recidivism. The literature reviewed has outlined some of the methodological and ethical challenges inherent in conducting robust and reliable recidivism studies, such as small sample sizes and lack of comparison groups. It was preferable for programs to measure program results against their stated intermediate-level outcomes rather than the higher level impacts, where a contribution only could be made.

Measurement of program success should thus focus more on intended intermediate and long-term program outcomes such as the development of skills, acquisition of competencies, placements in work or community settings, or increased motivation and capacity for program participants to successfully access and utilise other related and necessary support services or programs.

Assessing individual outcomes depends on the availability of robust data

While the assessment of participant outcomes was limited by data gaps (as stated in 10.1 above), there were some indicators of success in outcomes achieved through the program modalities. Areas of success were identified through a literature review that supported the veracity of the models being used and through the perspectives obtained from program personnel, stakeholders and beneficiaries. These perspectives would have greater validity if outcome data were collected and analysed through

[65] Narrative and visual representation of the relationship between a program's inputs (funding and resources), outputs (tangible deliverables following activities undertaken), outcomes (immediate and intermediate term) and impacts (contribution of program to its final longer term intended goal).

qualitative evaluation methodologies such as the Most Significant Change technique or case study approaches.

Data gaps prevented the Project B programs from establishing recidivism trends or making progress in accessing other services or opportunities for their participant group. The failure of a program to demonstrate a reduction in recidivism or effective participant pathways, however, should not be viewed as a failure of the program itself. The programs, based on qualitative feedback received, appeared likely to have made a contribution, along with a range of related programs and interventions, to positive participant outcomes that would support offenders not to reoffend.

Programs need to develop monitoring and evaluation systems that can capture client outcomes based on analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data sources, and they require capacity and resources to undertake these functions. All programs in Project B needed to prioritise data collection around client outcomes.

There was demonstrated value as to the useful role that custodial settings can play in prisoner rehabilitation, by building prisoner personal development, skills, qualifications and work orientation.

Some programs adopted a specific focus on addressing offending behaviour by targeting and responding to criminogenic needs, while others operated as gateway programs that were preparatory in nature and focused on offenders accessing offender-specific rehabilitation programs and/or engaging with employment and other programs in the community. Some programs attempted to bridge the gap between education, training and employment opportunities. The literature supported training for and securing employment as an important program outcome that could work to reduce a propensity for offending, and therefore recidivism.

Many programs indicated that participation had increased participant self-esteem and confidence, tackled underlying causal issues, increased competencies and skills, and assisted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to use the services and supports available to them, all which cumulatively would work to increase personal resilience and potentially avert reoffending. The programs all highlighted the importance of forging pathways, including pathways to accessing other support services, treatment programs and employment options. Remedial programs which actively promoted engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with economic activity made a constructive impact.

Such gains could potentially be substantiated through qualitative data collection methods such as case studies that track client progress, or selected vignettes of change such as provided by the use of the Most Significant Change technique. Quantitative data analysis requires the collection of rigorous and routine monitoring data as to client outcomes in terms of service utilisation and reoffending after participation in the program has ceased. This data was missing for most programs. For all programs,

the longer term effects of the programs in terms of reducing offending behaviour and recidivism thus remain unknown.

Should data matching protocols be developed by departments such as Corrective Services and by police and the courts that address ethical and privacy regulations, then these would be of potential benefit to programs in generating meaningful client tracking.

Service partnerships play a critical role in program success

Effective service partnerships formed a basis for all programs, though this was an area that needed improvement for some of the programs, where relationships with allied services and supports could have been better developed.

Many of the programs illustrated the importance of building pathways to further program participation, especially in preparing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners and community members for effective participation in such programs. Programs worked well when there was community support in place and other programs augmented the basic program so that there were pathways for people to move through, rather than participating in one intervention in isolation.

Partnerships, where they were developed, expanded the reach and impact of the programs, their level of acceptance and also the availability of resources. Partnerships developed with private-sector organisations with a strong commitment to improving the situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reinforced positive program impacts. Partnerships were effective when they built on the cooperation of organisations with mutually reinforcing aspirations, such as the rehabilitation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners.

The importance of service coordination and collaboration to developing partnerships and good relationships across key agencies and stakeholders was thus supported by the evaluation findings.

Capacity for systems advocacy and individual advocacy is important

There appeared to be a need for programs specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, given their pattern of non-engagement with mainstream programs. Programs should ideally have the capacity to influence the service system in order to enable access to mainstream services and supports and to influence and improve relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and justice agencies. This capacity was not available in most programs in Project B.

It appeared to be important for programs to have some capacity for systems advocacy and/or capacity for the promotion of the unique needs of the target group, and, while some programs were able to undertake these roles, others were significantly limited by available resources. For some programs,

such as the Local Justice Worker Program, systems advocacy was more part of their core business than other programs which were more intervention or treatment based.

All programs appeared to have had a beneficial impact in terms of highlighting the needs and potential of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners or community members, and on associated attitudes of some prison staff and justice agencies. These roles could have been potentially strengthened through improved resourcing of program personnel.

Effective governance and management are important for program success

Programs in Project B were not able to identify their progress against their intended intermediate level outcomes due to the absence of, or the underdeveloped nature of, their data collection systems. This militated against the capacity of programs to identify their achievements and successes. This limitation also hampered the capacity of programs to modify and adjust their program designs in the light of findings about what works, for whom and under what circumstances. The adoption of a Results Based Management approach has been highlighted as essential for effective governance and management and should form an integral part of program management.

There was a need for all programs to develop clear program intent through program logic mapping (or similar) as important features of good governance and management so that programs are clear on their directions and there is no risk of program drift or displacement. This was particularly important for programs that intended to operate as gateway programs to other programs or services and supports to ensure that they worked to appropriately channel clients through the system and that a tiered and progressive approach to intervention was adopted and followed through with.

Some programs required urgent review and redesign based on response rates and program uptake. This would form part of a Results Based Management approach; where performance monitoring data is analysed and indicates poor response rates, this would then lead to a process of program review and adjustment to the program design.

All programs needed to develop robust monitoring systems, including capacity for client tracking and follow-up post intervention. There was a need for programs to prioritise this monitoring function and to develop appropriate data collection systems and processes that could easily generate this data. This was seen by the evaluation to be a critical finding for Project B to ensure that programs developed an outcomes focus to their work.

Lack of stable funding and adequate resourcing levels were identified as challenges for all the programs in Project B and this undermined the potential for their success.

Ensuring sustainability in program funding is important for program success

Most of the programs in Project B were challenged by lack of adequate, stable and ongoing funding, and this worked to limit their success. The lack of stable and sufficient funding underlined many of the performance issues identified in this evaluation. The capacity of the programs to undertake performance monitoring to establish client outcomes, develop collaborative service partnerships and undertake systems advocacy were all limited by such constraints.

All programs could have been better resourced for success, especially for planning and monitoring and evaluation functions. This would have strengthened their capacities to be results based. There was also a need for adequate funding for the system as a whole in order to provide complementary programs and services.

Positive program results were hampered by short-term, time-limited or spasmodic funding, meaning the programs did not have the capacity for effective program planning, implementation and evaluation.

Many of the programs were relatively small in scope, and operated with limited resources and to some extent on the margins of mainstream prison and community service system operations. Increased levels of resourcing for these programs would certainly have increased the level of impact from their operations.

10.4 Strategies for achieving good practice across all programs

The key lessons arising from this evaluation have revealed a number of challenges for achieving good practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Offender Support and Reintegration programs. These are as follows.

Establish a valid program design and undertake program planning

All programs required improved planning functions, including:

- Detailing a more comprehensive program design document
- Giving attention to program objectives in order to encompass program intent
- Specifying expected outcomes
- Regular reporting of progress in relation to intent, processes and critical issues.

Adequately support programs to develop monitoring and evaluation capacity

All programs required improved attention to development of their monitoring and evaluation capacity. This is required to ensure continual quality improvement of the services they provide and their

capacity to evolve to meet changing needs. This will require initial and continued training in monitoring and evaluation and adequate resourcing to implement appropriate and customised performance management systems.

It could be beneficial for all programs to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to guide the collection of monitoring and evaluation data. This, however, would require expertise and resources possibly above and beyond those normally dedicated to service delivery functions. It may be beneficial, therefore, to nominate that approximately 10% of a program's budget be dedicated to monitoring and evaluation functions. Alternately, clusters of programs could be brought together to share monitoring and evaluation activities. In other words, evaluation needs to be built in as a core program component in program design and not left to ad-hoc, one-off evaluation processes.

Ensure adequate resourcing to achieve program aims and objectives

All programs required increased levels of staffing and resources and a more consistent and stable funding base for their initiatives. Programs experienced challenges in ensuring adequate program resources and sustainable funding.

Conduct research and use evidence-based interventions

Some programs, such as the Dthina Yuwali Program and the Koori Cognitive Skills Program, were based on evidence-based models and were able to clearly articulate their theoretical foundations, whereas others were not. Ideally, all programs should be in a position to deliver evidence-based interventions known to be effective in addressing offending behaviour. However, while the body of research is growing in this field, there remain substantial gaps in such evidence being available to support program interventions. When developing program designs, a Theory of Change model or Program Theory approach could be used to outline the expected trajectory of progress and outcomes from delivered intervention models.

10.5 Conclusion

The evaluation of the eight programs within Project B indicated a range of positive outcomes in terms of Offender Support and Reintegration. While lack of comprehensive data makes definitive findings on longer term goals such as reducing recidivism difficult, many significant positive outcomes were identified. Across the programs the evaluation highlighted that participants found the programs approachable and beneficial, and that local communities as a whole benefited from involvement. Importantly, many of the programs were found to be achieving outcomes in line with their original intent.

Again and again, this evaluation has affirmed the importance of further building an evidence base to identify and develop effective offender support and reintegration interventions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders. The focus of building an evidence base should be on identifying the characteristics and types of interventions that are most effective for achieving specific outcomes, such as reducing reoffending, the features and characteristics of effective program model designs and required governance and management processes for effective program delivery.

As a necessary precursor to establishing a greater evidence base in regard to those interventions that are effective, programs need to embed monitoring and evaluation processes into their operation. Program designs need to outline the program's intended goals and objectives and specify the intended outputs, outcomes and impacts to be achieved over time. Performance indicators and outcome measures need to be developed and agreed upon by stakeholders in line with program design. These should include indicators which signify progress towards the achievement of program goals and objectives, short and intermediate term outcomes which may be non-crime related (such as intended behavioural changes to be achieved) as well as the contribution of the program to intended long-term outcomes (impacts), which may include reduced reoffending. In order to achieve this, programs require performance management systems which can facilitate the monitoring of accurate, reliable and relevant performance data that can be routinely collected and analysed. Data matching potential, if developed by departments such as Corrective Services and by the police and the courts that address ethical and privacy requirements, would be of potential value to programs. Evaluative activities can be periodically conducted to build on monitoring data collected in further establishing program outcomes.

To enable the evidence base to further develop, dedicated funding for monitoring and evaluation functions should be provided and quarantined within the overall program's budget, and training and support provided to program personnel in order to undertake monitoring and evaluation functions.

It is hoped that the approaches examined and the findings of this evaluation will provide information for the Standing Council on Law and Justice as it considers future whole-of-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander justice initiatives, and for all governments and service providers as they plan and implement programs and policy to reduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interactions with the criminal justice system and improve community safety. Evaluation insights about ways to promote positive changes in offenders' behaviour are intended to make a useful contribution to these ends.

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