

PRISONERS AND DETAINEES

ADULT PRISONERS

41,202
people in prison across Australia
(up 51% in last 10 years)¹

for every
100,000
adults in Australia,
215.9
people are in prison¹



Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples are significantly overrepresented in Australia's prison population - making up 28% of prisoners yet only 2.8% of the population.¹

In the 30 days prior to incarceration

48%
of prison entrants were unemployed

25%
were homeless

46%
had dependent children²

Almost **50%** of prisoners have a cognitive or psychosocial disability (compared with 18% of the general population).³

31.3%
of prisoners are awaiting sentence (up 112% in the past decade)¹



The median time spent on remand is now

3.3
MONTHS¹

WOMEN⁴

3,299
women in prison across Australia
(up 66% in last 10 years)¹



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are incarcerated at more than **20 TIMES** the rate of non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.⁴

The majority of women in prison are victims of family or sexual violence.⁵

JUVENILE DETAINEES

On an average day in 2016-17,
913
young people were in detention

61% were unsentenced

58% were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.⁶

68% of juveniles entering detention in 2016 had a history of child abuse or trauma, **84%** had a history of previous juvenile detention and **54%** had at least parent who had been in prison.

Only **27%** were attending school prior to being placed in custody.⁷



PRISONERS AND DETAINEES

COSTS OF IMPRISONMENT

TOTAL SPENDING (2016-17)⁸

Adult Prison	\$4.1 billion
Juvenile Detention	\$468 million

PER PERSON PER YEAR

Adult Prison	\$104,000
Juvenile Detention	\$541,000

PRISONS ARE FAILING TO REHABILITATE AND PREVENT FUTURE CRIME

56.5%

of adult prisoners had previously served a term of imprisonment.¹

44.8%

returned to prison within two years.⁸

From 2013-2015, on average, 19% of adults and 43% of children who were convicted and received a penalty other than prison were then convicted of another offence within the next 12 months. **Comparatively, 39% of adults and 64% of children exiting prison were convicted of another offence within the next 12 months.**⁹

Priorities in this area include:

- Increase funding and support for prison/detention-based therapeutic programs and throughcare programs, including those which are linked to legal assistance, with adequate provision for robust evaluation.
- Include Justice Targets as part of the Closing the Gap strategy to reduce rates of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, family violence, and child removal.
- Introduce law reform across a range of areas which are contributing to the overimprisonment of disadvantaged Australians:
 - review bail and parole laws and conditions which can inadvertently set people up to fail;
 - abolish mandatory sentencing regimes; and
 - abolish imprisonment arising from fine default and introduce Work and Development Order schemes nationally.
- Develop criminal justice policies and procedures that recognise the distinct criminogenic profile of women offenders.
- Prioritise investment in bail accommodation and bail support programs for remandees, and post-release accommodation for former prisoners and parolees – particularly for women and people with disability.
- Expand access to legal assistance and information to prisoners through the use of technology that complements rather than replaces face-to-face legal services and court processes.
- Increase the age of criminal responsibility to at least 12 years of age, subject to doli incapax being in place, and not detain children under 14 years of age, except in the most serious of cases.
- Implement evidence-based policies and practices to reduce juvenile detention, having particular regard to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory.

1. ABS, 2017

2. AIHW, 2015

3. Human Rights Watch, 2018

4. ALRC, 2017

5. AIFS, 2012.

6. AIHW, 2018

7. Young People in Custody Health Survey, 2015

8. Productivity Commission, 2018

9. NSW BOSCAR, 2017